

# All Together Sunday - Grace

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Preacher: Gordon R

[ 0 : 00 ] This is a sermon from King's Church West London. Well, you might be wondering, have a seat for me, you might be wondering why we were looking at this idea of stories at the start.

I've been really struck by a really little Bible verse that Toby's going to pop up on the screen just now, which says this. I'll read it in the version on the screen because it's slightly better for us today. But it says, talking about Jesus here, and it says, for from his fullness we have all received grace upon grace.

And grace is a really funny word, but what it basically means is goodness that we didn't earn. So we have received God's goodness towards us, and we haven't just received one bit of God's goodness towards us.

Actually, you and I know because we've just been singing it, everywhere we go we see your face, that's one of the lyrics, because we see his goodness all the time. Sometimes we notice it more than others, but it's around us almost wherever we look.

[ 1 : 04 ] Or that other song there, there's joy in the house of the Lord. Well, why is there joy in the house of the Lord? Because if you know Jesus, you know that he is really, really good to you, even when you haven't earned it.

And I think that's these verses in action there. He's really good, and he just keeps being good to you and me time and time again. So the reason I was asking about stories earlier is this, because you and me, well, we have this story in the Bible, starting at creation right at the beginning, ending, kind of, or not really ending, in eternity, where we're all with God forever, and it goes on and it's perfect forever and ever and ever.

And you and me, we're probably somewhere around here in the book, so all of this stuff has kind of happened, and this stuff is still to happen. And we are in the story of God.

You and me, we live at a particular point where Jesus has come. God has created the world. God has created the world. Jesus has come and made all things good between us and God, if we choose to follow him by faith. And one day, heaven is coming, and perfection is coming, and all the sad stuff will go away, and we will be with God, and he will be with us, and we will be his people fully, and we'll know him fully.

So you and I, we're currently in the story of God, which means that when we look around us, we shouldn't be surprised when we find him, because we're living like actors, but real people in his very story. So what I want to do today is to have a bit of a think about what is that story.

[ 2 : 28 ] So in the next kind of 10 minutes or so, no pressure, church, but in the next 10 minutes or so, you guys are going to help the rest of us look at the kind of five main parts of the story of God, because some people very cleverly have split up the story of God's grace into kind of five bits, starting with creation, ending with eternity, and then various bits happening along the way.

So what I want us to do together is to help each other unpack that a bit and say, well, how has God been good to us? Where have we seen his goodness? How has it kind of worked before us? And how will it, does it work now?

And how will it work ahead of us? So, because grace is a little bit like this. So you're going to need to use your imaginations, because I forgot my prop today slightly awkwardly, but I want you to imagine it's someone comes up to you with a beautiful gift bag, and they say, this is for you.

Question, what might be in that beautiful gift bag? Any ideas? What might be in it? A gift, a gift! Okay, good. A gift. Okay, so I open my gift bag, I take out my box, and then inside the box, what might I find?

Any ideas? What kind of nice gifts have people received? And then what gift have you... A present. A present, yeah, absolutely. And someone had a young birthday not that long ago. Shoes. Could be

shoes, couldn't it?

[ 3 : 46 ] Yeah, it could be all kinds of things. Could be sweets, could be, I don't know, could be toys, could be toiletries, nice smellies, could be all kinds of different things. Ornaments. Ornaments, could be something nice for your house, you've just moved to the house, maybe.

Okay, I want you to imagine, I open my gift box, and inside I find this. What's this? A car key. A car key, well, good job, a car key. Okay, I mean, I once in my life received a gift of a car and kind of went, oh, what?

A car for me? Amazing. Like, amazing. From a friend who just decided to give me a car, absolutely amazing. What can I now do that I've got my car key? Drive? Yeah, where might I go?

Anyone got any dreams of going somewhere nice? Yeah, Ellen, where do you want to go? You have a good question and answer today. Where do you want to go? In a car. In a car, okay. You might go on a nice holiday, mind you. You might suddenly, like one thing, a gift bag, led to the excitement of a gift box, led to the excitement of an actual gift, led to the excitement of getting into your gift, leads to the excitement of going places, achieving stuff.

You might even meet your best friends in the future, or the place you want to live and work. Or you might meet the person you're going to marry one day and spend your life with. You might find a place where you think God has really called you there. But some gifts, they're not just little gifts.

