

Ministering Grace and Love

Story - Supermarket Checkouts

What does Ministering Love and Grace mean at the checkout

Are you like me?

Queue Selection

- Scanning the queue
- Shortest?
- Age?
- Gender?
- Trolley Size?
- Packing and Paying Speed (PPS)?
- Experience of the checkout agent?

Queue behaviour

- In a rush
- impatient
- Irritated by behaviour
- Customers
- Staff
- Irritated other queue is quicker!

What is frontline behaviour?

Pray which queue to take

regardless of size

Look out if people need help

Allow extra time - chance encounters

Ministry is not always convenient

But I am always in a rush

Last week example

A lady said to the check out guy

- Jonathan - what a nice name
- Conversation on meaning/origin in the Bible
- Jonathan - friend of King David

Young man - brilliant smile - paying

He was pleased with the attention - his self worth

Ministering Love and Grace is optional

Grace doesn't have to

But Grace does

The lady didn't have to be nice

But she did

Parable of the Good Samaritan

Example of a nested story in Luke

Main story: the teacher asking how to inherit eternal life

Nested within: Parable of The Good Samaritan

Good Samaritan

We all know the story:

- A man was robbed & attacked
- Priest ignored him
- Priest - overseeing the sacrifices at the Temple
- A Levite ignored him
- Levite - someone who serves at the Temple
- A Samaritan stopped and provided abundant care
- A Samaritan was seen by the Jews a second class citizen
- They were not exiled and according to the Jews their faith was doctrinally incorrect

What could this story look like today?

Different scenarios

- Man attacked on the street late at night?
- Homeless person?
- A lonely person ?
- A super market checkout person
- Etc...

Different casts

- Christian: Priest, Minister & ? (take your pick: Mormon, Jehova Witness?)
- Education: Professor, Teacher & ? (Person with Learning Difficulties
- Politics: MP, Local Councilor and Refugee?
- Real life: You, me and ?
- Who do we see in our hearts as second class citizens?

Point of the Parable

- Not what people profess to believe
- But by what they do
- The Second Class citizen offered grace in abundance when needed
- This was so against the grain that the teacher of the law could not give him his title
- When Jesus asked who is the neighbour
- The one who had mercy on him
- Jesus is not calling out against the high ranked in society
- He is calling out those who have mercy to others

What is this story saying to me?

1. Guilty?

- As the story is so extreme
- Have we all not found ourselves helpless in the sight of suffering?
- Also the Samaritans actions are extreme
- We would be happy to dial 999
- But to bring them to hospital or pay for a care home
- Surely that is the governments duty! - that's why I pay taxes

2. Who is our neighbour?

- First response: the people that live in my neighbourhood
- In Israel: the village or town - you depend on each other
- You need to help as you may need help
- So for us: friends, family, colleagues, and yes, neighbours
- Jesus: those who can never return the help offered!
- The Samaritan took care of the wounded man, without any expectation to ever receive any in return
- "Pay it forward"

3. Grace and love

- Grace does not have to
- Grace does

4. Jesus

- Another scenario:
- All people will perish when they die
- Even if they are told and reminded how to live well - like the expert of the law
- they know that we cannot live in the way that God demands
- Love God above all
- Heart, Soul, Strength & Mind
- Love our Neighbours as ourselves
- God asks Jesus to die for them all - so that they can repent and receive forgiveness
- Jesus didn't have to - Jesus did
- God didn't have to - God did
- Ultimate grace that we received also demands a grace response

5. Be assured that you are already doing a lot of grace

- It is in our nature now that we are Christians
- As Christ is in us and works through us
- But maybe we can be more intentional

Could this story make a difference in my life?

We are already exercising grace and love to each other and to strangers

But maybe we can be more intentional

Ask Jesus to highlight grace opportunities

Be conscious agents of God

By ministering Grace and Love

without expecting that they will come in the Kingdom

No: because Jesus died for all

Even for those not yet in the Kingdom

They may not yet know

But we owe them grace and love

As we owe this to Jesus