



# It's a Wonderful Mess!

## You Gotta Be Kidding Me!

#npitsawonderfulmess

Week 2

2 of 4

December 15, 2019

**Bottom Line:** Grace is not reserved for good people; grace underscores the goodness of God.

**Icebreaker:** What's been the hardest secret you've had to keep? What's the best secret you ever knew? When you were a kid, did you keep secrets well? What about now? If you have a great story, share it!

**Key Verse:** *For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast.* Ephesians 2:8-9

You might think the Bible is filled with good, godly people. And it is. But they also have their fair share of dark secrets and shadowy pasts. Judah is no exception. So why in the world would God decide to include him in Jesus' ancestry? He fathered a child in very shady circumstances, hoping to never be found out. Yet here it is for all to read—both in the book of Genesis and Matthew 1. He was the father of Tamar. Jesus came not only FOR sinners; He came FROM sinners. Judah was a sinner with a secret. He did some good things, but he was like all of us. Our self-righteousness is never enough to cover our sins and make us right with God and restore peace to our hearts. Our sins have tremendous consequences, and those can only be handled by the grace of God. Our shame is often revealed in our self-righteousness. God allowed Judah to get caught—not to punish him, but because forgiveness and health requires that we own our sin and receive God's grace. God allowed Judah's cover to be blown as an act of grace.

Judah is a picture of you and me. He is a picture of a person who deserved one thing and got something else. Judah is a person who discovered in the process that God's grace is available even to people who have not made themselves available to God. Judah had not yet been broken, had not confessed, and had not apologized to his brother Joseph for the sins committed against him either. Yet Joseph extended grace to Judah and gave to him the opposite of what Judah had given to others and what he deserved. Then God Himself decided to show grace, and He passed over righteous Joseph and chose Judah to be in the lineage that brought Jesus, the gift of grace for all time, into the world.

We are the point of Christmas. Jesus came so that we could surrender our secrets, be freed from shame, fix our relationships, and move into the destiny He wants to give us. The things we are so ashamed of that we planned to take them to the grave with us—Christmas came to save us from them. Grace—it is the gift of God.

### THINK IT OVER >>>

What impacted you most from the message?

Religious people tend to believe, "God is working in my life because of my behavior." This is called self-righteousness, believing my personal righteousness is enough to put me in good standing with God. How does this thought show up in your life?

Sometimes people take it the opposite direction. They believe they have so distanced themselves from God because of their sins and choices that He could never truly have anything to do with them. How have you struggled with this thought?

Jesus came at Christmas to hammer home one thought: Our salvation is not based on what we DO. It is based on what God has DONE. That is grace. Reflect and discuss.

That is the Christmas message. When and how did you come to understand it?

### LOOK IT OVER >>>

Explain the concept of sowing and reaping. How is that principle at work across the board in our world?

What is the interruption of grace to sowing and reaping? How would you explain it to a person covered in shame?

Grace creates the possibility of good things happening to undeserving people. The presence of grace means that sometimes we don't receive the consequences we deserve. How has God done that for you?

Perhaps the best definition of grace is "I deserved something and got something else." Why do you suppose that people who receive grace sometimes struggle with resentment when someone else is the recipient of great grace? If you have struggled with this, how do you overcome it?

Say aloud, "I will never have access to God through my goodness. It is only through grace."

## NEXT STEPS

1. If you have not yet received Christ through grace, do that.
2. Confess your secret to Jesus and to someone you trust.
3. Enjoy Christmas in a new way because you are FREE!

## EVALUTION/ACTION

Realizing and reaching your full potential in Christ

**Bottom Line:** Grace is not reserved for good people; grace underscores the goodness of God.

Rate yourself from 1 to 10 1 (never), 10 (always)	1	2	3	4		6	7	8	9	10
Why did you give yourself this rating?										
What benefits will you obtain by raising your rating?										
Do you know someone who demonstrates this bottom line well? What do you admire about that person?										
What specific action can you put into practice to raise your rating?										
At the end of this week, reflect - where did you see the bottom line show up in your actions throughout the week?										

## PRAYER

List group members and their prayer requests for this week:

## DAILY STUDY

Want to dig deeper? Check out **The Daily** this week at [newpointe.org/daily](http://newpointe.org/daily):

Monday: Genesis 49:10

Tuesday: Deuteronomy 33:7

Wednesday: Ruth 4:12

Thursday: Revelation 5:5

Friday: Zechariah 8:15; Luke 2:8-15

***Don't let the conversation stop here. Keep talking it over with others throughout the week.***  
*(Don't forget to bring this paper to your next small group meeting)*