[ 4 : 59 ] They're gifts that lead to goodness upon goodness upon goodness. And God's grace through Jesus is one of those. It's a gift that we get that has more goodness on top of goodness on top of goodness the more we explore it and the more we receive it.

And I think that's what this verse is saying. Jesus means that we receive the goodness of God time and time and time again, which is why we're going to explore it together today. Okay, I've done the first bit of work.

Here is your work. So in a moment, and I know some of you love this and some of you hate this, so forgive me or enjoy it. But either way, we're family together. We're going to get stuck in. And what I've got here is some piles of big sheets of paper with some, these are warning children and parents.

These are actual paint inside these things. So they're really easy to use. They're not great for you. If you decide to go all camouflaged on me, they're not great for your skin. So you may look really bad for school tomorrow. Okay, so do try and keep them on the paper.

But you've got a whole load of different colored paints there and some sheets of paper. And then you've got some instructions. So for example, this one is the third part of the story. And it says, God is good to us in saving us through Jesus.

[ 6 : 11 ] He came to pay our debt, mend our brokenness, to buy us back with his own life. And I'd like you to just read the verse together. So this one is Ephesians 2, 8. And then your challenge is, as it says here, to make a picture that represents rescue.

And please include the words, amazing rescue on your picture. So I hope you're feeling a little bit arty. We've got a challenge for you, a Bible verse to read, a picture to make. And in 10 minutes, one of you, I don't know, you can just vote who you want, push someone forwards.

But one of you is going to come and hold it up at the front for us to show us how you've got on with your bit of the story. Now, there are quite a lot of us today. So why don't we do it? I think we might do it by row. But you can also swap around if you want.

If you find your rows a bit wee or you just want to join another group, you're very welcome to. Why don't you send someone from your row to come up and grab a pile of paper and stuff and take it back and get painting.

You're going to need to spread out and use the floor and stuff because it's going to be a squeeze today. Send someone up. Go for it. You can also...

[ 7 : 16 ] I can get... I've got more. No, it's okay. I'll get more out. So we'll do it. Separate sides. Come and grab one. That's it. Take it back. Go on, Ellen.

Just grab a... Hi. All right. Let's get some more sheets. All right, guys.

There's some more coming over here. You can take it. Yeah, go back to it. And have you got a piece of paper? Have you got one of those as well? Take that with you. There you go.

Oh, my goodness. You might need some help. Guys, there's some more over here. Come and grab one over there as well. Oh, we are shot off this paper. Okay, I've got another one here if anyone wants it.

There we go. Thanks, Nicole. Thanks, Nicole. Great. Are you needing one more? Sorry? Go and have a look at it.

[ 8 : 25 ] Come back to me if you don't. Okay? Do you want to see some more?

Do you need some more colors over here? Just grab a few. Just grab a few. Have received. Serve others. Some nice bright ones. Do you have to make a few more? Take a few more? Take a few more? Take them quick, dudes. Go.

Take three quickly for me. Okay, that's it. There you go. Oh, there you go. Okay. I'm going to give you guys some more color. Have you got any colors? Yeah, we've got one. Let me grab you some more.

There you go, that's okay. Oh, thank you. Didn't distribute them very well. Do you guys need some more colors? More colors.

Yeah, there you go. That's okay. You can always go steal, I meant to say that. Guys, let me give you some paint as well.

[ 9 : 42 ] Sorry, I didn't quite get them around properly. Welcome to the Slightly Mad Sunday. The pink one? Yeah, absolutely. Is that good? No. Need some more colors?

Not much use, is it? It's going fast enough. When is the second batch of songs? We've got Coming Back Together, Quick Talk, and then it's the songs. Michael will come up and sort of link. But yeah, it's basically...

A short one and a slightly... Amazing. Thank you, mate. That was great. I'm going to go and borrow other colors from other places if you want. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. I'm going to go and borrow other colors from other places if you want.

You can go and borrow other colors from other places if you want. We didn't get them distributed very well. Very well. I'm going to steal a couple of those for the other week.

I've realized I've given you a double. There you go. Do you need, what is your one? Is it? Oh, the world. Give you some nice green. Yeah, you've got some green. Some yellow. There you go.

