



Rediscovering the Power of the Gospel

What is the one, definitive mark of those who have been saved?

The gospel brings an unmistakable change in your life.

It is impossible to really experience the grace of the gospel and not be transformed into a person of kindness, generosity, and love. When we experience the generosity of the gospel, we will naturally extend that generosity to others. We become people with a generous spirit, and that affects how we treat others and what we do with our money, time, and talents.

We have all received mercy... but it takes more than an act of mercy to change our hearts. The spirit of God has to open our eyes to the mercy and beauty of God in Christ and give us a desire for it.

Matthew 18:23-33

Nobody who has a debt of over \$1 million forgiven, would throw someone in prison for only three dollars - right?

And that is exactly Jesus point. ***There is no way you could have any concept of what God has forgiven you and be ungenerous in spirit toward others.*** If you are, it must mean you are unaware of the grace God has shown toward you.

Those people who really believe the gospel show it by becoming like the gospel. Someone saturated in the grace of the gospel develops an almost insane ability to forgive.

When you really believe the gospel, you see that you are first a sinner and only secondarily sinned against.

The problem in most relationships that are crumbling (marriage, friendship, etc.) is that neither party seems aware of how much they've been forgiven. Because you haven't really tasted grace, you won't extend grace to each other. You need to go back to the Gospel.

What would it look like for you to begin to see yourself as first, sinner, and second, sinned against?

As we become more aware of our own need for grace, we become more willing to extend it to each other.

As God's grace changes us, our grace changes others

In having dealt with a number of struggling marriages over the years, I have noticed that one of the biggest obstacles to showing grace to others is the belief that if you do not retaliate, those who hurt you will never learn the wrongness of what they have done. We take it upon ourselves to educate our spouses, our kids, our coworkers, our parents, and anyone else in our path as to their faults and how they've hurt us.

Is that how God changed us, by punishing us for our sin? No. God changed us by pouring out undeserved kindness on us.

Romans 12:19-21

The gospel does not tell us to be passive with others in their faults. It tells us to be aggressively graceful. We overcome evil with good. "Overcome" is a warrior's term. Paul is saying, "go to war with evil, and defeat it soundly with grace."

We respond to God, not to others

Now, I hear what you might be saying. "This person does not deserve my grace. You don't know how deeply they've hurt me." As compassionately as I can, I want to tell you: "that's the whole point!" We didn't deserve that grace when God saved us either. The clearest mark of God's grace in your life is a generous spirit toward others.

You should daily thing on the grace of God shown you in Christ, and pray:

"As you have been to me, so I will be to others."

GOSPEL PROCLAMATION

*In Christ, there is nothing I can do
that would make God love me more, and nothing
I have done that makes God love me less.*

God's presence and approval are all I need for everlasting joy.

As God has been to me, so I will be to others.

*As I pray, believe, worship, and praise,
I'll measure God's compassion by the cross
and His power by the resurrection.*