

# The Harvest - Wk 2 “Come & Drink Without Pay”

October 24, 2021 // Rock of Grace

## INTRODUCTION

The God who created heaven and earth, our Father, the one we worshiped in song this morning, He is passionate about YOU knowing HIM. His very nature is to seek and save the lost, no matter the cost.

He is madly in love with you! You were possibly invited to church today by a friend or co-worker or maybe you're watching online... whoever you are, you need to know that JESUS is head over heels about YOU! He loves humanity so much He calls us His “special creation”

He is passionate about knowing you. He wants to hear your voice and wants you to hear His. He is not distant. He is not far from you! He's closer than you think.

When He created the world 6,000 years ago, He put humans on the earth NOT to resemble every other creature He made but to resemble HIM.

Let me repeat that... When our Triune God, the Father, the Son & the Holy Spirit put humans on the earth, God didn't create us like He created every other creature. No, we were different! He made but to resemble HIM.

He put Adam and Eve in the garden and told them to rule and reign - to take dominion and yet as we know, they blew it with the option to disobey God. Ever since, mankind has been born into sin. BUT GOD MADE A WAY OUT by sending His Son Jesus to come to us - be born as one of us - to die as one of us, and then He was resurrected to new life 3 days later giving US the promise of new life.

Jesus is the answer to the problem you're facing.

Last week We used the parable Jesus gave us on the wedding feast as our main text. We heard Jesus boldly proclaim that everyone is invited to His party! Everyone's invited to God's party. Sinner, saint, religious, reprobate, retired, teenager, college kid, high school drop out, class clown, top of the class, no matter who you are, YOU are invited to the Harvest Party - the wedding feast of the Lamb - to God's Party!

**We must come to the party, thankful, not prideful.**

Romans 3:23 “all have sinned and fallen short of God's standard.”

Every's a sinner in need of God's grace. The problem is ... not everyone knows that.

**Romans 6:20-23** For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. <sup>21</sup> But what fruit were you getting at that time from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death. <sup>22</sup> But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the fruit you get leads to sanctification and it's end, eternal life. <sup>23</sup> For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

**As humans, we are constantly on the search for satisfaction and approval.** - from our boss, from our spouse, from our parents.. we are restless, looking for approval and love and affection - but that's a feeling that ONLY GOD Your Creator can give.

Father God's love is so rich! It's so pure! Jesus reveals His love! Have you met Jesus?!? It's so incredible and once you start realizing this and experiencing His presence in your life, you'll find that THIS is the satisfaction you were looking for!!!! I could talk about Jesus and how amazing He is all day, every day! He never stops being good, being faithful, being generous and kind. He is the joy of the human heart!

Today, we're going to compare and contrast Grace and the Law, Grace & Religion. I think you'll find that God's grace truly is amazing and YOU will be part of the Harvest!

King David puts it like this in Psalm 16:11 "You have made known to me the pathway of life. You fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand."

Look at what David says to the Lord in **Psalm 63**.

*"I have seen you in your sanctuary and gazed upon your power and glory.*

*<sup>3</sup> Your unfailing love is better than life itself; how I praise you! <sup>4</sup> I will praise you as long as I live, lifting up my hands to you in prayer. <sup>5</sup> You satisfy me more than the richest feast.*

*I will praise you with songs of joy. <sup>6</sup> I lie awake thinking of you, meditating on you through the night.*

*<sup>7</sup> Because you are my helper, I sing for joy in the shadow of your wings. <sup>8</sup> I cling to you; your strong right hand holds me securely."*

You see how David has no fear, how he feels secure and at peace. **You see, Being satisfied isn't about having something, it's about having someone - JESUS the Prince of Heaven as your very best friend!**

David found out as did the Disciples, as did Mary Magnalene, prostitutes and paralytics, religious leaders and heretics, Christian killers like Paul and so many others... that our souls (our mind, will and emotions, the real us on the inside) **We are only satisfied when we receive grace, come into relationship with Father God by**

**surrendering our lives to His Son, Jesus and rest in His love! This love that the Father puts within us gives us a building anticipation for the Wedding Feast of the Lamb, the Harvest Party!**

Are you resting in His love on a daily basis?

