

# Session 1 - Building a Foundation of Grace

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[ 0 : 01 ] This is a sermon from King's Church Westmore. Thanks, Gordon. Oh, it's great to be here. ! Who loves a church weekend away? I was really struck by some of those words that were shared. I just got that sense as we were worshipping that God just wants to almost take the lid off. I was just looking out over the sea and just the calmness and the light was illuminating the water. I just got a sense that the horizon was limitless. And I sensed that, you know, it's significant, I feel, that this weekend you've gathered together just off the back of hearing that incredible news that you've got the building.

And I just sensed that God's saying, as a church, okay, that's great. Now I want you to focus on the building of one another's lives and the building of other people that he's going to draw in.

There's a new season and he wants to take the lid off that. So it's so encouraging to be here. And thanks for having us. Well, guys, I wonder if anyone can relate to this experience.

[ 1 : 22 ] Maybe you feel particularly fired up in your Christian faith and you've got this renewed vigor and passion for Jesus. Maybe you come to a weekend like this or a particularly good Sunday and you're saying, yes, Jesus, I'm all out.

I'm going to live for you. And you've got the week planned. Monday is a great day. You get up extra early. You have a fantastic quiet time. And by Tuesday, it's not quite there.

That thing's just not gone quite right. And you're feeling a bit grumpy again. By Thursday, you're losing the plot. By Thursday, you realize, well, I haven't read the Bible for a couple of days.

And my prayer, well, my only prayer in the last two days is, please, Jesus, please help me find a parking space. And can anyone relate? And you're just not quite feeling as passionate for Jesus as you did five days ago.

And then it's very easy to become despairing and think, this is too hard. I can't do that. Can anyone relate to that? Well, I can.

[ 2 : 27 ] And yet, Scripture calls us, and we've just sung about it, to live free, to live a victorious life. And that's what I want to talk about.

Because the key is not in the big dramatic things. The key is day by day laying a foundation of grace in Jesus. And that is what I want to talk to you guys about.

Because there is hope for us. Jesus' finished work means that what we have in him is liberating. And it is life-changing, step by step by step.

So grace, that's what I want to look at this morning. Moses, familiar with him? The old guy, big beard. The guy that went up the mountain.

God spoke to him. He came down with tablets of stone. The Old Testament law. And I'm sure you're all familiar with that. But I wonder if you've endeavored to read through the Bible and perhaps got to something like the book of Leviticus and thought, what's going on here?

[ 3 : 36 ] What is this all about? Why am I reading lots of, not just the Ten Commandments, but now we've literally got hundreds of rules and laws about, I can't wear mixed fiber clothing, so I can't shop there anymore.

I can't eat shellfish, so that restaurant's out. Well, what is all this about? And that was the old covenant. What's a covenant? Covenant is an agreement.

So it was God's binding promise to his people. And you see, what all that was about, what it was pointing to, was the fact that God is perfection.

He is holy. He is the holy God who is above all that we just sung about. And what those laws are telling us, that his standards are exacting. His standards mean that actually we can't do it.

We can't actually get there. Romans 3, 23 says that we've all sinned and we fall short of the glory of God. I wonder if anyone has experienced this.

[ 4 : 40 ] Recently, Suzanne made me get some new clothes. I tried them on in the shop and I looked in the mirror in the changing room and I thought, oh, these are amazing.

I'm going to get these. Took them home. She's like, what on earth? You can't wear. You're trying to dress as an 18-year-old.

What are you thinking? And I looked in the mirror at home and I thought, I've been duped. There's something about mirrors in shops that aren't real mirrors.

They're made to reflect something else. They want you to buy. Exactly. It's a marketing ploy. Well, you see, what do we want to do?

We want to punch the mirror. But it's not the mirror's fault. The mirror is reflecting truth. The mirror is reflecting the reality of who we are. And you see, the mirror is a bit like the Old Testament law.

[ 5 : 40 ] It reflects who we are. It reflects that actually we do fall short and we can't meet God's holy, righteous standards. We're doomed. We're doomed. We're finished.

Or are we? No, we're not. Because God is merciful and gracious. He's merciful. Mercy. We do not get what we deserve.

But He's also gracious. Grace is we get what we don't deserve. Ephesians 2, verse 8 and 9.

