**Justifying Grace**

**Ron Griffin**

**New-Ark Area Men’s Walk to Emmaus #50**

Please turn to page 48 in your purple worship book and join with me in the Prayer to the Holy Spirit.

Come Holy Spirit

Fill the hearts of your faithful

And kindle in us the fire of your love

Send forth your spirit and we shall be created.

And you shall renew the face of the earth.

O God, who by the light of the Holy Spirit

Did instruct the hearts of the faithful

Grant by the same Holy Spirit

We may be truly wise and ever enjoy your consolations

Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

For many years, a man was being pursued by someone that really wanted to have a relationship with him. This man thought how can anyone really care about me, especially someone that wanted only the best for him. However, the man had everything under control and continued to turn his back on the relationship being offered.

After all, this man had his plan for his life, and didn’t want to be tied down in a relationship that could cause him to open doors he thought were better left alone.

This man was in control and after all, God was only for Sunday mornings and religious holidays. Then, someone close to him had an injury and was confined to bed for six months. All the control he thought he had went right out the window.

**\***The title of this talk is Justifying Grace and my name is **\***Ron Griffin.

1. **\*God offers us a relationship of unconditional love and grace. God offers us a relationship of unconditional love and grace**.
2. In the book of Gen. chapters 1 and 2, The bible says, in the beginning God created the world, the cosmos, and all things in it, including human beings and God saw that it was good.
3. But we as humans often times make wrong choices and that can separate us from God and diminish our spiritual lives. The wonderful thing is God will always welcome us back, even when we have turned away from our father as the younger brother did in the story of the prodigal son. You can find that story in Book of **Luke Chapter 15: Verses 20-24, that is Luke 15:20-24.**
4. I have also heard it put this way, **\*there is more forgiveness in Heaven than there is sin on earth. That is, there is more forgiveness in Heaven than there is sin on earth.**
5. Because God created us and designed us for a living relationship with God, nothing else can satisfy our soul – Not money, not sex, and not power.
6. The central theme of the Bible is the story of God calling us back into the relationship for which we were created.
7. Jesus called people to accept the relationship God offered them. You can find that **in the Book of Matthew, Chapter 11 Verse 28, that is the book of Matthew, Chapter 11 Verse 28 and also in the book of Luke, Chapter 19, Verse 10, That is Book of Luke, Chapter 19, Verse 10**.
8. God offers us a personal relationship of self-giving love, not a system of rule and regulations.
9. Title this part of your notes**. \*Our acceptance of the relationship. Our acceptance of the relationship**.
10. **\*Our acceptance changes everything. Our acceptance changes everything. Our acceptance changes everything. \*Justifying grace is at work the moment we say yes to the relationship God offers us in Christ. Justifying grace is at work the moment we say yes to the relationship God offers us in Christ. Justifying grace is at work the moment we say yes to the relationship God offers us in Christ.**
11. In the story of the prodigal son, justifying grace is evident in the son’s turning away from his misery and returning home to a loving father. Likewise, we are restored to an eternal relationship with the one who knows and loves us better than we know or love ourselves.
12. As in the story of the man I started out with, when we accept God’s grace, we say yes to the one that has been wooing and pursuing us, desiring a relationship with us. When we say yes, we change the nature of that relationship completely. The word yes marks the beginning of a lifelong commitment to God through Jesus Christ and the church. I would like to say that again, the word yes marks the beginning of a lifelong commitment to God through Jesus Christ and the church. (not on Screen)
13. **\*Responding to grace is an act of faith. Responding to grace is an act of faith**. We cannot do anything to merit a relationship with God.
14. In that moment of saying yes, salvation is instantaneous and continuous. It is correct to say and I would like you to write this down. **\*I was saved by grace, I am saved by grace, and I will be saved by grace. REPEAT. I was saved by grace, I am saved by grace, and I will be saved by grace**.
15. In scripture, the spiritual experience of justifying grace is also known as salvation, healing, conversion, having one’s sins forgiven and being born again.
16. I can tell you that when I said yes, and received the grace I was running from, what a difference it made in my life. The chains were gone, the sun was shining again, and I knew that my life had purpose and direction. I was truly blessed.
17. Justifying grace is clearly seen in the cross of Christ. He gave his life to prove God’s love for us.
18. (**SLOWLY**) If one looks at a cross, we see a vertical line (runs up and down) which can symbolize how the sacrifice of Jesus here on earth restored our relationship with God in Heaven. Christ also restored our relationship with our neighbor and that can be symbolized by the horizontal line (from side to side) in the cross.
19. **\*Conversion continues as we keep saying yes to Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior. Conversion continues as we keep saying yes to Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior**.
20. Some people, like the man in my story, do not understand the need to say yes to what is being offered.
21. We are involved in this process as we come to better understand ourselves and acknowledge our continual need for Christ.
22. Also, as we come to understand God better and seek and I mean really seek God’s will in our lives. We need to be aware of, and look for, God’s will in our lives.
23. Conversion also continues when we practice the spiritual disciplines of prayer, scripture reading, meditation, and active obedience that are essential for our conversion to continue and to be in the will of God. You will hear more about these and other spiritual disciplines later on.
24. Title this part of your notes as**, \*God’s activity and our response. God’s activity and our response.**
25. **\*Justifying Grace is a double acceptance. Justifying Grace is a double acceptance.**
26. God said yes to us in creation and again on the cross. Christ died for us while we were yet sinners, thus proving God’s unconditional love and acceptance of us. You can find this **in the book of Romans, chapter 5 verses 6-11, that is the book of Romans, Chapter 5, verses 6-11.**
27. God addresses our intellect, we respond in faith. Faith is a reasonable response to God’s revelation. You can find this also in the book of **Romans, Chapter 12, Verses 1 and 2, that is the book of Romans, Chapter 12, verses 1 and 2.**
28. God appeals to our wills. **\*By grace we are free to choose**. **By grace we are free to choose.**