Tomorrow morning, it will be Monday. There will be tasks to accomplish and goals to meet, deadlines from your boss. And you'll have the choice to be stressed out and panicky *OR* be calm and at peace knowing that God is on His throne and if you know Jesus, you know that! Nothing can stop the Harvest Party that you're going to! One day you'll be with Him and nothing can change that amazing truth!

Are you satisfied? Have you allowed God's love to do that? To take the pressure off – the pressure to perform, the pressure to be something or achieve a certain social status? ...

There is JOY for you! There is REST for you! Promised and given to us by Jesus! Mt **11:28-30**

**<sup>28</sup> Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. <sup>29</sup> Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. <sup>30</sup> For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."**

Today, we're again talking about an invitation to know Jesus - to know GOD, the One who formed you in your mother's womb. Psalm 139 says that He formed you, knit you together like a perfect tapestry, designed you, hand-crafted YOU and you need to know that. This is why life apart from your Designer simply makes no sense. Today, find what you've been looking for by looking to JESUS CHRIST!

God IS love and His presence is HERE... now... today... right now... wanting to fill you with joy, with peace, righteousness, with LOVE.

This series is called HARVEST. The harvest is a symbol of people accepting Jesus Christ. It's a picture of laborers, people like you and me, going out to collect the harvest and the harvest is people giving their lives to Jesus! Turn to Mt 9

**Mt 9:35-38 "And Jesus went throughout all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction. <sup>36</sup> When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.**

**<sup>37</sup> Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; <sup>38</sup> therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest." ESV**

We who are Christians, sons and daughters of God, are called by God to go out and tell people this good news. The good news I just described about God sending His only Son Jesus to forgive us of our sins.

Friend, it's no longer ok for you to keep this message to yourself!  
It's not ok with God that you hide the truth and good news of the Gospel  
from people - from co-workers, from neighbors, from friends.

We must be reminded of why we're here in church today.

## Turn to **Luke 15:11-32**

### LK 15:11-32

<sup>11</sup> And he said, "There was a man who had two sons. <sup>12</sup> And the younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of property that is coming to me.' And he divided his property between them. <sup>13</sup> Not many days later, the younger son gathered all he had and took a journey into a far country, and there he squandered his property in reckless living. <sup>14</sup> And when he had spent everything, a severe famine arose in that country, and he began to be in need.

<sup>15</sup> So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him into his fields to feed pigs. <sup>16</sup> And he was longing to be fed with the pods that the pigs ate, and no one gave him anything. <sup>17</sup> "But when he came to himself, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have more than enough bread, but I perish here with hunger! <sup>18</sup> I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. <sup>19</sup> I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Treat me as one of your hired servants." ' <sup>20</sup> And he arose and came to his father.

But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him. <sup>21</sup> And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' <sup>22</sup> But the father said to his servants, 'Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet. <sup>23</sup> And bring the fattened calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate. <sup>24</sup> For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.' And they began to celebrate.

<sup>25</sup> "Now his older son was in the field, and as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing. <sup>26</sup> And he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant. <sup>27</sup> And he said to him, 'Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fattened calf, because he has received him back safe and sound.' <sup>28</sup> But he was angry and refused to go in. His father came out and entreated him, <sup>29</sup> but he answered his father,

'Look, these many years I have served you, and I never disobeyed your command, yet you never gave me a young goat, that I might celebrate with my friends. <sup>30</sup> But when this son of yours came, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fattened calf for him!' <sup>31</sup> And he said to him, 'Son, you

**are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. <sup>32</sup> It was fitting to celebrate and be glad, for this your brother was dead, and is alive; he was lost, and is found.’ ”**

So Jesus tells us what the Good News is often by telling us a story - a parable that gives us a picture of what God is like and who we are in relation to God.

In this parable - one of my favorites, we find three characters.