For it is by grace you have been saved through faith. This is not from yourselves. It is the gift of God. Not by works, so that no one can boast.

You see, when we put our faith in Jesus, we are saved completely and utterly by Him. There's nothing we can do ourselves. It is grace.

[ 6 : 39 ] John 1 that Luke referred to earlier. For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

You see, the purpose of the law is to lead us to Jesus. It's to lead us to His grace. So now we have a new covenant, a new agreement with God, and it's all through Jesus.

Romans 6 reminds us that we're no longer under the law. We are now under grace. And grace, you see, means that people talk about choosing a path that leads up the mountain to God.

No, no, no, no, no, no. No, God came down the mountain to us in Jesus. He meets with us, and it is all by Jesus, and it's all through Jesus, and it's all for Jesus.

He stopped at nothing to save us, and it's all grace. So how does He accomplish that? Romans 5, 12. Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, who was that one man?

[ 7 : 49 ] Adam. Our forefathers are Adam and Eve. And interestingly, scientists would tell us that if you take our DNA and look at all the X chromosomes and the Y chromosomes, they all point back to an original couple who started the human race.

And the Bible tells us that. It was Adam and Eve. Those are our forefathers, if you like. So the verse continues. Sin entered the world through one man, Adam, and death through sin.

And in this way, death came to all people because all have sinned. Now let's look at this. Can you pass me my... So I said earlier that I'm Irish.

I'm quite proud to be Irish. Last week, my Irish passport arrived. And I'm very chuffed. So I was born in Northern Ireland, so I'm British. But because I was born on the Irish mainland, I can get an Irish passport.

Which means, in two weeks' time, when we go to Denmark, Suzanne will be in the long, long queue waiting to get through passport control, and I'll be having a coffee and a Danish pastry waiting for her.

[ 9 : 13 ] But you see, I'm Irish. I can't help it. I love eating potatoes. And I've only got two emotions, angry or asleep. I can't help it. I'm Irish.

Sorry, Jill. I'm painting the wrong picture here. I mean, I could try and be Scottish. I mean, I could change my name to, I don't know, Hamish McTavish.

I could start speaking like that. All right, pal? But actually, it doesn't change the fact that I'm Irish. My father was Irish. My grandfather was Irish. My great, great, great, great, great grandfather is Irish. And you see, it's the same with us. We are all born into Adam and Eve. They're our forefathers, which means that we are born into sin. I have three grown-up kids and I've taught them lots of things.

How to swim. How to ride a bike. But here's what's interesting. I never had to teach them how to lie. How to do the things that were wrong.

[ 10 : 22 ] Now, this is how you wind up your sister. Let me give you three top tips. I never had to do that. Can anyone relate? You will come through it, guys. You will come through it.

There's something in us that leans towards sin. We're all born into it and we can't help it. So we have to get out of Adam.

But we can. By grace. Romans 5:15 How much more did God's grace and the gift that came by the grace of the one man, so here's another man, Jesus Christ, overflow to the many.

See, we put our faith in Jesus, we become one with him. Now we're no longer in Adam. Now, we're in Christ. We're in him.

And that is the repeated phrase all the way through the New Testament. So that is your new identity as a Christian. You are now in Christ.

[11:25] Everyone turn to someone else and say, you are now in Christ. Jesus paid the price.

He was sacrificed on the cross for our redemption. Now, let's go back to the Old Testament under the law. If you sinned, what did you have to do?

You had to go to the priest and you would bring a lamb, but not just any lamb. You had to choose a lamb with no blemish on it, with no mark. It looked like a perfect lamb.

And you would take it to the priest and he would make a sacrifice on your behalf. But this is interesting because the priest would take the lamb. Now, you're there because you sinned.

But he would take the lamb and he would inspect the lamb. Is the lamb good enough for God? And then the lamb would be sacrificed. Now, you can see where I'm going with this because Jesus, we are told, John 1:29, is the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

[12:36] On the cross, Jesus took your sin and in exchange, you receive his righteousness. What does that mean?

It means that you are right with God. You receive the righteous, holy, perfect life of Jesus. You see, God isn't inspecting you. He's inspecting the sacrificial lamb.

Who is the sacrificial lamb? Jesus. Now, what's the basis? You've had a great prayer time? You've read through the entire Bible?

Your best efforts? You've served on not just one, but two teams at church? No, no, no. What do we do to impress God? Nothing. God is already impressed.

