

Matthew's house, He's invited Matthew to follow Him and then Jesus says out loud, I'm sure within the hearing of everybody who is very quiet at this moment on hearing this, Jesus actually said, "Tell the guys outside, it's not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick."

Matthew is thinking, "Wait, wait, wait. Jesus, I mean, you're my guest. Are you saying I'm sick?" To which Jesus would have said, "Yes, you're stealing from your people, you're sick, but I still want you to follow Me." It's like, what? "Yes, Matthew, I wonder how this unsettled everyone, because if you want somebody to follow you, you should ask people who are like you to follow you, you don't ask people who are unlike you to follow you, unless they decide they're gonna be like you.

You've asked someone who is nothing like you to follow you. You're messing up all the categories." And I think Jesus would just smile.

And then Jesus said, "Oh yeah, by the way, tell the Pharisees outside the following. Tell them this." And this was so offensive, "Go and learn," whenever you tell the smartest person in the world, in the room, to go and learn, you've offended them. You need to go learn something you don't know that I know." I think everybody in the room chuckled, because they knew this was such a dig at the learned, the teachers of the law, "Tell the Pharisees, to go and learn what this means." And then He quotes from

their own Scripture, the law and the prophets that they're supposed to be the experts in, "Go tell them to learn what this means, I desire mercy, not sacrifice, for I have not come to call the righteous." Then perhaps He swept His hand around the room and said, "But sinners. I'm not afraid to call a sinner a sinner. And I'm not afraid to go to their house for dinner."

What a beautiful story of Grace as we see it lived out in these unsettling relationships. Does anyone have unsettling relationships? Today Jesus invites us, sinners and Pharisees, to bring his grace and truth into

1 December 2019

## THE UNSETTLING SOLUTION for just about Everything—1



Here's a thought; why wouldn't everybody want Christianity to be true? Maybe not the version other people grew up with or maybe not the version that you grew up with, maybe not Christianity the way we've made it, or what we've turned it into, but I don't know why everybody wouldn't want the original version to be true, Jesus irresistible version to be true. There's a big difference between "I don't believe it's true" and "I don't want it to be true."

Christianity, in its earliest original form, was so extraordinarily attractive that I don't understand why people in modern times wouldn't want it to be true, even if intellectually they can't actually get there, because Jesus was attractive. People were attracted to Jesus. Early Christianity was attractive, and the thing

that makes Christianity so attractive, at least the original version, is a single word. It's the word that makes me want it to be true. But perhaps it's a word that wasn't in the equation for you. And the word is 'GRACE'. Grace is what we... This is what we all have in common. Grace is what we crave most when our guilt is exposed?

In that moment, even if maybe you didn't think of the word, what you're looking for is grace. You are looking for someone to give something to you or extend something to you that you know you don't deserve.

Grace, is at the same time, this is the flip side and this is why there's so much tension, grace is what we're hesitant to extend when confronted with the guilt of other people. Especially when they've hurt me, or even more so when they've

hurt someone I love, and therein lies the tension that grace, when we're on the receiving end, is extraordinarily refreshing, but grace, when it's required of us, is extraordinarily disturbing. It is, in fact, as we're gonna see, as you think about how this settles in on your relationships, your good ones and your bad ones, and the ones that you're trying to repair, or the relationship that someone's trying to repair with you, that grace really is the unsettling solution for just about everything.

Here's our definition for the next few weeks. It's simply undeserved, unearned, unearnable, favour. It's someone leaning in your direction when they should lean away. It's someone that you know you should pursue because you've hurt them, and they

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**Christ Church Lutheran**

Worship Times - 9.00am & 10.45am  
Pastor: Tim 0427326553



Jesus' disciples multiplying disciples

actually initiate the conversation.

But grace is strange. You can no more deserve grace than you can plan your own surprise party. If you plan your own surprise party, the fact that you planned it voids the surprise, and the moment you think you deserve grace, you've actually voided the grace.