Father

Son who sinned, repented and became glad

Son who stay home & was upset and became ... more upset

*expoud*

**LIFE - SAVER ILLUSTRATION** - *Jordan pick it up and throw it when I say  
“God throws us a lifeline by sending Jesus to us. There’s nothing we could do to earn salvation.*

We clarified also that sanctification, the purifying of our lives, comes AFTER salvation not before.

The GOOD NEWS - the GOSPEL is needed for BOTH SONS.

The prodigal who ran away needed God the Father to forgive him, yes, of course!

But so did the “Older Brother” For he had to come to a place of gratitude for the Father.

**“Religion is when you work for what the Father has already given you. Grace is receiving what God has given you knowing you don’t deserve a thing.”**

So what did it sound like when Jesus sends out the 12 disciples to start spreading the good news about His salvation? Let’s look.

Mt 10:5-20

<sup>5</sup> These twelve Jesus sent out, instructing them, “Go nowhere among the Gentiles and enter no town of the Samaritans, <sup>6</sup> but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. <sup>7</sup> And proclaim as you go, saying, ‘The kingdom of heaven is at hand.’ <sup>8</sup> Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, cast out demons. **You received without paying; give without**

**pay.** <sup>9</sup> Acquire no gold or silver or copper for your belts, <sup>10</sup> no bag for your journey, or two tunics or sandals or a staff, for the laborer deserves his food.

<sup>11</sup> And whatever town or village you enter, find out who is worthy in it and stay there until you depart. <sup>12</sup> As you enter the house, greet it. <sup>13</sup> And if the house is worthy, let your peace come upon it, but if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you. <sup>14</sup> And if anyone will not receive you or listen to your words, shake off the dust from your feet when you leave that house or town.

<sup>15</sup> Truly, I say to you, it will be more bearable on the day of judgment for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah than for that town.

Jesus says “Freely you have received now go out and give without pay.”

I wonder how

It’s so easy for us to slide back into legalism, self-image management and behavioral modification isn’t it? It’s so easy to forget the concept of grace, the beauty of grace.

I wonder if I could personify grace for you for a few moments. Before I do, I want to reiterate that the harvest party that God is hosting will be attended by those who receive grace NOT by those who simply “obey the law” and try hard. Our trying and our obedience is an outflow of our gratitude for grace.

## **Grace and Religion**

Grace forgives you.

The law accuses you.

Grace empowers you when you don’t deserve it.

Religion pushes you down.

Grace teaches you to lift others up.

Religion tells you to push others down so you can be lifted up.

Grace looks for who’s to heal.

Religion looks for who’s to blame.

Grace looks for potential.

Religion looks for criminal record.

Grace celebrates.

Religion humiliates.

Grace forgives.

Religion holds on.

Grace says “Come on in!”

Religion says “Stay out!”

The law of Moses was given by God for three reasons. 1) To reveal God’s Righteousness. 2) To reveal our unrighteousness, our need for God 3) Point us to a Savior, Jesus.

Remember, we can’t fulfill the whole law. That’s why it points to our need for a Savior.

James 2:10 “Whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it.” Some of God’s initial law in the OT are easy to keep, some are very, very difficult. Why? It pointed mankind to the need for a Savior to come and just fix the whole thing.

Jesus comes on the scene and writes His law upon our heart! Just like the prophet said He would!

Simply BELIEVE in the grace given to you by God!  
 Simply BELIEVE in the life-saver thrown to you by God!  
 Simply HOLD ON to your faith!  
 Simply BELIEVE in GRACE & HOLD ON to grace!

**Hebrews 3:12-14** reads ... *“See to it, brothers and sisters, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called ‘Today,’ so that none of you may be hardened by sin’s deceitfulness. We have come to share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original conviction firmly to the very end.”*

That scripture starts out with “see to it” in other words – make sure you put in effort so that... “be intentional about your life in Christ” Other scriptures say “be careful then how you live...” If you CHOOSE to not allow people to speak into your life when you need it, you’re choosing to be deceived.

If you CHOOSE to not read your Bible but only believe what you hear from others’ you’re choosing to miss out on important truth that you NEED.