[ 10 : 55 ] There you go. Another moody color. Another moody color. Just a couple more for you guys. Good to see you guys.

How are you doing? Good. Good. Oh, that's exciting. Oh, wow, yeah. It really is. That's cool. Oh, what am I here for?

I'm about to get something. A pen. Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

[ 13 : 31 ] Thank you. Oh, wow.

Look at this. That's amazing. Oh good job Nicole, are you the resident artist today with this group? Well done. Oh I love it. Oh this is great, oh my goodness.

What's that? We've got a lot of meteorites here. A lot of meteorites, yeah. We're not always like this every Sunday by the way, we're not going to make you do art every Sunday.

Is that right? Oh.

Oh. Oh. Oh. Oh. Oh. Oh. Oh. Oh. Oh. Oh.

[ 15 : 02 ] Oh. Oh. Oh. Oh. Oh. Oh. Oh. Oh. Oh. Oh. Oh.

Yeah, just a bit of a disaster morning mate to be honest, but nothing awful, just life, just life.

Yeah. Yeah.

Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

Yeah. Yeah.

[ 16 : 28 ] Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

Yeah. Okay, folks, this is your two-minute warning, so you've got two minutes left to finish off.

Fire. What was your one again? Creation. God made fire.

I mean, okay. . . . .

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[ 17 : 33 ] ..

Wow, guys, look at this. . How's it going in the corner? . . . . .

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. . OK, folks, just a few seconds left, so time to bring your chairs back together and be ready to join in again at the front.

[ 18 : 56 ] . . . . . Okay, grab a chair for me and let's come back together.

Whoa, brilliant. You hold on to it for two minutes for me and I'll get you to come up and show me, okay? Okay, folks.

I'm going to give you 10 seconds and then we're all going to be back together. And 10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1.

Okay, let's go then. So if you are in group one, can you bring your pictures up for us? Is that okay? And if you've got your instructions too, that would be super helpful. Just group one just now.

Fantastic. So we'll come and stick it up on our wall over here. Okay. Oh, look at this wonderful creation picture. Oh, no.

[ 20 : 29 ] Is this going to work is the question. What could possibly go wrong with magic sticky stuff? I think I'm going to get you to hold it for me. Is that okay? Fantastic. I'll borrow that from you.

Oh, we've got two. Thank you very much, Martin. We've got two group ones here. I'll grab one side as well. We can hold it. I'll hold it if you like. First Sunday. Back is a bit cruel, haven't you, at the front, isn't it? So these guys in group one, they had Genesis 131.

It said, God saw all that he'd made, and it was very good. And you can see beautiful world, perfection. God is king. God is creating fire and rainbows and the earth and all of those good things. Act one, God made. And God made the world and gave it to us as a perfect gift. Thank you, guys. Give them a round of applause. That's a bit scary being first. Thank you.

And we're going to leave them a light down here on the floor. Yeah, great, because my sticky stuff isn't really working. I wonder if group two can show us what they've been up to. So, oh, group two, you had a tough gig.

[ 21 : 27 ] Group two. Okay, we're going to have paper everywhere. We'll just embrace it. Group two, what did you guys have? Yeah, do you want to tell us what your picture's about?

Is that okay? Come over here, because the speaker's going to get gnarly at us. There you go. What's that about? Is it good or is it?

As in, I think it's a good drawing, but is what's going on in the drawing good or not good? Good. It's a garden, but the door is locked down. Yes. And the Holy Spirit's on the other side.

Yes. And nobody can, I made that, so nobody can get in. So God's locked away from God? Yeah. Wow. Well, but the people didn't want him there, so I made it some fire.

So anyone tries to get in, they're going to get... They're going to get burned. Roast. No, roast and toast into steak. Roast it. Okay, that is some serious separation from God. Roast it, toast it if you try and get over the line.

[ 22 : 30 ] Thank you very much. That is brilliant. Thank you, Danny. You're going to turn into steak. Excellent. Well done. And you guys ruin. Look at this. Do you want to tell us what's going on there? What's happening?

They're falling from the land. They're falling. Because they sinned. Because they... Sinned. Because they sinned. You're right.

