



YOU: Connect. Grow. Serve. Go!
Winter 2017-2018 Midweek/ Sermon Starter

Unit 2: Spiritual Check Up

Sermon Series Title: Grow Up: A Look At Spiritual Maturity

Sermon 3: Giving Grace

Bible Passage: Galatians 6:1-2,7-10

Introduction

On April 15, 1947 Jackie Robinson broke the racial barrier in Major League Baseball by becoming the first African-American to play in the league. Unfortunately, Robinson experienced hostile jeering crowds at every game. One afternoon during one game, Robinson committed an error—this time bobbling an easy grounder that could have cost his team the inning. The entire stadium, without surprise ridiculed Robinson mercilessly. Robinson stood there humiliated listening to the fans jeering and booing him, shouting every racial slur imaginable. Suddenly, something remarkable happened. Robinson's white teammate Pee Wee Reese, who ironically played the same position as Robinson, came over and stood next to him. Silently without saying a word, Pee Wee Reese put his arm around Robinson and faced the crowd—daring them to heap the abuse on him, instead of his teammate. Gradually a hush came over the entire stadium, and the fans grew quiet.

That day, Jackie Robinson experienced grace.

Background/Context

Paul wrote to the church at Galatia to encourage believers to become more sympathetic to each other's struggles. He adamantly admonished all of us to practice grace-giving during moments of error—hence, displaying spiritual maturity.

**A. The Recipients of Grace
(Gal. 6:1)**

Paul commenced Galatians 6 with an immediate appeal. He wrote, "brothers and sisters, if someone is overtaken in any wrongdoing, you who are spiritual, restore such a person with a gentle spirit" (Gal. 6:1a). Here, Paul exposed a significant truth: Sometimes believers make mistakes—no one is perfect—everyone needs grace. In fact, Paul argued, "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23).

Paul used a phrase to punctuate this claim. Paul wrote, "if someone is overtaken in any wrongdoing." *Wrong doing* here denotes, a sin, misdeed, fault, fall, or offense. It also indicates a lapse or deviation from truth and uprightness. It literally paints the picture of someone who has either unintentionally or willfully fallen and has hit rock bottom.

I imagine that Paul penned this plea from a very personal perspective. Paul knew what it meant to live a life in error—Paul knew what it meant to participate in “wrong doing”. Therefore, Paul petitioned the hearts of the community to seek restoration instead of retribution.

Why extend grace? Paul not only commanded us to give grace but Paul offered a caution as well. Paul wrote, “watching out for yourselves so that you also won’t be tempted” (Gal. 6:1b). Paul wanted us to recognize that no one is excluded from temptation. We are reminded that we all are susceptible to wiles of the world. Moreover, we may never know when we might require the rendering of grace.

Application Point: Who needs grace in your life right now? How can you do a better job of ensuring that grace is extended to those individuals? Take time to assess the people who need to experience grace in your life and do your part to help them experience true restoration.

B. The Reason for Grace (Gal. 6:2)

Paul continued his appeal for grace-giving by adding more expectations for the believers. Paul wrote, “carry one another’s burdens” (Galatians 6:2). Here, Paul urged us to carry each other’s heaviness and trouble. Therefore, Paul’s appeal is two-fold: restore and carry.

In the first place, Paul urged us to give grace by restoring people. Here, *restore* means to strengthen someone by mending, repairing, and putting back in order, that which has been broken. Paul also urged us to give grace by carrying each other’s burdens. It is difficult to carry the burdens of judgment when you have been broken by your own blunders. Here, Paul offered the reason for grace. We give grace because sin has a way of breaking people. However, believers should be in the business of building people.

Notice Paul’s words, “you who are spiritual, restore” and “carry one another’s burdens.” Beloved, giving grace to guilty people requires a certain measure of spiritual maturity. Spiritual maturity is not measured by spiritual gifts; spiritual maturity is measured by the presence of fruit of the Spirit. And the fruit of the Spirit is love.

So, why should we practice spiritual maturity by giving grace to guilty people? Paul explained, “in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ” (Gal. 6:2). 1 Peter 4:8 reminds us that “love covers a multitude of sins.” And Solomon reminds us, “hatred stirs up conflicts, but love covers all offenses” (Prov. 10:12).

Application Point: Why do you think God allows us to see people in their weakness? How do you react when you learn about the shortcomings of others? Remember, God strategically allows us to see people during their weakness because God trusts that we will cover them and help restore them.

C. The Reciprocity of Grace

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(Gal. 6:7-10)

Paul concluded with these words: “therefore, as we have opportunity, let us work for the good of all, especially for those who belong to the household of faith” (Gal. 6:10). Paul was persistent in his unrelenting pursuit to establish grace-giving among the Christians in Galatia.

Paul presented his final reason for grace-giving. He wrote, “whatever a person sows he will also reap” (Gal. 6:7). Paul introduced the reciprocity of grace. He taught believers about the importance of sowing grace to gain eligibility for grace. In good judgment Paul invites all of us to consider what we sow to people everyday. Paul wanted believers to recognize that grace is always given reciprocally. Jesus confirms this notion with these words, “Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven. Give, and it will be given to you; a good measure—pressed down, shaken together, and running over—will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you” (Luke 6:37-38). According to Jesus, everything we release will eventually be returned to us.

Again, Paul made it clear that no one is perfect—we all make mistakes. So, why do we give grace? Beloved, we give grace because we need grace. More importantly, we give grace because God always extends grace to us.

Application Point: How has grace helped you recover from major mistakes? How productive would you be if you received the same amount of grace that you give to others? Remember, we reap what we sow. Therefore, make sure you always give grace because you never know when you will need to receive grace.