If you CHOOSE to repeatedly sin, over and over, every day, willfully ignoring the Spirit of God with conscious effort,

Whether it’s continuing to lie to your spouse, your coworkers, your boss, if it’s a lying habit

Or if you continue to look at pornography every day, knowing you’re sinning over and over and over,

Or if you’re living together before you’re married and trying to have the benefits of marriage without the commitment of marriage and every day you’re doing this. ...

Anything you’re doing EVERY day KNOWING you’re going against the plan of God, then you’re *choosing* to reject the faith that you once knew; you’re choosing NOT to hold on to your faith like we read about. You’re choosing NOT to endure to the end to be saved. Therefore you’re choosing to be deceived.

Don’t misunderstand me here. This doesn’t mean you have to be perfect to go to heaven. No

**You don’t’ have to be perfect to go to Heaven. You have to be humble to go to heaven. The harvest party is for the humble not the deserving.**

You see in arrogance, you tell yourself that you can continue to sin without the consequence of God.

But in humility if you sin, you will soon-after repent and genuinely ask God for forgiveness and INSTANTLY your slate is clean and you’ve got a fresh start.

When you’re convicted and you hear a friend or a preacher teach you something that doesn’t please the Lord, then again you receive grace - the enablement for Godly living and you choose to let that grace transform you. You change! You change paths. You change behavior. Why? NOT TO EARN salvation but because of salvation. You change paths NOT to EARN God’s approval but because of GRACE - because you’re so thankful He saved you!

**You and I need the Gospel of grace not only the day we receive Jesus but every day since. The Gospel continues to save us and teach us what it means to let God be in charge.**

Back to our life saver illustration...

We are drowning in our sin before we accept Jesus. We can’t find the shore. We can fight the current of the world we live in. We needed saved. God sent Jesus to save us!

We are once saved by Jesus.

We are being saved by the Holy Spirit.  
One day we'll be called home to Heaven by the Father.

We taught last week about the Holy Spirit who teaches us HOW to follow Jesus. He is our teacher, our counselor and comforter. While we can't see Jesus in person right now, we can feel His Spirit speaking to our hearts, making us fall in love with Jesus, our bridegroom. The Old Testament reveals this mystery hidden in a story of Isaac and Rebeca.

## **THE SERVANT WHO LEADS REBECA**

Abraham is wanting to find a bride for his son Isaac. Isaac has already been shown to be a type of Christ when Abraham went to the hill of Golgatha and attempted to sacrifice him only out of obedience to God's voice. The angel of the Lord stopped him and we see in this passage that Jesus, like Isaac, was willing to die in our place. But just like God spared Isaac's life, God spared Jesus' life in a sense that He was resurrected to life again 3 days later. Isaac, we know, already represents Jesus in many ways. Just like Jesus said, what we read in Luke 24, all the OT simply points to Him.

Isaac is older now and Abraham wants to find a bride for his son Isaac and he sends "his servant" who is not named to find a bride for him.

**His servant is not named because he represents the Holy Spirit, to find for his son Issac a bride.**

**We are the bride of Jesus Christ. We are the one whom God the Father looked to find as a bride for His Son Jesus Christ.**

The bride Isaac was found in a heart of serving. It's interesting because the word that was told to the servant was that "the one who offers to give you a drink of water and to give water to your camels is the one I want to become the wife of Isaac."

Sure enough, he stops at a well and there was a beautiful woman who approached him. She not only offered to fetch a drink for him but

By the way I realized as I was studying that Jesus said "I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink." He says this in His definition of who would really be entering Heaven - as He separates the sheep from the goats - as He separates those who know and love and trust Him from those who do not. Jesus says "Enter in to rest. Enter in to eternal life for I was hungry and you fed me. I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink. For whoever you did this to the least of these, you did it for Me!" WOW

This imagery is seen even in this encounter with Isaac and Rebecca.

The Spirit of God is searching for a bride!

Rebecca felt a comfort, a knowing, a LOVE for Isaac that could not be rationalized or described. She just knew she was to marry him. She could've even see Isaac, yet KNEW he was the one for her.

