

Life Group Notes 8/25/2024

Pastor Peter Bonanno

[No doctrine is a given unless it has been found in the Word given by the Holy Spirit and received by you. If you have observations or questions, feel free to send me an email with your comment or observations at tbeachhead@comcast.net. Thank you for taking the time—Pete Mehegan, the Scribe.]

Remember: Be good to one another. Be sensitive and kind. Let God heal our hearts...and guide our discussions. **PLEASE PRE-READ THESE NOTES AND CHOOSE THE DIRECTION THAT IS APPROPRIATE FOR YOUR GROUP.** BE COGNIZANT OF YOUR GROUP'S TIME AND BE SENSITIVE! **Some groups would like to dwell on a single idea. Let the Spirit be your guide. Never feel obligated to complete this study.**

Note: I have highlighted suggested discussion questions that Pastor Peter Bonanno has raised this week, 8/25. Let's allow the Holy Spirit to guide all our discussions, using the highlights as trail blazes. **The purpose is to minister to one another.** I include each of the passages mentioned in full, to facilitate the enjoyment of these notes. Footnotes are not meant to distract. This week's footnotes include:

1. [On Grace Capital, a word from the year 2000.](#)
2. [On grace, the Greek word.](#)

*****Important:** At the very [end of these notes](#), I've included passages that were mentioned in this week's message for deeper study using SOAP journaling to help further your study during the week. ***

GCC started with eighteen people in a home in Deerfield, moved to Pembroke Academy from the cafeteria to the auditorium and found its home where it is today. Ground was broken on July 31, 2003.

Pastor Bonanno began reviewing the vision and the purpose of Grace Capital, meeting in homes where you gather to build relationships, and then join in celebration on Sundays.

1. What do you remember?
 2. Do you have a testimony?
 3. What role have life groups played in your own journey?
- "Grace," says Peter, "is greater than fair." He asked us to repeat it.
1. What is the difference between justice and fairness?
 2. What is the difference between mercy, justice and fairness?
 3. What is the difference between grace, mercy and justice?

He says, "The grace of God covers all of our sin." Look up Matthew 20: **1**"For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire workers for his vineyard. **2**He agreed to pay them a denarius for the day and sent them into his vineyard. **3**About the third hour he went out and saw others standing in the marketplace doing nothing. **4**'You also go into my vineyard,' he said, 'and I will pay you whatever is right.' **5**So they went. He went out again about the sixth hour and the ninth hour and did

the same thing. [6](#)About the eleventh hour he went out and found still others standing around. 'Why have you been standing here all day long doing nothing?' he asked.

[7](#)'Because no one has hired us,' they answered. So he told them, 'You also go into my vineyard.' [8](#)When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his foreman, 'Call the workers and pay them their wages, starting with the last ones hired and moving on to the first.'

[9](#)The workers who were hired about the eleventh hour came and each received a denarius. [10](#)So when the original workers came, they assumed they would receive more. But each of them also received a denarius. [11](#)On receiving their pay, they began to grumble against the landowner. [12](#)'These men who were hired last worked only one hour,' they said, 'and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden and the scorching heat of the day.'

[13](#)But he answered one of them, 'Friend, I am not being unfair to you. Did you not agree with me on one denarius? [14](#)Take your pay and go. I want to give this last man the same as I gave you. [15](#)Do I not have the right to do as I please with what is mine? Or are you envious because I am generous?'

[16](#)So the last will be first, and the first will be last."

1. What do you see?
2. How do fairness and justice fit into the story?
3. Look at the order in which the workers were paid. Who got paid first?
4. If you were the first to work, how would you feel seeing the last to work getting paid his wage before you?
5. And what if you knew they were getting the same wage, how would you feel?
6. Comment in the context of this parable on the truisms Peter mentioned, that we've been taught:
 - a. "The early bird catches the worm." Does he always?
 - b. "Work hard and you will be rewarded." Is this true?
 - c. "God honors faithfulness, diligence and consistency." Always?
7. Why is Grace NOT about what we do and what we have earned?
8. Have you ever reacted to someone else getting a bigger portion than you did? How did you feel?
9. Look at the last verse: Mt. 20: [16](#)So the last will be first, and the first will be last." Is this fair? Explain.

Look up 1 Corinthians 1: [18](#)For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. [19](#)For it is written: "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise; the intelligence of the intelligent I will frustrate." [20](#)Where is the wise man? Where is the scribe? Where is the philosopher of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? [21](#)For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know Him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe. [22](#)Jews demand signs and Greeks search for wisdom, [23](#)but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, [24](#)but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. [25](#)For the foolishness of God is wiser than man's wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than man's strength. Peter says, "Grace is greater than fair."

1. Why is the message of the cross foolishness?
2. How is it counterintuitive?

3. What changes when the last is first and the greatest is the least?
 4. How is that wisdom?
 5. What makes grace greater?
 6. In your experience, who decides what is fair?
 7. Who controls grace? How does that make you feel when it is out of your control?
- Peter says he judges himself by his intentions and he judges others by their actions.

