



Ice Breaker

- Where is your dream vacation?
- What does your dream home look like and where is it located?
- Who is your dream dinner guest and what are you cooking for them?

Open in Prayer

Message Review

Throughout this series we have talked at length about diligence. Pastor Ron used the ant, spider, and rock badger as examples of what is wise as described in the Bible.

There are traits that God looks at in the earth and considers to be wise to have and diligence is one of those main traits. Diligence is doing a little thing for a long time until something big happens. Most of your life's success will be doing a little thing for a long time until something big happens. Investing in a college fund is a great example: You put fifty dollars, or one hundred dollars, in that fund each week and in eighteen years you have thousands of dollars in that college fund ready to go for when it's time. That is your breakthrough. We will dig in a little more regarding diligence. Let's get ready to breakdown the message.

Let's Talk About It!

Read James 2:14-24

There is a great contention in the church across America. There is a tension between grace and truth. The Bible says that The Word in heaven became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld The Glory, which is the Son of God full of grace and truth. That is Jesus. We have basically created two kinds of churches: one church that only talks about grace and the other that only talks about truth. There are some people that say don't judge me and they want you to just affirm their lifestyle and anything they do. They want you to not judge them and just be gracious to them. As a result, there are churches that affirm their lifestyle and say come as you are God loves you as you are. As much as those two statements are true, grace never leaves you as you are. Grace always takes you and changes you. Grace is not just the power to be saved, grace is the power to change. It is correct that salvation is free. It is a gift from God that you can do whatever you want with; therefore, we have people that mistreat, misuse, and abuse that gift of salvation. So, what do you need to be saved? It is by grace that we have been saved not of works so no man should boast. Truth, however, is what flows out of grace. Jesus is not just grace He is grace and truth. So now we have truth churches. We have churches that hold a standard that they believe is God's standard. If you don't meet that standard, they don't welcome you.

They can be judgmental, legalistic, rigid, and not operate in grace.

These are two different kinds of churches with two different kinds of mindsets, and they tend to be in contention with one another. God is not just grace and God is not just truth. He sent His Word, Jesus, who is full of grace and truth. He's full of forgiveness, and accepting you just the way you are, but He also says go and sin no more, like He did for the adulteress woman in the Bible. We have one church that possesses the grace of "we accept you and forgive you", but they lack the "go and sin no more" part. Then we have the other church that says "don't sin, don't sin", but they don't know what to do when a sinner comes in and needs grace. I'm here to tell you that church is supposed to be both. We are supposed to allow anyone in that needs a touch from God. Jesus didn't come to save the righteous. He came to seek and save the lost. At the same time, He is the God of righteousness, justice, and truth. There is a standard and He leads you in the path of righteousness. Just like you've been touched by grace; grace has an overflow that makes you want to conduct yourself in a different way than before you met Jesus. It makes you want different friends, different environment and activities, different things that you watch, listen to and represent. After you find salvation, that grace makes you different and you want God to use you.

Faith without "works" is dead. James said I will show you my faith by my works, but he did not say that his works saved him. He said that the natural outer workings of his faith become his conduct, behavior, and his lifestyle. We are to accept anybody, including the homosexual for example, because everyone is welcome in the house of God. The "grace" is allowing them in the church to hear the Word of God, the "truth" is them listening to the Word of God and the results are between them and God. They have to work out their own salvation

with fear and trembling with God. It's not one or the other, it's both because grace and truth work together.

Faith without works means that faith without a corresponding action is dead faith. If you have faith for a house, then you are going to go home and start cleaning your credit for that house. Your "works" and your faith need to work together and not contradict one another for it to work. You can't have faith to get out of debt, but then book a Caribbean cruise on your credit card. We believe for God to do different things in our lives, but we don't ever take action. You have to believe God for something in your life (faith) then there needs to be physical movement (an action taken) that will get the ball rolling in the direction of what you're having faith for in your life. If you want your marriage to be better and thrive. What actions are you going to put on the heels of your faith that are going to move you towards that direction? You have to work your faith.

*What is grace and what does Grace ultimately produce in an individual?
How do Grace and Truth work together?
What does faith without works is dead mean?
How do we apply that in our lives?*

Read Luke 13:1-9

The fact that you have believed and accepted Jesus in your heart and confessed that He is the son of God, doesn't really mean that you have repented. It means you have been forgiven. The Bible says that Godly sorrow works repentance. People who come up broken for the way that they have spent their life, regretful of their sins and time lost and come to God for grace and restoration, those are the people who have sorrow that works repentance. Not those that come up and say the prayer because others are doing it and don't mean it. Repentance is not a prayer. Repentance is change. James says all perish unless they change. You can be saved but if you don't change, something is always deteriorating in your life. Just because you got saved, doesn't mean that your mind is renewed. Just because you got saved doesn't mean that you can, for example, change your marriage, who you are as a person, or your tempter. Your new found faith, however, if you were really broken enough when you came to God, will demand repentance, change, works, grace and truth.