And that is just like us. We fall in love with Jesus before ever seeing Him!? Why the Spirit of God, the Servant, has met us and told us all about Jesus, our bridegroom!



In the text, we don't see Isaac again until she's united with her Bridegroom Isaac. In the same way, we won't see Jesus again until we're united with Him! Jesus will come at the Father's command, leaving Heaven a second time and we'll meet Him in the air. We'll have a wedding celebration like no other!

### **JESUS' INVITATION IN THE BOOK OF REVELATION / QUOTED from prophet Isaiah**

Reading the book of Revelation is so powerful. In fact, there's a blessing promised when we do! I want to read just a portion about the coming eternal reign of Jesus and the "city" in which He's built where we will enjoy His presence. Having a few people who've lost loved ones recently in our church caused me to revisit this book and the powerful imagery given about our promised land!

**Rev. 21:16-17 "I, Jesus, have sent my angel to testify to you about these things for the churches. I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star." <sup>17</sup> The Spirit and the Bride say, "Come." And let the one who hears say, "Come." And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who desires take the water of life without price.**

**Come and drink without pay.**

**Drink it. Rest in it.**

**22-26 And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. <sup>23</sup> And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb. <sup>24</sup> By its light will the nations walk, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it, <sup>25</sup> and its gates will never be shut by day—and there will be no night there. <sup>26</sup> They will bring into it the glory and the honor of the nations. <sup>27</sup> But nothing unclean will ever enter it, nor anyone who does what is detestable or false, but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life.**

### **CHAPTER 22 The River of Life**

**Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb <sup>2</sup> through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. <sup>3</sup> No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him.**

**<sup>4</sup> They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. <sup>5</sup> And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever. <sup>6</sup> And he said to me, "These words are trustworthy and true. And the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, has sent his angel to show his servants what must soon take place."**

**<sup>7</sup> "And behold, I am coming soon.**

WOW! What a picture of what is coming! Are you thirsty for something more? Do you know deep in your gut that this life simply doesn't offer what we crave? Of course you do. You and I

both do. We all have a knowing about this future reality; think about it. That's why we grieve. When we grieve the loss of someone to cancer or covid or a tragic accident, what we are saying is "this shouldn't be" We mourn and in essence are feeling "there should be a place with no cancer, no tears, no death, no mourning" and you're right. There should be and there IS. Heaven has existed long before you and I ever existed. It has always been and will always be. Jesus promised to prepare a place for us in His Father's house so we could be with Him in that paradise. Just like the Israelites journeyed through the wilderness trusting the miraculous God of their forefathers to lead them home, we too journey our way through pain, heartache and grief knowing that Jesus is leading us home to a place where there is NO MORE PAIN FOREVER! Are there miracles now? Yes! You know I believe that. But the fullness of perfection doesn't come until Jesus comes take His bride (you and me and all who've accepted His grace) home to Heaven. The kingdom of God is here and not yet. There's a city with a river of life flowing from the Lamb, JESUS! There's 12 pearl gates that remind us of the 12 tribes of Israel! There's a light at the center named JESUS and we will worship Him forever! Are you ready? Are you going when He comes?

\*For further study on Jesus' return you can read 1 Thess 4 and 5.

Isn't that powerful when vs 4 says "His name (JESUS) will be on their foreheads. Other places this is discussed is called "the seal" or the "seal of the Christ" Dr Brian Simmons said recently "Too many Christians worry too much about the mark of the beast and too little about the seal of the Christ. Put your focus on Jesus, place your mind on Jesus! Worship Jesus! Read His Word, know Him and love Him and trust me you won't be taking the mark of the beast" LOVE THAT

**God has destined you to receive His grace!**

**1 Th 5:9-11 "For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>10</sup> who died for us so that whether we are awake or asleep we might live with him. <sup>11</sup> Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.**

[\*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version\*](#). (2016). (1 Th 5:9–11). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

**We have a Heavenly Father desires that every single person receives His love and grace - a Father who wants everyone to be saved from their sin, brought into His family to "drink without pay".**

**Obedying the commands of God and becoming a moral person is not a prerequisite to salvation rather it is a byproduct of Salvation.**

Religion says you need to obey the laws of God to get approval from God. Grace says that you get approval from God by simply accepting Jesus Christ and obeying the laws of God are simply your response of gratitude. Therefore obedience isn't a prerequisite it's an overflow of a grateful heart.

