



# I LOVE MY CONNECT

## STUDY 21

### Scandal of Grace

**Romans 9:16, 10:11-13**

Many people cannot get their head around God's grace. It is scandalous that God would suffer and die for us, yet everything we have as a church is built on that scandal. The fact that the only way to God is not through anything we do also proves to be stumbling block to our faith and reason.

The redemptive scandal God outworked in Jesus is multifaceted. When Jesus lived on earth, those who were waiting for the Messiah were expecting a great ruler on a throne – not a humble Jewish man that would die on a cross and his humility was a stumbling block for them. For others, it is scandalous and offensive that Jesus literally gave his life and blood so that we can receive grace. Jesus' death was a moral scandal because, Jesus an innocent man died while a guilty man, Barabbas, lived and was set free. It is a religious scandal that Jesus was rejected so that we can be accepted God.

Jesus paid an unreasonable price so that everyone could know the power of his love and forgiveness, and so we could enter into a God given hope and a God given future. To redeem us, Jesus crossed social, cultural, religious and intellectual divides and removed our sin, the greatest divide of all. By his blood, he covers us in grace and love and reconciles us to his Kingdom.

Our past doesn't matter anymore – grace is based on the righteousness of Jesus and accepting in faith the salvation he has made available for us. It outrageous and remarkable, that despite our background, despite our past, despite our weakness and vulnerability, that God chooses to save us.

As we understand the heart of Jesus, we find that he was on mission in every possible way – in his life and in his death. Everything he did was focused on reaching out to people and reconciling them to God and each other. Through Jesus, we understand life is not about us at all. Let us choose to embark on this wonderful journey of grace with Jesus, and may our lives be one of forgiveness as we extend his grace to others.

**CONNECTION AND ACTION** *Use these questions to promote conversation and connection.*

**ICEBREAKER:** *Share an embarrassing moment from childhood.*

- Q:** Why is the Gospel scandalous?
- Q:** What is the most scandalous thing God has done for you? What difference has it made in your life?
- Q:** Who is someone you admire for their ability to reach out to others? Share an example.
- Q:** What kind of people do you find it difficult to reach out to? How can you address this?
- Q:** What steps can you take to extend grace to others in scandalous ways?

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**BIBLE AND BELIEF** Use these questions and scriptures to help believers develop a biblical worldview.

**Leaders Guide:** Break into the group up into pairs. Divide the following passages of scripture up amongst the pairs. Get each pair to read their passage amongst themselves, and discuss the questions. Then get everyone to come back together as a group to share answers.

- Luke 13:10-17
- Luke 19:1-10
- Acts 10:23-34, 10:44-11:1-3
- 1 Timothy 1:12-17

**Q:** What divide was God crossing?

**Q:** Why did this divide exist?

**Q:** What was scandalous about crossing this divide, and what would be a way we could outwork this example in our lives today?

**Q:** What does this scripture tell us about God?

**GROWING LEADERSHIP** Use these questions to help people in your group grow as leaders.

**Q:** As a leader, how can you model scandalous grace?

**Q:** How do you balance living in grace with the need for performance in your leadership?

**Q:** How do you extend grace to people you lead at the same time as motivating or challenging performance?

**Q:** As a leader we should adopt a lifestyle that is above reproach and avoids the appearance of evil. How do we do that at the same time as being scandalous in the way we show grace? How did Jesus navigate this challenge?