

“LIVING AS EASTER PEOPLE”
“Called by Grace to Offer Grace”

Today is First Sunday after Pentecost – the Celebration of the “Birth of the Church.” Our commission as brothers and sisters in Christ is an incredible gift of grace so that we can grow, find encouragement and strength and be surrounded by others of faith. It is also an awesome responsibility as we are commanded to share that grace with a world that walks in darkness. The gift of grace we have received through our faith in Jesus is not just for us – we are to give it away, without strings attached. How is God calling you to use your gifts to be a faithful and effective witness for Jesus? - Dr. Tal Tittsworth

Things I’d like to remember from today’s sermon: **“Called by Grace to Offer Grace”**

Prayer for the Week

Lord, make me an instrument of thy peace; where there is hatred, let me sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; and where there is sadness, joy. O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console; to be understood, as to understand; to be loved, as to love; for it is in giving that we receive, it is in pardoning that we are pardoned, and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. Amen.

This week’s sermon may be viewed at <http://sundaystreams.com/go/firstwichita>

Study Guide

Monday, 6/12/17 Psalm 103

This psalm reminds us of how richly blessed we are as God's people and we are invited to a lifestyle of praise and thanksgiving! What wonderful promises: forgives **all** our sins, redeems our lives from the pit, and satisfies our desires with good things... On this side of eternity we don't always see these promises fulfilled (such as "heals all our diseases...") and we don't understand the whys and wherefores of life. It's a psalm that reminds us above all else that God is with always with us, regardless of our circumstances. Its great reminder: "The Lord is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love...He does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities."

Tuesday, 6/13/17 Titus 3:3-11

Paul reminds Titus in this short letter that what we have received in Jesus is always a gift of God's grace, not dependent upon who we are or what we do. We have been saved 'from ourselves' to a life where we are invited "to devote ourselves to doing what is good, excellent and profitable for everyone." He also warns against those "unprofitable things: foolish controversies..that are unprofitable and useless." **We must be focused on what builds up the body of Christ and forget trivialities that make no difference!**

Wednesday, 6/14/17 1 Corinthians 1:26-31

An old adage that many quote is that God works in mysterious ways. Paul states that to the contentious Corinthians by saying that God uses what is "weak...lowly...despised" according to the world, but is useful from God's perspective. The purpose is so that none of us can boast of our talents or abilities. "If we boast, we can only boast in the Lord," not in ourselves and what God accomplishes through us.

Thursday, 6/15/17 Romans 3:21-30

Paul's arguments can sometimes be deep and intense and, so often, humbling to us who "pride" ourselves in following Jesus. But he reminds us that what God did for us in Jesus is absolutely "in spite of ourselves." No matter our background, how long we've been in the church, what committees we have served on, etc. **It is by grace that we have all been saved.** Our 'right-standing' (righteousness) with God is simply a gift we receive by trusting in what God has done for us through Jesus.

Friday, 6/16/17 James 1:26-27, 2:14-19

v. 26 -- Ouch! "If anyone thinks they are religious but doesn't keep a tight rein on their tongue, they deceive themselves and their religion is worthless." It's not what we say but how we live and how we treat others, the author of James says, that really displays our heart of faith. These are among the verses so often used in the argument about salvation by faith or by works. All of the New Testament authors, echoing Jesus' teaching, remind us that our relationship with God is best displayed in our relationship with others. We display our love for God in the ways we love our neighbors.