a. God does not dictate our response, it is a free decision, an act of the will.

b. In the book of **Matthew, Chapter 16, verses 24-26, that is Book of Matthew, Chapter 16 verses 24-26,** we are told, that Christian Faith is an act of trust and self-denial; we are to take up the cross and follow a crucified Lord.

4. God touches our heart and we respond with love and enthusiasm.

5. **\*God calls us to be disciples of Jesus Christ, we respond with trust and obedience.** **God calls us to be disciples of Jesus Christ, we respond with trust and obedience.**

a. **\*Saving faith is the foundation of obedience and good works, not the result of them. Saving faith is the foundation of obedience and good works, not the result of them.**

b. The disciples experienced the life-giving grace of God and invite us to receive it as well.

c. The mission of every believer, once he or she has accepted God’s grace, is to join in God’s mission and make disciples for Jesus Christ. We find this command in the book of **Matthew, Chapter 28, Verses, 18-20, that is in the book of Matthew Chapter 28, verses 18-20.**

d. Spiritual disciplines are a faithful response to justifying grace; as we follow the spiritual practices of Christ, we become more like Jesus.

e. Draw a circle on your paper and put a dot in the middle. The size of the circle is not important. We cross the outer circle when we say yes to Christ, we start moving toward the middle of the circle. By following the spiritual practices of Jesus, every day we get closer to the middle of the circle which represents our Lord. Continue your walk toward the middle. Grow closer to Christ each day of your walk.

I don’t want you to put a dot on the paper for where you are in relation to where Jesus is, but think about it. Are you in the circle, are you outside the circle, are you near our Lord? Always try to grow closer to Christ each day, again grow closer to Christ each day of your walk.

1. Introduction to Agape.
2. One of the ways God moves us to the point of acceptance and healing, salvation, or conversion is through the loving acts of other Christians.
3. This special kind of love is called **\***agape. **Agape is a \*Greek word for God’s unconditional, gracious love for you and for me. Agape is a Greek word for God’s unconditional, gracious love for you and for me**. We can never earn or deserve God’s love, it is a gift of grace.
4. During this weekend, Many Christians will express this unconditional love in sacrificial ways by praying, serving, and performing other acts of agape- so that you will know more clearly how much God Loves you.
5. Emmaus communities from across the nation and from around the world have sent letters and other forms of communication to let you know about agape love. Here are just a few.

READ LETTERS>>>>>>>

And that man that was running from the grace being offered by God. Well he quit fighting and said yes to a wonderful and awesome God. A God that had so much more to offer than I could have ever realized on my own.

I stand here today a changed person and only because **I realized that \*God, not me, has been, now is, and always will be, in control. I realized that God, not me, has been, now is, and always will be, in control.**

It took the simple act of agape love from a community of believers bringing food and offering encouragement during the time my wife was in bed and recovering from a broken back. That very simple act humbled me and turned my heart to a more obedient and caring heart. Never think that the small act of agape love you may do for someone won’t change their lives.

Please allow God to open your eyes to the needs of your neighbors, say yes to the one that is calling you and always keep walking towards the middle of your circle, drawing ever nearer to Christ our Lord.

**\***De Colores.