



## **Sermon Discussion Guide for Groups**

# **“Experiencing God’s Grace”**

**Preached by Andrew Arndt**

**September 21<sup>st</sup>, 2025**

### **Summary**

*Have someone in your group read the following summary aloud.*

Pastor Andrew Arndt delivers a powerful message on how the grace of God transforms lives, using Ephesians 3:1-13 as his text. He explains that experiencing God's grace completely disrupts our plans and redirects our lives in unexpected ways. Through examples of Paul, Augustine, St. Francis, and Mother Teresa, Pastor Andrew illustrates how God's grace not only transforms individuals but also carries them outside themselves to serve others. He contrasts this with the American gospel of self-actualization, emphasizing that true fulfillment comes not from achievement or self-focus but from giving ourselves away in service to God and others. The sermon

concludes with the powerful truth that we find our lives not by seeking them, but by losing them for Christ and the gospel.

## **Key Passage | Ephesians 1:15-23 NIV**

For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles—

<sup>2</sup>Surely you have heard about the administration of God's grace that was given to me for you, <sup>3</sup>that is, the mystery made known to me by revelation, as I have already written briefly. <sup>4</sup>In reading this, then, you will be able to understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, <sup>5</sup>which was not made known to people in other generations as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to God's holy apostles and prophets. <sup>6</sup>This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus.

<sup>7</sup>I became a servant of this gospel by the gift of God's grace given me through the working of his power. <sup>8</sup>Although I am less than the least of all the Lord's people, this grace was given me: to preach to the Gentiles the boundless riches of Christ, <sup>9</sup>and to make plain to everyone the administration of this mystery, which for ages past was kept hidden in God, who created all things. <sup>10</sup>His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, <sup>11</sup>according to his eternal purpose that he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord. <sup>12</sup>In him and through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence. <sup>13</sup>I ask you, therefore, not to be discouraged because of my sufferings for you, which are your glory.

## **Opening Prayer**

*Open your session in prayer, using the words below or your own*

**Heavenly Father,**

as we gather to discuss Your transformative grace, we ask that You would open our hearts and minds to receive what You have for us today. May Your Holy Spirit guide our conversation and help us to see the ways Your grace has been working in our lives, even when we haven't recognized it. Give us the courage to surrender to Your grace and allow it to mess up our carefully constructed plans. Help us to be honest with one another and to learn from each other's experiences. In Jesus' name, **amen.**

## **Getting Going**

*Allow time for each member to answer the following questions before moving on.*

Share a time when your plans for the day were completely disrupted, but the disruption ended up being a blessing in disguise.

## Discussion Questions

*Answer as many of the following questions as time and interest permit.*

1. Pastor Andrew said, 'The experience of God's grace messes you all the way up.' How have you experienced this disruption of grace in your own life?
2. How does our culture's emphasis on self-actualization and achievement conflict with the gospel message about finding fulfillment?
3. What does it mean that 'man can only find himself in a sincere gift of himself'? How have you found this to be true?
4. Pastor Andrew emphasized that we don't all need to be apostles or missionaries to participate in God's work. How are you uniquely positioned to be part of 'the economy of the mystery' right where you are?

## Making It Personal

*Take the opportunity noted below to apply this week's sermon to your everyday life*

This week, identify one area of your life where you've been focused on self-actualization or achievement, and intentionally surrender it to God's grace. Then, look for at least one opportunity each day to give yourself away in service to others - whether through a kind word, a helping hand, or simply

being present for someone who needs you. Keep a journal of how these acts of surrender and service affect your own sense of fulfillment and joy.

Remember that we find our lives not by seeking them, but by losing them for Christ and for others.

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## Key Takeaways

*Commit to memory one point from the message before you dismiss.*

- The grace of God completely disrupts our plans and redirects our lives in unexpected ways.
- True fulfillment comes not from seeking ourselves but from giving ourselves away to God and others.
- We all have a unique place in 'the economy of the mystery' - God needs us exactly where we are, living our lives in the right way.
- Some of our unhappiness stems not from external circumstances but from self-centeredness and sin.
- The paradox of the gospel is that whoever tries to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for Christ will find it.

## Closing Prayer

*Have someone from your group close you time in prayer, using the words below or your own.*

**Lord Jesus**, thank You for the disruptive power of Your grace that turns our lives upside down for Your glory. Forgive us for the times we've clung to our own plans, our own achievements, and our own self-centered pursuits. We

surrender anew to Your grace today. Help us to stop trying to save our lives and instead lose them in service to You and others. Show each of us our unique place in Your kingdom work right where we are. May we find the true joy and fulfillment that comes not from seeking ourselves but from giving ourselves away. Transform us by Your grace until we reflect Your selfless love to a world in desperate need. We pray this in Your mighty name, Jesus. **Amen.**