

REFLECTION OF GRACE

A Weekly Reflection on Stewardship from our Members



Sunday, August 14 | Gospel

Luke 12:49-56

Jesus said, "I came to bring fire to the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled! I have a baptism with which to be baptized, and what stress I am under until it is completed! Do you think that I have come to bring peace to the earth? No, I tell you, but rather division! From now on five in one household will be divided, three against two and two against three; they will be divided:

father against son
and son against father,
mother against daughter
and daughter against mother,
mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law
and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law."

He also said to the crowds, "When you see a cloud rising in the west, you immediately say, 'It is going to rain'; and so it happens. And when you see the south wind blowing, you say, 'There will be scorching heat'; and it happens. You hypocrites! You know how to interpret the appearance of earth and sky, but why do you not know how to interpret the present time?"



GRACE: ABSOLVING DIVISION

By Jonathan March

Grace comes from God's unconditional love for us despite our tendency to fall short of perfection. Our ability to find Grace and apply it to others who have different experiences in life can be difficult each day due to the many differences our world magnifies from every direction. Accepting God's Grace and applying it to our interactions with those who are different from us can heal divides and create a more unified Christian community and a more peaceful world.

Today's Gospel from Luke brings us to a moment when Jesus speaks to the crowds about his purpose for coming to Earth and the challenges he is yet to face, how that purpose may create division and not necessarily peace. He invites those who are listening to be more aware of how they live each day rather than how others may be living around them.

This theme of division and having more awareness of how others experience life seems to be something that comes up quite frequently in the modern day. We see it every day – from political division and finger pointing here in the United States to different religions' division around various accepting certain beliefs and practices to neighboring countries at war.

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As a gay man, I've grown up in a world that is divided with me and the LGBT+ community on one side and those who disagree with how we live and love on the other. As a Christian, I've always approached this division as something that must be understood through my own journey rather than something that should be judged by those who aren't living out love for one another.

In the last portion of this Gospel, Jesus reminds us that as humans, we have thoughts, feelings, and opinions about the world and how other people should live and act. Instead of focusing on our journey as Christians and making a positive difference in the world, we tend to focus on those who approach their journey differently than we do. Our vision of what is right and true as humans is, at best, a flawed perception and can be hypocritical as Christians. Living out our lives as taught to us by Jesus and through the Grace of God should be our goal.

God's Grace on us should be the example we use as we approach those who are different from us. We should trust God's plan for each of us and look inward at how we can love those around us who are different from us rather than look for reasons to create and maintain divisions. Finding ways to know and understand one another and minimize those differences is putting Grace into Action. At Ascension, there are many ways to learn about and positively impact those different from us. We should always be ready to receive God's Grace to love and support those around us no matter how different they may be as part of our Christian journey.

Question for Reflection – How do you find ways to learn about, understand, help, and love those different from you in your daily life?

Jonathan has been a member of Ascension for four years, serves as a member of the Vestry, and is the Treasurer for Ascension. He enjoys his job working as an accountant but also enjoys bike rides with friends, spending time with family and loved ones, and trying new foods. He lives with his two dogs Ruth and Gizmo and cat Aida in the Dallas Farmers Market.