John 14:23 Jesus promises "...My Father will love them and we will come to them and make our home with them."

Timothy Keller explains this same phenomenon that is so widely misunderstood by so many religious people when he said in commenting on this verse...

*"The Gospel transforms obedience to God's commands from a legalistic means of acquiring salvation to a loving response to a received salvation."*

- Timothy Keller

**LIFE - SAVER ILLUSTRATION** - *Jordan pick it up and throw it when I say*

To use our lifesaver illustration, the difference is this.

Many think "If I kick harder and swim perfectly in perfect form... If I obey God's commands, if I am a moral person then I will end up on shore - in Heaven." If I give to the local mission during the Holiday Season, that makes me a good person and being a good person gets me into heaven....

This is also the view of universalists who believe all roads lead to Heaven.

But the Gospel tells something different. The Bible teaches us that while we were still sinners Christ died for us and that the grace and forgiveness of God is given to us without any earning on our part whatsoever. This is grace, the undeserved favor of God!

Maybe you're a guest today, invited by a friend and you're wondering "well lets say I do want to be a Christian; I know my life is a wreck and I tend to make a mess of things. What do I have to do to be saved?" The answer ... NOTHING.

The Gospel says

The only "thing you have to do is repent - admit your sinful state to God and let Him forgive you. "Come and drink without pay" Jesus says!

The Gospel offends people unwilling to admit their need.

"Grace transforms people who receive it but it infuriates those who insist on proving themselves." - Pastor Ben Dailey

Remember in our story of the Prodigal Son, both boys worked.

The prodigal came home and said "I will my Father's farm" out of a motivation of gratitude.

The older brother worked out of a motivation of obligation and desire to prove himself worthy.

They were already worthy. They were sons!

Religion is when you work for what the Father has already given you.

**The Gospel given in God's Word tells you and me that Jesus did what we could not do to achieve for us something we could never earn. Jesus truly did pay it all!**

**1 Th 1:1-10 Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy, To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace. <sup>2</sup>We give thanks to God always for all of you, constantly mentioning you in our prayers, <sup>3</sup>remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>4</sup>For we know, brothers loved by God, that he has chosen you,**

**<sup>5</sup>because our gospel came to you not only in word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction. You know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake. <sup>6</sup>And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, for you received the word in much affliction, with the joy of the Holy Spirit, <sup>7</sup>so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia. <sup>8</sup>For not only has the word of the Lord sounded forth from you in Macedonia and Achaia, but your faith in God has gone forth everywhere, so that we need not say anything.**

**<sup>9</sup>For they themselves report concerning us the kind of reception we had among you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, <sup>10</sup>and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.**

We take hold of this grace given to us by God - we grab the life saver - and we are pulled to shore by a loving, saving, kind, generous, compassionate God. We simply hold on to His grace.

Our response of thankfulness is our Christianity. Christianity is simply a response to God's grace and love. It's saying "yes" the grace of God offered freely to you and me and to everyone willing to admit their need.

**We are saved by Jesus. We are being saved as the Holy Spirit teaches us what it means to follow Jesus' example. That's why our mission statement here is "Leading people to follow Jesus together."**

And one day we will be saved eternally when Father God sends Jesus for the second time to come take us Home to be with Him in Heaven. One day, Jesus will split the sky and we'll meet Him in the air and we'll be eternally saved!

### **1 John 3:2**

**"Now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known (we're still being saved) but we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." NIV**

Did you hear that? "What we will be has not yet been made known"

WOW The goodness of God that we've experienced now - the water we've drank now - is only a taste of what it is to come! We will be transformed when we see Jesus face to

face! We'll be given a new Heavenly, eternal body, like the one given to Christ, the Bible says!

"When Christ appears, we shall be like Him!" WOW!

