

The Miracle of a Generous Heart Week Four - Falling Into Grace

Texts: 1 Timothy 6:6-19; Philippians 2:1-15; 2 Corinthians 9:12-15

Welcome to week four of our series, The Miracle of a Generous Heart. My name is Clay West and I am the Minister of Small Groups here at University Heights Baptist Church. Today we are going to be talking about "Falling Into Grace" and how grace affects the way that we give, the way that we are generous, and the way that we live our lives. It's going to be a good day.

Falling into Grace, this great, indescribable gift that God gives us. Today we're going to let the Word speak for itself. It's the best thing to just read a lot of Scripture and really let the Holy Spirit speak to us. So we're going to be reading some lengthy passages today. The first is going to come from 1 Timothy 6. So if you have your Bibles, turn there with me. 1 Timothy 6:6. "But godliness actually is a means of great gain when accompanied by contentment. For we have brought nothing into the world. So we cannot take anything out of it either. If we have food and covering, with these, we shall be content. But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires, which plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs. But flee from these things, you man of God (woman of God), and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance and gentleness. Fight the good fight of faith; take hold of the eternal life, to which you were called, and you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses. I charge you in the presence of God who gives life to all things and of Christ Jesus, who testified the good confession before Pontius Pilate, that you keep the commandment, without stain or reproach until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, which He will bring about at the proper time. He who is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings, and Lord of lords, who alone possesses immortality and dwells in unapproachable light, who no man has seen or can see. To him be honor and eternal dominion. Amen. Instruct those who are rich in this present world not to be conceited or to fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly supplies us, with all things to enjoy. Instruct them to do good, to be rich in good works, and to be generous and ready to share, storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that, which is life." Indeed, this goes back a little bit to what we talked about last week: being satisfied, being content, not chasing after the things of the world, but trusting God to provide the way He says He would. This is the HOW. Warn those who are rich among you. Remember, that's pretty much all of us! Warn those not to be tied up in the things of the world, but to rather pursue the things of God. And that's where the WHY comes in. We find the why in Philippians. So turn over to Philippians 2. We're going to start reading in verse one. This great exhortation from Paul, for us to be like Jesus, to be like the one that we're following. Philippians 2. "Therefore, if there is any encouragement in Christ, if there is any consolation of love, if there is any Fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and compassion, make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love united spirits, intent on one purpose (this is the One Love we talked about before). Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important

than yourselves. Do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others, have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although he existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bondservant, and being made in the likeness of men. Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. For this reason, also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation, with fear and trembling. For it is God who isn't working you both to will and to work for His good pleasure. Do all things without grumbling or disputing; so that you will prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world, holding fast to the word of life. Wow. The WHY. Why are we to hold on to the things of God, and not on to the things of the earth? Because Jesus, who could have held on, who was in the very form God, who had all authority and power, did not consider that something to be held on to but rather, gave of himself. For us, we have this indescribable gift of grace. So the question is, friends, what are we to do with that? When we live in this world, we are to be in this world, not of it. We know we're foreigners here. This is a temporary home. But we are to be in it. And when we're in it, do we chase after the things of the world only? Do we grasp onto those things and hold on to them and count them as valuable? Or do we do like Jesus did and empty ourselves out to other people, show grace to other people by the way that we love them, by the way that we generously lavish what we have to help them to meet needs that exist. How do we show grace, by the way that we live? By being generous. We are supposed to abound in gracious work. We are supposed to be a model of grace. And in fact, the world will know that we are His disciples by the way we love each other, by the way that we are gracious to one another. This is how the world will really know. We are His disciples, by the way we are gracious to each other. We are His disciples by the way we are gracious to them, by the way that we love them, by the way that we serve them, by the way that we exhibit generosity to them. James says that faith without action is not really faith. Our faith is to be worked out. Our salvation is to be worked out. It's supposed to be evidence of grace in our life. So I ask you, have you been exhibiting grace in your own life? Are people looking at you and saying, they aren't like the rest of the people that I know. There's something unique about them. 2 Corinthians 9:12-15. Richard is gonna touch on this passage in our series, but I just wanted to read this section, because it relates to what we're talking about today. "For the ministry of this service is not only fully supplying the needs of the saints, but it's also overflowing through many thanksgivings to God, because of the proof given by this ministry. They will glorify God for your obedience to your confession of the gospel of Christ, and for the liberality of your contribution, and to all, while they also by prayer on your behalf, yearn for you, because of the surpassing grace of God in you. Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift." We know that grace is not something we earn. We don't earn our salvation by being good people or being morally right, or anything like that. It is a gift of God that is freely given for us to receive. Therefore, we need to live gracious lives through gracious living. Gracious living, by definition, is an outworking of our faith. So when we exhibit the things of

Christ, the characteristics of Christ of love, sacrifice and generosity, we are working out our faith. This outworking of our faith is the indescribable gift of God in our life, of the grace of Christ in us. So, as you break into your discussion groups, I would like you to consider this thought: How am I exhibiting this indescribable gift that I've received not by just the way that I give my money to the church, whether I tithe, give above a tithe, don't even give, or just give what I can, but by investing in the lives of people? How do you show grace, mercy and love to the world so that they might know that you're a child of God?

Discussion Questions

1. Paul doesn't call money the root of all evil, but rather "the love of money". Has money ever been an idol in your life? If so, how did you learn to love God more than money?
2. How do we hold onto the things of Christ and simultaneously live open handed?
3. What is the greatest gift you have ever received, other than grace? What made it so special?
4. Encourage open discussion on this statement: The way we live our life directly corresponds with what we believe about God.
5. We give generously, not just financially, for many reasons. We know this type of generosity can be used by the Holy Spirit to draw the world to Christ, but how does it also edify the saints?