Some of us understand the grace of God. We also understand God and Jesus as your shepherd, but you don't know the businessman of God. Jesus was not raised in the home of a preacher. He was raised in the home of a businessman. John the Baptist was raised in the home of a preacher because his father was a priest. He was out in the world telling everyone to repent because the Kingdom of God was coming. He was the forerunner of Jesus who announced the coming revival that Jesus was going to bring. But it was Jesus, the son of a businessman, that brought the revival. Two percent of Christians get paid by the church. Ninety eight percent get paid in the marketplace. The people that are going to bring a revival are not going to be the ones on stages. It's going to be the ones that God put behind enemy lines, the world, and you are going to bring a great wealth transfer into the Kingdom. You are going to bring souls into the

Kingdom. That is the way the Kingdom is supposed to work. We are kings and priests unto our God. That two percent on a stage have a priestly anointing, but those marketplace kings have a kingly anointing and it's the kings that have to bring the revival. All I can do is foretell it and give them hope, as a pastor, because the prophets prophesy and the priest foretell. But it's you, kings who work in the marketplace, that are going to bring the revival and demonstrate it with souls and the world's wealth.

For those of you that are just "grace" people, here comes the truth. For those of you that are just "faith" people, here comes works. Jesus comes back to hold the tree accountable, in James, because He has made a significant investment in that tree. God will hold you accountable with what you have been given. There are some of us that are chronic complainers, and you need to know that there are people who have less in their lives that have done more. There are people who have had worse treatment and experienced worse lives that have complained less.

What are you doing with what God has given you? If you have been given a gift, and an anointing by God, He will hold you accountable with what you have done with that gift and anointing. God's going to come back and see how much fruit you are bearing with that gift because He invested in you. It says in verse 7 that He came back to the same tree after three years and instructed for it to be cut down because it was not bearing fruit. We are not used to a "cut it down" God. We are in Wisdom Society here. We are talking about diligence, being accountable, understanding that there are standards in God that He will hold us accountable to. Yes, He loves you, forgives you and accepts you, but then He expects you to walk in the paths of righteousness that He laid out. He expects you to serve in the Kingdom of God with the things He has put in you. I will be held accountable, as a pastor, at whether I came in here lazy, or with passion. I will be held accountable for whether I had something to say, how I pastored you, and how I used these moments. I don't want to be a church and people that run from His accountability. I want to be so fruitful that I embrace it.

God is looking at the tree and saying why is it using up the ground? I've invested in food, water, nutrition, ground, laborers, and labor to this tree. It is just a taker. It takes, but it never gives. It's using up space and I could have put another tree in its spot that would have done more. Cut it down. In Luke 19 Jesus also talks about the one who buried his talent and did nothing with it. He said take from the one who has one talent and give it to the one who has ten. In other words, God said I'm going to put my stuff in the hands of the people that value it and know what to do with it.

Imagine this conversation is between justice and mercy. Justice says this tree has been given plenty of time, investment and been given everything it needs to produce, but it still hasn't. Get it out of here and let me put a tree in its place that will produce. That is the voice of truth and justice. It is justified for me to expect fruitfulness from something I made so great an investment. The voice of mercy, however, comes in and says give me one year. I still believe this tree has potential, even though we haven't seen it. I believe there is fruitful life inside this tree. Grace and mercy are not the same. Grace is giving you what you don't deserve. Mercy, is that you deserved it, but God didn't let it hit you. He stepped in between you and it and let it hit Him. He let the blood of your consequences be absorbed in his mercy. This tree has justice coming and after three years of taking, justice says it needs to be removed, but mercy slides in and says give it another chance. I believe it can be fruitful. I love it when God is ready to hold

us accountable and mercy comes in between us and what we deserve and says give them another chance, another cycle, another season. There are some of us here that God should have come down and held us accountable, but mercy was working on our behalf and gave us another chance. That is when justice backs off.

The remedy of the keeper of the vineyard was to cultivate the soil. He dug around the tree, took the hard soil, and flipped it over, and brought the rich soil up to the surface. He disrupted it as he mixed and moved around the soil. The answer for lack of production and diligence by the vineyard keeper was instability. The tree was in an easy mode: It wasn't doing anything, it was comfortable, hard, and just sitting there sucking everything up. As a result, the vineyard keeper said let me create instability in its surroundings.

And you were wondering what was happening in your life. You thought God forgot about you and left you. All God was doing with the friends that walked out of your life was creating instability. All God was doing with the job that laid you off was creating instability. All God was doing with what happened in your family was creating instability. Why? Because when you create instability in the soil, the roots have to move and go deeper. They have to move into the next level to find a new level of nutrition that will feed the trunk and move onto the branches and create fruit. The answer to the tree that would not produce is to create instability around it so that roots can go deeper. Then the vineyard keeper said I'll fertilize it. That is animal dung. Creating instability and putting animal dung on the tree was showing it mercy. You got some bad things showing instability in your environment, that's the alternative to God cutting you down. That was the alternative to God saying this one is going to be unfruitful, cut him down and let Me get someone else here that will know what to do with that opportunity.

There are people that are weathering and are feeling great instability in their lives. There are others of you that have been experiencing great barrenness; you haven't experienced fruitfulness in a long while. God will minister to both of you today. Wherever you are and whatever is happening in your life, there is purpose behind it. God can create instability and God can create disruption because He has your overall fruitfulness in mind.

What does it mean to repent?

What does repentance ultimately produce in someone that has truly repented?

Does being saved mean that you automatically are a different person? Explain.

What is the difference between Grace and mercy?

What gifts and anointings has God given you?

Have you been fruitful in your gifts and how will God hold you accountable in those gifts?

Is God loving you and accepting you enough or will God expect more from you? If so, what is it?

What does justice say in regard to fruitfulness and how does mercy respond?

What is the answer for lack of production and diligence by the vineyard keeper?

What is the point of instability and what is it supposed to cause in your life?

Prayer Focus and Requests

Ask your members if they have any prayer requests or praise reports. Encourage one another to stir up your faith and pray BIG prayers this week and expect God to blow your mind with His answers.