The second act of the story, our story with God, is not one of perfection anymore, but one of sin, and I've called it ruin. One where everything goes, sin gets in the way and separates us from God. And yet, somehow, that's in some ways good that we know that. Because suddenly, humans, they know right from wrong, and they know that they need Jesus.

They know they need God to help them and mend them. So thank you guys very much as well. Give a round of applause for those two groups. Okay. Now, in the dream world, when I was planning this last week, these stuck up on the wall beautifully.

[ 23 : 29 ] So you could see this picture unfolding in front of you. In reality, we're going to have bits of paper flying everywhere, I think. But if you look carefully, you can see that we've got God creates G. We've got ruin.

We're going to spell out the word grace one act at a time. So who is... I think we'll just embrace it. Who is group three? Now, this is a rescue plan. Amazing rescue.

Ah, Ben, fantastic. Come and show us what you guys have done. Look at this work of art. There we go. And it said in there, I think God is good in saving us through Jesus.

And it says in Ephesians 2.8, for it's by grace you have been saved. By God's goodness you've been saved. Through faith, not from yourselves. It's a gift from God. He throws a line of rescue out

to us in Jesus, eh?

And, yeah, anything else you want to add? So we, as Gordon said... Come this way away from the speaker for me. We had Ephesians 2.8. So we are saved not by our own actions, but by grace itself.

[ 24 : 26 ] So we were talking about the fact that the thing that separates Christianity is that the life raft has already been thrown. We don't have to earn it. So there was water.

There was a life raft. The artwork credit goes to Adelaide there. Very good. But, yeah, so the life raft has already been thrown. All we're asked to do is grab it. Excellent.

Thank you so much, Ben. And thank you to that group. Okay. They deserve a round of applause as well. Let's go for it. Can you just stand with it? Can you just see it? Yeah. You can get a crew if you want to. Can you just stand with it? I'll stand with it.

This is Mike's rescue plan happening right now in front of you, so you can actually see the artwork. Okay. And, okay, group four. Who was group four? Oh, fantastic.

I'm sure one of you can stay up and hold them up for us as well. Thank you very much. Do any of you want to tell me what's in your picture or anything? You do? Oh, whoa. Okay. Amazing. Right. What's in your picture? I draw a tree.

[ 25 : 23 ] A tree? And a pea. Yeah, good. It's full of life, isn't it? Sausage. Say that again. And a sausage. And a sausage. I mean, you clearly know there's a barbecue coming in church life in two weeks' time.

Like, that's brilliant. Anything else we've drawn in there? Yeah, what else is going on there? It's about life of God who's done all of this for us. Wow. God has done all of this for us.

And the big words across the middle. Do we know what those big words are across the middle? I can read them for you. It says church family. So we've gone from the fall where everything, we've gone from creation, everything good, the fall, everything going wrong, Jesus rescuing us.

And now we live in the part of the story where he builds us into church family. We do this stuff together and this stuff together and eat sausages together and we do all kinds of stuff together because he has put us into church family.

Oh, yeah, go on. Tell us then. The community center. The community center. I'll enjoy the community center. Oh, very nice. I like it. Well done, guys. Would you go and join the end of the line for me? And do you want to tell us about yours?

[ 26 : 27 ] Let's look at it together. We're just basically on a table. A table. I like that. It's a picture of church family. What a brilliant idea. A big table. And guys, the dance class is later.

Okay. And we've also got people playing music and having fun together. It's full of joy. If you could see this, there's loads of joy in it. Can I get you to come and hold it over here for me as well? Is that okay? Thank you so much.

Can I hold that for me? Thank you so much, Peter. Okay. And our last group, group five. Do we have group five? We have D. We've just got the one group five.

Fantastic. Thank you, guys. Can you tell us about yours? It's about eternity and how everyone's happy. Sun is shining.

People are playing. Excellent. Clouds. Mostly people just being happy in the presence of God. Happy in the presence of God. What a great ending to the story. Thank you. Can I?

[ 27 : 29 ] Would you mind standing over there next to Pete? Is that okay? And we'll see. I mean, guys, what an amazing story that we live within. One where God makes humans mess up.

He sends a rescuer. He builds us into church family. And we get to spend eternity with him. Now, everything you read in the Bible fits in one part of that story.

And we are in that end bit there of learning to do life with Jesus together and pointing people to him, our amazing rescuer, before we spend eternity with him. Can we give these guys a massive round of applause?