In the Old Testament, King David speaking of this confidence in the eternal life to come said this in ...

### **Psalm 16:1,2; 5-11**

**"Preserve me, O God, for in you I take refuge.<sup>2</sup> I say to the Lord, "You are my Lord; I have no good apart from you." ... The Lord is my chosen portion and my cup; you hold my lot. The lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; indeed, I have a beautiful inheritance. I bless the Lord who gives me counsel; in the night also my heart instructs me.**

**<sup>8</sup> I have set the Lord always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be shaken. ( I AM CONFIDENT!) Therefore my heart is glad, and my whole being rejoices; my flesh also dwells secure.**

**<sup>10</sup> For you will not abandon my soul to Sheol, or let your holy one see corruption. You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore."**

*[The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Ps 16:5–11). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.*

**No one even has the money to pay for what God is offering. Money can't buy it. A degree can't deserve it. Only God can give it.**

**Remember the prodigal son and his older brother?**

**BOTH need the grace of the Father.**

**BOTH were given the same love.**

**One realized his need for the Father's goodness and although he messed up, became grateful and full of joy. The older brother was mad and stayed mad, insisting on proving himself. One way you know you're sliding into an "older brother" religious funk is when you are slow to celebrate someone's victory. If someone celebrates something online or in person in front of you, how quick are you to celebrate with them? If you, without thinking, are like "YES! Bro so happy for you!" That's a sign you're walking in grace. If you're like "That good stuff never happens to me." There's a problem. There's an**

**older brother syndrome creeping into your heart. Let's let grace get that out today.**

## **ALTAR CALL**

**Play "Resting In Grace" on Instrumental W.M.V. 4**

**Everyone bow their heads and close your eyes with me? USHERS, "DIM" the lights to the "DIM" setting please.**

There's two segments to this response time.

**FOR PRODIGALS:**

The first one is for those of you who've never received the free gift of God – salvation. If you've never received Jesus Christ as Your savior and you'd like to make that decision today to be forgiven and to start living for Him, I'd like you just meet with one of our trusted leaders on our prayer team in the back of the room. In the back of the room, we have prayer team leaders who would love to walk you through making that decision to follow Jesus Christ.

I'm not gonna pressure you nor try to convince you ... the Holy Spirit will do that. In fact, if your heart is about to beat out of your chest, that's not the lighting nor the music, it's the Holy Spirit calling your name. It's Jesus Himself knocking on the door of your heart – wanting to come in and be your Savior and your closest friend. If that's you, just meet with one of our prayer team members in the back.

**FOR BELIEVERS:**

The second part of this altar call is for those of you who are just in the Rat Race, on the hamster wheel, running and running and running and you're just plain tired. If today, you realized that you've been trying to earn God's love or if you realize that you just need to stop worrying and start resting in His unfailing love, then why don't you just take some time right now to talk to God and tell Him how you feel. Make a commitment to God that from this day forward, you'll learn to be content in any and every situation, that you'll learn to be thankful and at ease – filled with joy – just KNOWING that you are HIS child. Make it a prayer – ask God to help you relax in His love. Take some time to talk to Him right at your seat or here at the altar.

## **WEEK THREE: So Go & Tell Them!**

*Matthew 28:18-20*

The expectation of Jesus was for His followers to actively go into the world with one goal, to make more disciples. He has all authority in heaven and on earth, and He has given it to us. This command is not optional, it is expected. So, go.

*Acts 1:6-8*

The Lord of the Harvest is bringing His kingdom to earth. The time when this will fully be a reality is not for us to know, but we have a part to play in its arrival. Through the Holy Spirit, we have received power to go and announce the Kingdom of God through our words and our actions. We are to go from places that are near to places that are far away to change the world.

## **WEEK THREE: The Good News**

**Your message should sound “beautiful” even if everyone doesn’t receive it. Beautiful Feet**

*Romans 10:13-17*

The gospel is truly good news for all who have ears to hear. But how can people respond to this good news without it being presented to them? The people of God must be willing to be sent. Those who share this gospel are world changers and beautiful for their loving service.