He's looking at the sacrificial lamb. He's looking at Jesus. Jesus has already impressed God on your behalf. And that means Hebrews 4, talking about the sacrifice that you and I can become before the throne of grace with confidence.

[13:45] We have free access, free, open access to the living God through Jesus. You see, we don't know who we are until we know whose we are.

2 Corinthians 5:17, if anyone is in Christ, that's you, they are a new creation. The old is gone, the new has come.

This is who you are. This is your identity as a believer in Jesus. This is your spiritual position. You're in Christ.

You have a whole new identity. You see, there's another mirror. mirror, not the mirror we were looking at when we came home from the shops, but there's another mirror.

And when we look on that, what do we see? We see Jesus. He's not reflecting our life, it's reflecting back the very life of Christ. The perfect, holy, righteous life of Jesus.

[14:50] So we have a choice. Every day, we can look in that mirror and look at us or we look in the mirror and see Jesus and say, no, no, no, I'm looking at Him.

He has done everything to satisfy Father God. I have free access. I am made holy, righteous, and new in Him. I'm chosen.

I'm loved by God through Jesus Christ. Christ. And what's His love based on? Your performance? No. Christ's perfect performance.

He did everything. And guys, He cannot love you any more than He does right now. His love for you is not in question.

What did Jesus say on the cross before He died? It is finished. It's what Jesus has done for us. All by grace.

[15:51] You see, His finished is our started. How incredible is that? And you see, grace doesn't end there. That's the beginning. Now, we can be well-meaning as Christians.

So, in our discipleship, if someone becomes a Christian and we say things like, Gordon, maybe you can help me here. I would like you to carry a few bags for me.

If someone becomes a Christian, we say, well, that's amazing. You put your faith in Jesus. Now, it would be really great if you have a prayer time. So, think of these things as bags that you now need

to put on your life.

So, so, so, Gordon started on his journey and he's, he's having a prayer time. And he's saying, well, actually, Gordon, don't just have a prayer time. Don't forget, you need to pray for the earthquake victims and pray for all that's going on around the world.

So, we'll just let you carry that one as well. And actually, Gordon, now that you have started on your prayer life, you need to be reading the Bible. So, you need to read a passage every day and make sure you don't miss one.

[16:51] Brilliant. So, that's good. So, now you can carry that back. And actually, Gordon, the Bible says don't neglect meeting together. So, you need to make sure you come every Sunday. It's really important that you meet with the people of God.

And actually, now that you're part of the church, make sure you get into a small group. So, really want you to carry that. Now, that also means that's great that you're coming along, but we really need you to serve on the coffee team because you really ought to be using your gifts for Jesus. And, now, let's look at your lifestyle. You can't be doing that thing in your life anymore. You need to cut that right out now that you're a Christian. And actually, Gordon, we noticed that actually, there's another thing in your life and you need to work really hard to get rid of that.

How are you feeling, Gordon? Yeah, great. How's the freedom of this new life in Jesus going?

Yeah. Right, that's on your key.

You get the point. Yes. Well done. You've been a very, round of applause for Gordon.

[18:08] Very good, bad, Perry. Now, all those things are good. So, hear me. I'm not saying don't do those things. What did you learn at the weekend away?

Mike said we don't have to read our Bible anymore. No, I'm not saying that. That's not what I'm saying. A Tesco Bible. Well, we could, yeah.

Every little helps, right? But, there's a subtle lie in that. The subtle lie is, if we're not careful that actually what we're saying, it's, now that we're saved by grace, now we put in the effort.

Now you've got to try really hard. Now you've got to stay on the right course and make sure that you're doing all these wonderful things for Jesus. We're trying to impress God. we're trying to draw near, not by grace, but by the things we do.

We're saved by His grace. It's His work. What theologians call justification, just as if we never sinned. But from justification, it leads to sanctification.

[19:18] What does that mean? Becoming like Jesus. But we don't start by grace and then grow by sweat. We don't start by grace and then go back to the law of the old covenant.

What kind of a God would it be who calls us to be followers of Jesus and says, my child, you're saved by grace. You're saved by the finished work of Jesus.

Now, now I want you to live for me, but good luck with that because you probably won't make it. It's going to be really hard for you. Of course He doesn't. What kind of a God would that be? But you see, here is the beauty of a gospel of grace.