And for all their hard work. Okay. And, guys, I'm going to talk for about five minutes. So you might want to put them down just here because I think it's a bit cruel of me to make you all stand up for those minutes. So pop them down for me. They're brilliant.

And there you go. Just down there would be great. Thank you very much. Excellent. Well done. In about 15 minutes.

[ 28 : 26 ] Okay. Ellen, take a seat for me, darling. Okay. Well done. Well, guys, this bit is really, really easy because you guys have done all the hard work. Because what I called this bit of the

service was five reasons to be cheerful.

Now, that's a very British understatement. These are five amazing facts that each are to do with each part of that story. Reason number one. Reason to be cheerful.

God makes with love creation. You are not an accident. God made this beautiful world for you. He made you. And he looks at the world and he looks at you and he made it very good.

It makes us cheerful because every time we see a sunset or beautiful sunshine or even snow or even an amazing lightning storm, we're able to look at that and say, our God did that.

This isn't an accident. It's not just a bit of science, but that he made you and this world with love.

The start of the story. And then the second reason to be cheerful is even though we mess up and we sin and we can ruin and the world in some way is ruined, God never gives up on us.

[ 29 : 37 ] Even when we make a mess now in our lives or make bad choices or feel broken, God doesn't ignore us. He isn't saying, well, you did it. You're stuck there.

In fact, he's God that is the rescuer. This part of the story reminds us that he is good to us even though we don't deserve it. And as Ben and his team so well said, our job is to grab hold of his goodness and not just let it kind of drift on by, but to accept his rescue plan and to live within it. And he doesn't give up on us. Reason number three to be cheerful is that Jesus has rescued you. Even in the middle of mess, Jesus has done all the hard work and you and me, we can be right with God.

Not just to have hope in the moment, but hope for all of life. Jesus, our rescuer, came and lived and died a horrific death so that we might be friends with God.

He is our rescuer. And then we become the children of God because of that. Not because we're good enough. Not because we come to church. Not because we do the right things even when we can.

[ 30 : 46 ] But because he is really, really good. And we can just say thank you. Thank you, Jesus, for that. Reason number four to be cheerful is we get to belong to a super family.

There is no family like you guys and no family like God's family around the world. All people who put their trust in Jesus and he brings together. And I love those pictures of church family as a massive table and as all the crazy stuff we get to do together.

He puts us into family. We never have to face life alone or hardship alone because he's put us with each other. And there is really no family like the church.

There's no group, I think, that you'll ever belong to that is as different from you and sometimes the same as you as we are to each other. Because God does this mad thing of through Jesus taking people from all kinds of backgrounds and putting them together and saying come follow me and help each other and lean on the Holy Spirit as you do that.

So we can be cheerful because he made us, because he doesn't give up on us, because he rescued us in Jesus, because we get to belong to a super family even as mad as this one. And reason number five, when we go to the end of the story and we're not yet there, is that one day he will wipe every tear from our eyes.

[ 32 : 10 ] One day we will totally be with God. He will be ours and we will be his in a way we can only begin to imagine. But the end is coming and for us that's a really good thing.

Because our ultimate destination is home with God, peace with God and life with God. And no matter what tomorrow throws at you, whether it's the greatest day or the worst day of your life, do you know something?

We know how the story ends. It ends really, really well. It ends with him in perfection. So I don't know about you, but that makes me want to think a few things.

But one of those things is awe, is this like, wow, we're in this story with this God who is this great. Lord, I can't believe I get to be a character in your amazing story.

It's something we're able to say. There is no part of your life that needs to be without kind of purpose or without hope. Wow. And the other one is we get to pass it on.

[ 33 : 16 ] We get to live in a really good story. So we get to share that joy and that grace to other people as we live our life. So, wow. Thank you guys so much for helping us unpack and look at those different parts in the story.

And for helping us think about this big story that we're a part of. So go back to the beginning there. From his fullness, you and me, we all have received grace upon grace.

His goodness upon goodness upon goodness. And we will continue to, which is absolutely amazing. I think what we're going to do now is we're going to sing again and we're going to worship him because he's been really, really good to us. And we want to celebrate together. So these guys are going to come and lead us in some more songs together. And then we'll pray. Thank you.