You can ask for grace, you can beg for grace, you can plead with someone to extend grace to you, but the minute you think you deserve it, it's no longer grace.

And then, here's the additional twist to the whole conversation. We can't recognize... This is so important for many of us. We can't recognize or receive grace for what it actually is until we're convinced we don't deserve it. You can't even recognize or experience grace for what it is until you come to the place, and I come to the place that I actually don't deserve it. It can only be experienced within the context of a relationship.

Grace is purely relational. It's always tied to a relationship.

Grace can only be experienced in the context of a relationship... Ready for this? Where there is an imbalance, and you are on the negative side of the ledger because of your behaviour. And this is what makes

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### GRACE: Undeserved, Unearned, Unearnable Favour.

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Christianity so unique. This is what makes the story of Christianity so unique and so attractive. This is the reason that even if you never get to the place intellectually where you can believe it's true, this is why everybody should want it to be true. And this is why God had to show up. Because grace is 100% relational, and you can't experience or understand grace apart from a relationship.

This is why God had to show up. This is why we

celebrate the way we do at Christmas. We would have never known the grace of God without and apart from the presence of God. For God's grace to be seen, for God's grace to be known, there had to be a person. It had to be personal. It is the message of Christmas.

Here's a relationship story from Jesus life

which displays grace at work. Jesus and his Apostles and the crowd that followed Jesus everywhere went through an intersection and they

had to stop and face down a tax gatherer. And after they did their business Jesus leans in and He says, "Levi or Matthew, hey I want you to follow Me." To which all of the apostles that were with Him were like, "No, not him. He's a tax... He's a traitor. I mean even his family won't have him over. What do mean follow? He's not gonna be a part of our thing."

But Jesus said; "Matthew, I want you to follow Me." And there's no

indication that Matthew decided not to be a tax gatherer anymore, he just got up and had one of the subordinates take over whatever he was doing and he decided to follow Jesus. And Peter and all the guys are stepping back like, "This is not gonna go well for us, okay. We're gonna lose the crowd."

And Matthew says, "Okay I'll follow you.

Where are we going?" And then Jesus said something that offended everybody that could

hear. He said, "Matthew we're gonna go to your house." And Peter's like, "Oh I'm not gonna go to his house." And Jesus said, "Yes you are 'cause you're following Me too. We are all going to his house." Wait a minute, wait. He's a tax gatherer. You haven't even asked him to repent. You haven't even asked him to give back the money he's stolen. You're just gonna ask him to follow us, just like that, and go to his house?

This is the most awkward moment ever. They go to his house and Matthew invites his tax gatherer friends because Jesus says, "I wanna have a dinner. I want you to invite your friends." And Matthew's thinking, "Okay, you're not gonna like my friends. Because my friends are nothing like You and You're nothing like my friends

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### Grace is Relational

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and they're not gonna like You and You're not gonna like them." So Matthew gathers all of his friends and all of his friends are all the wrong people. And then there sits Peter with a bad attitude and Andrew's with a bad attitude. All a bit weird and unsettling.

So there's Jesus the Rabbi in the house of Matthew the tax gatherer. The whole thing is so ridiculously awkward and unsettling because that's the nature of grace. It is

the unsettling solution to just about everything, but it is unsettling.

Then the Pharisees who are the protectors of the truth, when the Pharisees saw this they asked His disciples, why does Jesus eat with tax collectors and sinners? He should be eating... If He's a Rabbi, if He's a representative of God, He

should be eating with us."

I'm sure whoever delivered the message delivered it out loud so Matthew

and his friends could hear to shame them, "My friend, the Pharisees outside, the leaders from the Temple have come. And Jesus they wanna know why are You eating with this rabble, why are You here with tax gatherers and sinners?" And then Jesus, I think answers equally as loud. "Don't call Matthew and his friends, sinners that may hurt their feelings."

Then Jesus makes an awkward situation even more awkward. He's at