

## ICE BREAKER

When is a time you were honest and vulnerable? How did it go?

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What part of the message was most encouraging to you? What part do you find challenging?
2. What did You notice about God in the passage? What did you notice about yourself and other people in it?

## GOSPEL EXCHANGE (REDEMPTIVE WORK)

*Jesus asks us to give Him our burdens (Matthew 11:28-29), whatever they may be (a lie we have believed about God or ourselves, our hurt or negative emotions, or even our concerns for loved ones), so He can carry them for us and give us His peace (wholeness and completeness) in exchange.*

What do you want to exchange with Jesus today?

What is the burden? “Lord Jesus, I give you my...”

What’s His gift? “Lord Jesus, I receive your...”

## ACTION QUESTIONS

1. What is one step of obedience you can take this week, based on what you’ve learned today? *(NOTE – You might consider stopping and prayerfully asking God to answer this question for you, taking 30-45 seconds to listen in silence for an answer, then write it down.)*
2. During the coming week, who is someone with whom you can share what you learned today? *(NOTE – Consider repeating the same step with this question as the previous question.)*



## Sermon Study - Conversation Guide

September 3, 2023

“The Extravagance of God’s Grace”

Ephesians 1:1-4

This guide is a discipleship tool for personal reflection, family conversations, for home groups, and for Table Talk on Sundays @10:40 on the Lowell Patio

Coastal Community Church  
mycoastal.org

**NOTES: The Extravagance of God's Grace (Ephesians 1:1-4)**  
**Pastor Andy Rock**

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We start the book of Ephesians today, and we'll spend the fall working to understand God's extravagant grace, His profound and constant mercy, our identity in Christ, and the power and position we have as God's children, filled with the Holy Spirit, and showered with God's favor.

What about the recipients of this letter? They were Jews and Gentiles, the religious and non-religious, who were brought together as a family of faith. Yet they had different backgrounds and argued constantly about how to live out their faith. They lived in one of the largest cities in the eastern Roman Empire, Ephesus, a city that worshipped money, and especially sex, in a huge temple dedicated to Artemis, the goddess of fertility. Knowing all this, Paul starts his letter to them in this way...

**1:1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, to God's holy people in Ephesus, the faithful in Christ Jesus: 2 Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.**

Paul lived and worked in Ephesus for two years, helping establish the church there. His story of becoming an apostle was simply miraculous. Paul didn't choose Jesus, Jesus chose Paul when he was known as Saul, the famous Jewish rabbi who was dedicated to using violence to stomp out the Jews who loved and worshipped Jesus as their Messiah and God. Jesus literally knocked Paul off his horse by the Holy Spirit and revealed to Paul what he was doing.

This is the first thing you need to know about your life. God chooses you, not when you're at your best, but when you're at your worst. God chooses you and keeps on choosing you, through seasons of victory, seasons of grief, and seasons of rebellion. This is grace. Grace is getting what you don't deserve.

We often don't understand God's will and how grace works because we assume God is going to rescue us from every difficult situation or every consequence of our own choices. That's not how God works.

Jesus isn't afraid of my blemishes or failures, nor yours. The invitation Jesus is giving you, which Paul will give to the church in Ephesians is simple: You don't need to hide your blemishes and hurts and failures. Jesus knows them all and loves you just the same. Honesty allows you access to God's grace. Stop hiding.

Can we pray through that right now?

*Jesus, I've been hiding my hurts and blemishes and it's not working. I reject the strategy of hiding. I choose to be honest with the people you've given me. I choose to be honest with you, Jesus. Thank you for loving me and giving me grace, even when I'm hiding.*

**1:3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. 4 For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight.**

God is wild about you. Paul praises God the Father for giving us everything we could ever need by Jesus' very own hand. What has Jesus given you? Forgiveness. Redemption by His efforts, not yours, not punishing you but blessing you. Unfailing love. Chance after chance after chance. Heaven. His very presence.

Notice verse 4. God chose us to be holy and blameless before we were ever born. What does that mean? It means you're a saint. It means your sainthood, your holiness and blamelessness, is not because of what you've done. It's because of what Jesus has done for you. It's your choice whether you trust that or not.

Being a saint doesn't mean everything is easy. Suffering happens. God isn't absent when you fail or when someone fails you. Jesus is right there with you. The question a saint must answer is this: *Do you want God's purpose and will for you more than you want anything else?*

Are you going to please others or are you going to live into the purpose God has for you, no matter what others think? Honesty is scary, because if I admit what's actually going on in my heart, I'm afraid I'll be rejected or unloved. But that's never how it works with saints.

When we confess our brokenness, when we talk about what's really happening in us, then the grace and peace of God becomes real. And it's then that we can make the choice to pursue God's purpose above anything else in our lives.

**SMALL GROUP GROUND RULES: Tips for great conversation**

- Extroverts: Please allow space and time for introverts to speak.
- Introverts: Please speak up when you have something to contribute.
- Everyone: Show respect by listening to one another, knowing that we all can learn from those who have a different perspective.