

Daily Discipleship

Second Sunday of Christmas (A) – John 1:10-18

Discipleship – *Grace upon Grace*

Focus Question: *How do you describe grace?*

word of life

“From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace.” John 1:16 (NRSV)

Read John 1:10-18

This wonderful text is assigned for Christmas Day worship and the second Sunday following Christmas for all three years of the lectionary. But the calendar does not always have two Sundays within the twelve days from December 25 through Epiphany, January 6. Consequently, if a congregation does not have Christmas Day worship it is not used very often.

In many ways the text offers a summary of the life of Jesus. He was in the world, but the world did not accept him. That rejection included his own people. Nevertheless, some people believed and accepted him. They were given power to become children of God.

1. *What does it mean to be a child of God?*
2. *What is surprising about the people who reject Jesus?*

“And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father’s only son, full of grace and truth.” (John 1:14 NRSV) God’s Word, spoken at the time of creation to bring life into being, is the same Word which takes on flesh. The essence of God through the Word became human in the form of Jesus Christ. We can learn something unique and profound about God through Jesus Christ which is not fully revealed through creation.

3. *What has Jesus taught you about God?*
4. *What can you learn about God through Jesus not revealed in creation?*

In John 1:14, the Greek word for *lived* is *dwelt* as in *pitched a tent*. This image stirs memories of Moses pitching a tent for the Lord during the time in the wilderness. (See Exodus 33:7-11.) Jesus did not literally set up a tent, but chose to live among people. He did not choose to live distant or over people, but dwelt among people as one of them.

5. *How well do people learn about each other when they live together closely?*
6. *After living so closely together, did people see the “real” Jesus? How so?*
7. *Describe the “real” Jesus.*

From God’s great love made known in Jesus Christ, the fullness of grace and truth has been revealed. Truth is a theme throughout the Gospel of John, leading Pilate to ask at the crucifixion, “What is truth?” (John 18:38 NRSV) But that question has been answered in the Gospel of John in the first chapter. Jesus is the truth because he comes from God alone.

8. *How does Jesus reflect truth?*

It is out of God’s fullness, we experience “grace upon grace”. (John 1:16 NRSV) Grace is often a word to describe God’s never-failing love. So what exactly is grace over and beyond grace? If God’s grace in itself is sufficient, what exactly is grace upon grace? Is this an attempt to define and articulate something beyond the limits of words?

9. *How do you define “grace upon grace”?*

word *among us*

The church youth group decided to go on a camping trip in the mountains during their summer vacation. The group spent much time getting ready for the trip. They thought they were prepared, but little did they know about the challenges of mountain camping. They also thought they knew each other well. But they learned much about each other through the rains, cold weather, and challenges of the week. Some things they would have preferred not knowing. One person had more of short temper than anyone realized. One adult chaperon snored so loudly they thought it would wake up sleeping bears.

The group got lost together, but they also laughed together until they cried. That's what can happen when people get so tired that they no longer have energy to put on a facade. In fact, they also cried when it came time to leave one another. Despite the struggles or perhaps because of them, the group agreed it was the best trip ever!

There is nothing like camping with others to get better acquainted. The tents are not like the walls of a home. Everything is heard by others. It is nearly impossible to hide from each other or from oneself.

- 1 *Share stories from camping (your own or from the movies).*
- 2 *What can you learn about other people through camping?*

The lounge outside the ICU on the second floor of the hospital had several couches. During the day, people would come and go. But by night, only a few families stayed and camped out in their respective corners. They waited anxiously for the news about their loved ones in critical condition. Sometimes they talked with one another. Other times, they sat in silence. Now and then, they slept. Those in the lounge became extremely close as they waited together for the news.

- 3 *How can challenging times bring people together?*
- 4 *How can challenging times bring people closer to God?*

By sending Jesus into our world, God chose to pitch a tent among us. God chose to let people get to know God in an intimate way. Not only did Jesus learn more about living on this earth and what it means to be human, but we can learn much about God through Jesus Christ.

- 5 *If you had a chance to go camping with Jesus for a week, what kind of questions would you ask him?*
- 6 *What questions might Jesus ask you?*

Grace is one of the words often spoken in reference to God. We often say we are saved by grace. But what does it mean?

- 7 *Imagine a friend of yours who is not a church person comes to you and asks you what grace means. What kind of an answer would you give?*
- 8 *What if that same person asked you about "grace upon grace"?*

Prayer

O God, you loved us enough to come and dwell among us. Thank you for your grace extended on a daily basis. Thank you granting us grace upon grace in Jesus Christ.

Dig Deeper

Jeremiah 31:7-14

last word

Make a list of examples of God's grace in your live.

Review the list and check those items which seem to embody grace upon grace.



Daily Discipleship

Written by John and Robin McCullough-Bade

Copyright © 2005 Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

May be reproduced for local, non-sale use provided the above copyright notice is included.

www.elca.org/evangelizingchurch/dailydiscipleship

2 Christmas (A,B,C) Page 2 of 2