What Jesus calls us to do, He empowers us to do. That's what grace literally means. It means a power, an empowering, that is not from us.

We have His life. Romans 5, 17. How much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ.

[20:31] There's our life of victory. There's a life that overcomes. There's a life of freedom. You see, the law can't impart life. If it could, we would read it. We would read things in the Old Testament like, do not steal, and as soon as we read it, we think, great, I'll never be able to steal again.

But it can't. It can't do that. It's why we go outside and there's a sign that says, keep off the grass. And we think, really? I quite fancy walking on the grass.

There's something in us. Do you see what the law does? It provokes something. It shows us that we're not right. It pushes us to Jesus. But you see, the law demands a change in behavior, behavior, but it can't help us one bit.

And so, we say things like, well, I'm trying to overcome that in my life. I don't want to give in to that temptation anymore, so this week, I've got it.

I'm going to write it down in my journal. I've got it. It's my new thing, so I'm not going to do that anymore. And what happens? We fail. We blow it.

[ 21 : 39 ] And we live in this sin-confessed, cycle. We live in this place where we feel victory and then we get defeated. We feel victory and then we get defeated. But you see, the law pushes us into the arms of Jesus.

Matthew 5, 17. Jesus, speaking about the law, said, I have not come to abolish the law. I have come to fulfill them. So it is all fulfilled in Jesus.

It's what Jesus has done for us. Now you may be surprised by this, but I've actually realized that I have a superhuman strength. I can fly.

I can actually fly. And you say, well, Mike, don't be ridiculous. Now, of course, if I opened that window and jumped out, I wouldn't fly off, would I?

It would take me about 1.3 seconds to hit the floor and probably damage myself. But if I step into an airplane, then I can fly. You see, how do we overcome a law?

[ 22 : 49 ] With a greater law. The law of aerodynamics overcomes the law of gravity. Romans 7.4, so my brothers and sisters, you also died to the law through the body of Christ.

Christ. You see, the law didn't die. We did. Our old sinful nature, the part of us that was in Adam, it was crucified with Jesus Christ.

He has fully met the requirements of the law for us. It's by grace. Romans 6.8, now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him.

Verse 11, it goes on, in the same way, count yourselves dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus. Jesus died.

Our old sinful nature died with him on the cross. And a historical fact, when he was raised to life, we too were raised to life in him.

[ 24 : 00 ] You are in Christ. That is why baptism is such a powerful symbol. Do you see that? The old you is dead, and the new you is alive, not with your life, but with the life of Jesus.

Look at what it says. Count yourself dead to sin. That word is an accountancy term that was used. So imagine that you say to Gordon, Gordon, you are good at administration, help me with my budgeting. Here is how much I have got.

I want you to track all my spending for the next few weeks. Gordon does one of his spreadsheets, which he is good at. After two weeks, you say, I am probably all right.

Gordon says, you have overspent. I can't. Look, there is the facts. I have tracked it all. Those are all the items that you bought. You have been clothes shopping again.

[ 25 : 04 ] You have been looking in those mirrors. But you see, that can't lie. Count yourself. And that's what it's saying. This can't lie. This is God's word.

It says you need to reckon it. Count yourself dead to sin, but also count yourself alive to God in Christ Jesus. So by faith, that is how we need to see ourselves.

We need to see that our sinful nature has been completely crucified. So that sin, that temptation that we're trying to overcome, it's not about us trying to do it. It's about the fact that Jesus has already done it for us.

He has already taken and crucified that old nature. That desire in us has already changed. And we're alive to God in Christ Jesus.

We're alive in Him. So it's not about what our experience is, it's about the Word of God, it's about the truth, and it's about standing on that. He has done it, so we start believing it.

[ 26 : 08 ] The law was fulfilled in Christ. He's our righteousness. So we start with His new life, and we continue day by day by day, letting His new life working out through us.

Go back to our verse in John 1. The law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. Now look at the verse before it, verse 16.

Out of His fullness we have all received grace in place of grace already given. There it is.

That is grace for living. What does it mean? Grace is the fullness, the full nature, the very life of Jesus. It's His power working in us and through us.

So, Romans 6 says, on the back of what we just read, do not offer yourself to that sin. Instead, offer yourself as one who has been brought from death to life.

