

## 1. Get Acquainted: Icebreaker, Love in Grace and Truth

Heavenly Truth is always Gracious and Heavenly Grace is always Truthful. Truth is a gracious act and Grace is done in truth. Love has 2 expressions, words and works, words that heal moral brokenness and works that mend physical weakness and struggle. Most of us are bent toward one or the other. Some of us love primarily with words of compassion and honesty while others are built to love through works of compassion and service.

- So how do you interact with someone who’s your opposite? Rate yourself 1-10.
- How can you best love and encourage your opposite?

## 2. Kingdom Centered Prayer:

I love being trained by Tim to pray through his prayers. It is evident that he desires that we:

- Worship
- Confess our weaknesses and attitudes
- Live Thankful
- Be others centered
- Seek the Spirit to transform us

YOU CAN PRAY WITH US...

1. Worship the LORD, God our Savior, for His mercy and His integrity. Praise Him, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, that He has shined the light of His grace into the darkness of this world, especially our hearts!

2. How have you, like Nicodemus, seen the problem of sin as in other people, but not you? Confess your arrogance and folly to Jesus, asking Him to forgive you and change your heart by His indwelling Spirit.

3. Give thanks to Jesus for how He is gracious even as He is directly honest. Thank Him that He would reveal everything wrong about us *to cleanse us from it*, and then give us His Spirit to transform us by His love.

4. Who do you know that is religious but blind to their own guilt and sin? Pray for them, asking the Lord to help them to see their need for His grace, just as He did for Nicodemus.

5. Ask the Spirit to give you insight into what it means that He came to reveal even hard truth to us *with grace*. Pray that He would help you apply His rich promises *and* that you would convey the hope of Jesus to others.

### 3. Worship:

A dear friend of mine, Jeff Weishaupt, sent this reflection to me this week and it dynamited me into worship. Read it. Wallow in it. Sing it to your soul. Delight in the infinite swallowing up the finite. Meditate on your weakness and his strength, your need and his solution. Rejoice in the darkness of our hearts being unable to overcome or overwhelm the light of God’s Love. Confess. Praise. Enjoy Together.

For God so gave ..... His Son ..... that we ..... have ..... Eternal life.

#### **You Gave**

You gave me eyes knowing I would look away from you.  
You gave me ears knowing I would not listen to you.  
You gave me hands knowing that I would build my own empire.  
You gave me a tongue knowing I would curse you.  
You gave me feet knowing that I would run away from you.  
You gave me a conscience knowing I would ignore it.  
You gave me an imagination knowing that I would escape into it away from you.  
You gave me a will knowing that I would not choose you.  
You gave me desire knowing that I would want everything but you.  
You gave me passion knowing that I would fight for anything but you.  
You gave me strength knowing I would dominate others.  
You gave me relationships knowing I would neglect them.  
You gave me a guide knowing I would go my own way.  
You gave me duties knowing I would fail them.  
You gave me intelligence knowing that I would argue against you.  
You gave me abilities knowing I wouldn't help you.  
You gave me resources knowing that I would squander them.  
You gave me pleasures knowing I would abuse them.  
You gave me time knowing I would waste it.  
You gave me life knowing that I would rather have death.  
You gave me needs to meet knowing I wouldn't.  
You gave me excess knowing I wouldn't be generous.  
You gave me the image of God knowing I would rather be God.

Therefore,

You gave up everything knowing that I would receive everything.  
You gave up your righteousness knowing you would make it mine.  
You gave up your dignity knowing you would cover me.  
You gave up your purity knowing you would cleanse me.  
You gave up your rights knowing that I would be your son.  
You gave up your riches knowing that I would share in your inheritance.  
You gave up your peace knowing I would finally find rest.  
You gave up perfect fellowship knowing that I would be in your family.  
You gave up heaven knowing I would never see hell.  
You gave up your own life knowing I would never lose mine.

#### 4. Sermon Reflection:

##### **Proclamation of God’s Word**

**Text:** John 3:1-17 (ESV)

**Title:** The Instincts of Jesus: Grace and Truth **Teacher:** Tim Rice

<sup>1</sup> Now there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. <sup>2</sup> This man came to Jesus by night and said to him, “Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher come from God, for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with him.” <sup>3</sup> Jesus answered him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.” <sup>4</sup> Nicodemus said to him, “How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born?” <sup>5</sup> Jesus answered, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. <sup>6</sup> That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. <sup>7</sup> Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘You must be born again.’ <sup>8</sup> The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So, it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.” <sup>9</sup> Nicodemus said to him, “How can these things be?” <sup>10</sup> Jesus answered him, “Are you the teacher of Israel and yet you do not understand these things? <sup>11</sup> Truly, truly, I say to you, we speak of what we know, and bear witness to what we have seen, but you do not receive our testimony. <sup>12</sup> If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe; how can you believe if I tell you heavenly things? <sup>13</sup> No one has ascended into heaven except he who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. <sup>14</sup> And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, <sup>15</sup> that whoever believes in him may have eternal life. <sup>16</sup> “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. <sup>17</sup> For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.”

##### **Into – How do you interact with someone who is your opposite? Where do you struggle the most?**

- In marriage
- In Parenting
- A Co-worker
- Classmate

Our culture –

- Agree with me – I reward you.
- Disagree with me – I separate from you.

##### **Our Natural Limits - Our Nature, Our sinful Nature Limits Us**

Reacting to difference

- Are you an inclusion(ist)? Peace at the cost of truth. Friendship over Truth
- Are you a Pharisee, a separatist? When there is disagreement do you cut the other person out?
- What if God treated us this way?
  - As an inclusion(ist)?
  - As a separatist?

Alignment –

- What happens when you are out of alignment with someone? How can you tell?
- What happens if you are out of alignment in key relationships?
- How have people helped you with your alignment with them and with God when you are out of alignment?

### **Jesus’ Supernatural Promise – God’s move toward us in love**

- Promise: Truly, Truly you must
  - Be Born from above
  - Be Born of the Spirit
  - Receive my testimony – Believe in me and you will have eternal life
- Instincts of Jesus
  - Horizontal explains the Vertical
  - Sent to save

Are you born from above?

Are you powered by the Wind? Or experiencing No Wind?

### **Trusting His Truth and Grace – We need Holy Spirit to give us Repentance and Faith**

Moses lifts up the serpent and all who look at the serpent will be saved (Num 21)

Jesus is lifted up on the cross and all who look to Him will be saved.

At Peace with God – Humble and Hopeful

- Have you been infected with the venom of Satan and separated yourself from God?
- Have you been infected with the venom of Satan and believe you and God are “all good”?
- Humbled – are you humbled by your sin and willing to cry out to Jesus?
- Hopeful – are you confident in the testimony of Jesus that He can save you from the infection of evil that has dominated your heart?

At Peace with your neighbor full of grace and truth

- What neighbor is hurting that could use words of compassion and honesty?
- What neighbor is hurting and could use an act of kindness?

## **5. Mission: Our mission this week and every week is to love.**

Jesus loved to love and hunted for the opportunity. It is in his nature to love so it is His Great Instinct. So, our mission this week is to love by going on a love offensive! So,

- Think of the week ahead and the folks you will be blessed to enjoy.
  - How can you love them with words of grace and truth?
  - How can you love them with works of compassion and service?
- Think of the folks you will meet and enjoy by “accident”?
  - How can you love them with words of grace and truth?

- How can you love them with works of compassion and service?