

Show + Tell: Offer Grace

Matthew 9:2-7

9.15.2018

Series Intro – Our series is titled, “Show + Tell.” It is drawn from 1 Timothy, chapter 4.

16 Pay close attention to your life and your teaching; persevere in these things, for in doing this you will save both yourself and your hearers. 1 Timothy 4:16

Notice those two simple words: Life (showing) and Teaching (telling). But we have to understand that “Showing + Telling” is never the full story. <Holy Spirit’s work>

Today, we’re still on the “showing side of things and we’re going to be talking about offering grace. <“Grace” – Undeserved kindness ... not what we deserve.>

<ILL: Coach Tompkins> A little bit of grace (a little bit of undeserved kindness) goes a long way. It doesn’t have to be a “life altering situation.” It can be simple and still make a world of difference.

- Helping someone carry something or opening a door (with a pleasant smile)
- Saying “please” and “thank you”
- Being a little patient with a difficult person

It doesn’t take a lot of grace to make a big difference! So, if a little grace can make a big difference, what do you think a lot of grace can do? This is what we’re going to be looking at in our text for today.

2 Some men brought to Jesus a paralytic lying on a stretcher. Seeing their faith, Jesus told the paralytic, “Have courage, son, your sins are forgiven.” Matthew 9:2

The story begins with some men bringing their friend (who is a paralytic) to Jesus. Jesus responds with grace: “*Your sins are forgiven.*” Notice not only that Jesus shows grace, but what He wants that grace to result in: “*Have courage, son.*” Grace results in courage! Why is that important?

8 Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden at the time of the evening breeze, and they hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden. Genesis 3:8

Sin makes us want to hide.

- Jacob and Esau
- David and Bathsheba

We know that sin deserves judgment, so we want to hide. But judgment is like a heat-seeking missile! It always finds sin! There is NO hiding! It always comes out.

<VIDEO: Little girl with “Lip-pick”> She went just a little too far! Grace allows us to talk about the stuff that is messed up because we are not afraid of the outcome. We are loved!

Think about this paralytic man. Do you suppose he ever thought his paralysis was a result of his sin? Jesus wants to get that all out of the way, so he starts with grace. <ILL: Driving on the highway> But the some of the reaction to Jesus’ grace is not joyful, but suspicious.

3 At this, some of the scribes said to themselves, “He’s blaspheming!” Matthew 9:3

4 Perceiving their thoughts, Jesus said, “Why are you thinking evil things in your hearts?” Matthew 9:4

The leaders have “control” righteousness. They did the right things and looked the right way. The problem was that they had deceived themselves into thinking that they were better than “those sinners.” The religious leaders have the most difficult sin to deal with of all. But just like Jesus wants to help this paralyzed man, He wants to help these religious leaders.

5 “Which is easier: to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Get up and walk’? 6 But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins” – then He told the paralytic, “Get up, take your stretcher, and go home.” 7 So he got up and went home. Matthew 9:5-7

Jesus tells the leaders that He has the power to offer grace – to forgive sins. Part of the reason the religious leaders were skeptical of Jesus is because they didn’t think He even had the authority to give grace. He is about to erase the misunderstanding!

<ILL: judge is lenient vs. a defense attorney asking for leniency> Jesus has the authority to show grace! And He offers that to us freely! BUT, He also give us that same power!

21 Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent Me, I also send you.” 22 After saying this, He breathed on them and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit. 23 If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.” John 20:21-23

Jesus says, “Just like I said to the paralytic, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ you forgive each other!” There are times when you retain sins (e.g., you discipline your kids), but forgiveness comes first! Forgiveness is essential!” There is NO survival for us without it!

<ILL: Confession and Absolution> People like that moment in the service. But it doesn’t have to be restricted to that moment! You don’t need a pastor. If someone is feeling guilty, you can tell them, “Your sins are forgiven.” This is who we are called to be!

Keys to offering GRACE

1. I NEED Grace! It’s hard to offer grace until we realize the grace we have received.

15 This saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance: “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners”—and I am the worst of them. 16 But I received mercy for this reason, so that in me, the worst of them, Christ Jesus might demonstrate His extraordinary patience as an example to those who would believe in Him for eternal life. 1 Timothy 1:15-16

One of the reasons Paul’s ministry was so filled with grace is because his life was covered in grace. When we understand that we have received grace, we’ll want to share it!

<ILL: When you find something really good you want to share it!> Why? You know that someone else needs it too!

2. Others need GRACE! Don’t call them out. Love them. That is exactly what Jesus does. When Jesus sees this paralyzed man, not only does He see his condition, He sees his heart. You and I KNOW that the people around us need grace! God has given us that knowledge. But we don’t know the specifics. Part of showing grace is just taking the time to get to know someone – their fears, their hurts, and their regrets. Sometimes offering grace means taking time to listen.

<ILL: Busyness and Distraction> Can you take the time to slow down and put down your phone?

3. Be Courageous! Sometimes when we offer grace, people abuse it. That shouldn't stop us. If we want to control people by withholding grace, we are not different than the religious leaders. God has a different system.

20 Where sin multiplied, grace multiplied even more. Romans 5:20

You can't out-sin the grace of God! Isn't that really good news!

Remember, there are a LOT of people all around us who live their lives in fear! They are a mess... they make lots of mistakes and it is just a matter of time before the truth catches up with them. What can stop the fear?

<ILL: Snipe hunting> You and I have a Savior who came for us. He stays with us through all the bad parts. He cares for us. And He has given us the very same ministry! To go to hurting, broken, messed up people and offer them GRACE!