

Title: Grace, Gratitude, and Transformation: A Prodigal's Journey Home

Sermon Summary:

This deeply personal sermon explores the transformative power of God's grace through the testimony of a self-proclaimed sinner who wandered far from faith before returning home. The speaker vulnerably shares his journey from encountering Jesus at age 12 through a passion play, to years of addiction and sinful living, and finally to redemption and restoration. The message emphasizes that grace is freely given to all sinners—not earned through good works—but came at the tremendous cost of Christ's blood. The sermon challenges believers to respond to grace with gratitude (shown through action), humility (submitting to God), and transformation (becoming a new creation). Practical applications include respecting the Sabbath, conducting family Bible studies, and actively serving others as demonstrations of gratitude for God's undeserved mercy.

Key Points:

- Grace is freely given to all sinners but cost God everything—the blood of His perfect Son
- No one deserves salvation; it is a gift that cannot be earned through good works or righteous living
- God remains faithful even when we are unfaithful and pursues the one lost sheep with relentless love
- Grace produces three essential responses: gratitude, humility, and transformation
- Gratitude must be an action word—showing love through service to church, community, and neighbors
- Humility requires resisting the devil, drawing close to God, and genuinely repenting of sin
- Transformation means becoming a new person where the old life is gone and new life begins
- Practical spiritual disciplines like respecting the Sabbath, family Bible study, and unplugging from technology strengthen faith
- Seeds planted early in life by God often don't bear fruit until years later when desperately needed
- Children can lead families in faith when parents model authentic

Christianity in the home

Scripture References:

- 2 Timothy 2:13 (God's faithfulness despite our unfaithfulness)
- Luke 15:1-7 (Parable of the Lost Sheep)
- Ephesians 2:8-9 (Salvation by grace through faith, not works)
- Romans 3:23-24 (All have sinned; justified freely by grace)
- Romans 5:8 (Christ died for us while we were still sinners)
- Romans 3:10 (No one is righteous)
- 1 Peter 1:18-19 (Ransomed by the precious blood of Christ)
- Hebrews 9:22 (Without shedding of blood, no forgiveness)
- Psalm 107:1 (Give thanks to the Lord; speak of redemption)
- James 4:7-10 (Humble yourselves before God)
- 2 Corinthians 5:17 (Anyone in Christ is a new creation)

Stories:

- Personal testimony of attending the "Jesus of Nazareth" passion play at age 12-13 and accepting Christ
- Participating in the passion play for several years, playing roles including demon-possessed man, fish buyer, Thomas the Doubter, and Michael the Archangel
- Years of prodigal living including drug addiction (meth) and sinful lifestyle from ages 19-35
- Text message from mother acknowledging God's faithfulness through difficult years and remembering the young boy at the passion play
- Meeting couple (John and Courtney) on a cruise in the Bahamas wearing Branches of Christ shirt, leading to finding church home
- Neighbor Christy repeatedly inviting the family to church before divine appointment on cruise
- Implementing Sabbath rest and nightly family Bible studies starting January 2025
- Nine-year-old daughter Millie spontaneously leading family prayer during a stressful week, demonstrating spiritual growth
- Mowing neighbors' lawns and blowing leaves as practical expressions of gratitude and service