

Being God's People In Today's World



Overview

- Week 1 Establish our response to God's plan for humanity
- Week 2 Examine NT snapshots of offering grace and love to others
- Week 3 Examine contemporary case studies to be faithful to God's plan and live with grace and love to others

Aim for this class series:

To help OC engage a turbulent culture with faithfulness and grace.

Aim for today:

To describe how we can live with grace in the world.

A night-time photograph of the Nashville skyline, Tennessee, USA. The image shows several prominent skyscrapers and buildings, many of which are illuminated with lights. The lights from the buildings and streetlights are reflected in the water in the foreground. The sky is dark blue, and the overall scene is a vibrant cityscape at night. The text "Being God's People In Today's World" is overlaid on the right side of the image in a large, white, serif font. Below it, the text "Faithful to His Will" is also overlaid in a smaller, white, serif font.

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Faithful to His Will

Review

Responding Faithfully to the Will of God

- Turbulence and brokenness seem to be everywhere in the world today.
- The will of God is sovereign.
- As God's people we must remain faithful.
- Our faithfulness is our witness to the world.

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Snapshot #1: The Samaritan Woman at the Well

John 4:1-26

- Jesus reaches across discriminatory cultural norms by talking to a person who is a woman and a Samaritan.
- Jesus treats the woman with grace and kindness.

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Snapshot #2: The Woman Caught in Adultery

John 7:53-8:11

- The teachers of the law and Pharisees are using this woman's situation to trap Jesus.
- Jesus shifts the conversation to the more egregious offense of the Pharisees' leveraging their own moral superiority over the woman as a tool to condemn her and to attack Jesus.

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Snapshot #2: The Woman Caught in Adultery

John 7:53-8:11

- Jesus responds with grace to the woman and with harshness to the Pharisees (see John 8:42-47).
- Jesus offers forgiveness to the woman, which means her sin isn't tolerated but necessitates forgiveness.
- Jesus lovingly calls her to a life of holiness.

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Discussion

What similarities do we see in these first two snapshots?

How can the church better embody the grace of Jesus when we interact with the world today?

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Snapshot #3: Jerusalem Council

Acts 15:1-6, 22-29

- The council's decision ultimately reinterprets their understanding of the scriptural requirement for circumcision.
- When faced with a difficult issue, the church gathered to listen, engage with one another, discuss and dialogue.

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Snapshot #3: Jerusalem Council

Acts 15:1-6, 22-29

- After much discussion, they say, “it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us...” This communal discernment process led them to offer grace to the Gentiles.

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Snapshot #4: Paul in Athens

Acts 17:16-23

Paul wins some in Athens by:

- Listening

- Beginning with those closest to him

- Accepting their invitation

- Appreciating their position

- Meeting them where they are

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Discussion

What are the key ingredients to a healthy communal discernment process?

How can the church use Paul's strategy to offer grace to the world? When has the church done this well historically? When have we struggled?

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Snapshot Trends

- We do not want to reflect the pharisaical practice of claiming moral superiority over others.
- Listening well to others is a prerequisite to being heard.
- Forgiveness and grace always trump legalism.
- We should not erect barriers for those turning to God.
(Acts 15:19)
- God's truth remains intact.

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Conclusion

We are called to offer love and grace to the world around us.

Our witness to the world is limited by our ability to show love and grace.

A night-time photograph of the Nashville skyline, featuring several illuminated skyscrapers and buildings. The lights from the buildings and streetlights are reflected in a body of water in the foreground. The sky is a deep blue, and the overall scene is vibrant and modern.

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Faithful to His Will