[ 27 : 17 ] And so, we can try with our little mantras, we can try and say, yeah, I'm not going to give in to that temptation anymore. I'm going to try my best. I'm not going to do it. No, it doesn't work.

And for me, the lights came on when I realized it's not about do this or don't do that.

It's about recognizing I already have the power of Jesus. I already have His resurrection life and I can overcome because He already overcame for me.

And when I started to see myself that way, what happened? my desires started to change. Does that make sense? You see, we have to see ourself with the fullness of the very life, the very nature of Jesus.

His nature becomes our nature. So, overcoming sin, overcoming the things in our life which hold us back, becoming like Jesus, it's not about us trying.

It's not about us trying to modify or change our behavior. We already have all we need in Jesus. He has already given us a new heart.

[ 28 : 28 ] He has already given us and planted those new desires in us. It's about the fullness of new life in Him. And that leads to a changed behavior.

You see, if we see by faith that we are already loved, that we are already holy, that we are already righteous, it motivates us to a changed life because we have His heart, His desires, His power in us.

So, under the law, if we go back to that, we try our best. I'm going to do better. No, no, no. We live out the very life of Jesus. I'm not trying to impress God.

I'm not trying to do things to earn my way to Him or earn His love or earn His favor. It's grace. We already have the fullness, the very life of Christ, and we live out of His love.

You see, if we keep trying in our strength, we'll never do it. But you see, you already are free. This is who you are in Him.

[ 29 : 41 ] You already are loved in Jesus Christ. And we keep living out of that. We keep coming back to that.

It's almost like every day we've got to encounter afresh the beauty of this gospel of grace. This is who I am in Christ.

You know, I want to finish with this. 1 John 4 says, this is love. Not that we love God, but that He loves us.

It's all Him. It's not about us. You know, it's really interesting at the Last Supper. If we piece together the accounts from the Gospels, there's an incredible contrast between two disciples, Peter and John.

Peter, whose name means rock, which means that his name signifies stone. What does Peter stand for? The law. And Peter, out of his boldness, said to Jesus at that Last Supper, Jesus, I'm ready to die for you.

[ 30 : 48 ] I'll go to the cross for you. I'll do it with you. And what happened, Peter? He let Jesus down, denies him three times. Now, John, on the other hand, whose name interestingly means grace, what was he doing at the Last Supper?

What was he boasting about? Nothing. He's the guy who had his head on Jesus' chest. But he was the only one disciple who was left standing at the cross of Jesus when he died.

And John called himself the disciple who Jesus loved. Well, did Jesus and him have some special relationship that wasn't there with the other disciples?

No. Did Jesus love him any more than the others? No. John got it. John saw it. John realized that it wasn't about what he could do.

It was about what Jesus does for him. it was about his love. Does that make sense? So guys, I just want to finish there. I want to leave you with that.

[ 31 : 58 ] I wonder if you see yourself that way. I wonder if you see yourself as the disciple that Jesus loves. Insert your own name there.

The disciple who Jesus loves. Because that is our starting point. And that has got to be our starting point afresh every single day. It's a gospel of grace.

It's not about what we can do. It's not about our efforts. It's not about trying harder. We're not trying to please God he's already pleased. You couldn't be more pleased because Jesus has already pleased him.

So let me finish and ask you that question. How do you see yourselves? Are you the disciple who Jesus loves? And as I was preparing for this there's a couple of things that I just felt I wanted to lead you towards.

I just sensed that there might be some here who wrestle with that and actually know in their heart of hearts that that's really hard to accept. And they don't see themselves as the one that Jesus truly loves.

[ 33 : 11 ] And I would just say to you whether it's now or over this weekend. There's people here who would love to pray for you. Because I think there's a barrier there. It's deep in your heart that God wants to take away.

He wants you to know how loved you are. And the other one is this. I just sensed that there might be some amongst us who can really resonate with that thought of yeah I've been trying to overcome that thing that temptation or that sin for years.

And it's like I'm going around in circles. And I just sensed the Lord wants to say to you this weekend I want you to draw alongside someone and I want you to be honest and I want you to take it out into the open and I want you to see yourself.

It's not about you trying but in the grace and the power of Jesus he wants you to start walking in freedom and liberty. So I leave that with you.

I just sensed that's what the Lord wanted to do on the back of that. I