

Introduction: Why is understanding grace so important?

What is grace?

- A dictionary definition
- A theological definition
- A Sunday school definition
- The problem: It's still _____.

How do we get a grasp of grace?

- Examine its roots Exodus 33:19-34:5
- Examine the life of Jesus John 1:14-18
- Examine the teaching of Jesus Luke 15

A Prodigal Love *

Luke 15

A. This is an incredible and (in Jesus' time) _____ flabbergasting chapter of scripture!

B. This is the only time in Scripture when Jesus tells 3 stories in one parable. He wants to dramatically emphasize some essential and (to His audience) revolutionary truths about God.

1. Jesus wants us to _____ what God is like!

2. Jesus wants us to understand the _____ of the Father.

C. Jesus ministered in a Middle-Eastern _____ culture.

1. Even the "urban" and the educated had their roots in that peasantry.

2. The peasant _____ and traditions were known by everyone in the culture.

D. "Jesus _____ sinners."

Luke 15:1-2

1. What flabbergasted and angered the Scribes and Pharisees was that Jesus, who claimed to be one with the Father, _____ sinners as friends!

2. Jesus was _____, and defiling, God's reputation. At issue was God's character.

*Notes adapted by permission from Roger Williams, CEO – Mt. Hermon Christian Conference Center, 4 months before his death.

E. "He _____ with them."

Luke 15:1-2

1. Eating a meal together has great significance in the Middle East – it is a sacramental act signifying total acceptance and conferring blessing.
2. This act _____ Jesus, according to the Pharisee's norm.

F. "...muttered..."

Luke 15:1-2

1. This _____ is used only twice in the New Testament – here and in Luke 19:7
2. Because of a special prefix, it has added strength. There is a murmuring through the crowd – they are actively stirring up a public undercurrent of _____ and disapproval.

G. Notice the _____ of this chapter:

1. In the first story the lost is one in a hundred. In the second, the lost is one in ten. In the third, the lost is one in two.
2. In the first story, the lost is out in a wide wilderness. In the second, the lost is inside the house. In the third, the lost is inside the _____.

H. Notice the parallel characterizations of this parable:

Actors	The Lost Sheep	The Lost Coin	The Lost Son
God	The Shepherd	The Woman	The Father
Sinners (Irreligious)	The Lost Sheep	The Lost Coin	The Younger Son
Sinner (Religious)	The 99 Sheep	The Nine Coins	The Older Son

I. Notice the common themes:

	Something Valuable Is Missing	Something Valuable Is Found	Celebration!
Lost Sheep:	Missing Sheep Matters	Missing Sheep is Found	Luke 15:5-6
Lost Coin:	Missing Coin Matters	Missing Coin is Found	Luke 15:9
Lost Sons:	Missing Son Matters	Missing Son is Found	Luke 15:22-24

Questions to Ponder:

1. How do you tend to view God?
2. How would you now explain grace?
3. What do you think God is saying to you in this lesson?

Suggested Reading:

The Return of the Prodigal Son by Henri Nouwen
Prodigal God by Tim Keller
AHA by Kyle Idleman