1. Can you relate?
2. How does "fair" work on this scale?
3. He talked about speaking at funerals for those who had been active in ministry all their lives, and for others with whom he had prayed the day before they died. What is the reward of each?
4. How does fair work on *this* scale?
5. Why is grace better?

Follow this principle in the Old Testament. Look up 1 Samuel 30 and read what happens when David and his men return to Ziklag to find that they have been raided, pillaged and their wives and children taken. Look at verse [6](#) *And David was greatly distressed because the people spoke of stoning him, because the soul of every man grieved for his sons and daughters. But David found strength in the LORD his God.* In pursuit, two hundred of his men are too fatigued to follow, and remain with their supplies. The rest continue after the Amalekites to destroy their army and to regain what was stolen. Upon their return, some of those who fought do not want to share the spoil... [23](#) *But David said, "My brothers, you must not do this with what the LORD has given us. He has protected us and delivered into our hands the raiders who came against us. [24](#) Who will listen to your proposal? The share of the one who went to battle will match the share of the one who stayed with the supplies. They will share alike."*

1. What do you see?
2. What is David's first response to the disaster?
3. Look at how David treats his team. What do you notice? How like is this to Jesus' parable?
4. Is this fair?
5. David is described as "...a man after God's own heart." Why is David's understanding evidence of the wisdom Paul spoke of?

Peter reminds us that Jesus tells us to turn the other cheek when we are stricken on one cheek. He says we are to forgive seventy times seven times. He says we are to love our enemies and pray for those who treat us spitefully.

1. How much greater is "grace" than "fair?" Can it be more fun as well?
2. What is the fruit of grace? Do you have a testimony?
3. Look again at what Jesus says at the end of the parable above: [15](#) *"Do I not have the right to do as I please with what is mine? Or are you envious because I am generous?"* Answer him.

Pastor Peter summarizes the three things to be drawn from the Parable:

- Jesus is challenging us to look for God in this parable, and also to look for ourselves.
 1. We are not just to read the parable, but to let the parable read us. Explain.
 2. Where are you in this parable? Are you the owner? Or the worker?
 3. Are you the first arrival or the last to be hired at the end of the shift?

4. How do you respond if you worked the whole day?
5. How do you respond if you only worked the last hour, and you know you received the same wage as those who worked the whole day?
- Jesus invites us to see the world differently. God defaults to grace over fairness.
 1. Do you default to justice or to grace in your daily dealing?
 2. What was your reaction to Peter's "Taj Ma-shed" that he was forced to take down? What would you have done?
 3. How does seeing through the "eyes of grace" change your frame of view?
 4. Why do you see as the most important facet to living as a part of a community?
 5. Peter says, "Fair compares. It does the math." Why is that attitude inferior?
 6. What does that attitude lead to?
- Jesus is showing us an upside-down Kingdom characterized by "crazy generosity."
 1. Peter asks, "Can you handle that?" Do you have a testimony?
 2. "Will you be a part of a kingdom where the undeserving do not get exactly what they deserve?" Answer him.
 3. What have you seen?
 4. Will you be willing to extend to others what they do not deserve? Even forgiveness?
 5. Look up Romans 5: *7Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. 8But God proves His love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. 9Therefore, since we have now been justified by His blood, how much more shall we be saved from wrath through Him!* Describe grace in these terms.
 6. Review 2 Corinthians 5: *18All this is from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: 19 that God was reconciling the world to Himself in Christ, not counting men's trespasses against them. And He has committed to us the message of reconciliation. 20Therefore we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making His appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ: Be reconciled to God.* Compare this with what Paul told the Romans in the previous point? What is our assignment?
 7. Who needs grace?
 8. Which is easier for you? To extend grace or to receive it, knowing you did not earn it?

The Follow-up Application

1. Use the [SOAP journal studies](#) below throughout the week.
2. Intentionally extend grace to someone who doesn't deserve it at all. Make a record.
3. Do this again in secret, telling no one. Write down your observations.

Take the time to pray.

Scribe's Notes:

1. **On Grace Capital, a prophetic word for the church.** This word was given on Sunday September 24, 2000, during the first service in the Pembroke Academy cafeteria.

Grace for the lost

My God.
I have no right to the kingdom.
I have returned to my vomit
I am lost.
I have looked at you.
I have seen your heart.
I know where you are.
But Lord.
I am held captive
You said whatever a man obeys, to that he is a slave.
The prisoner of war does not lose his citizenship for that.
The slave is freed by law after the seventh year.
But Lord!
I have returned again to sin that I renounced.
I have pierced my ear.
I am captive bound and lost forever.
I have seen your ear and made it whole.
I am the Lord who heals you.
But Lord!!
Such mercy is too much for me.
Such kindness is beyond my understanding.
Of course. It's grace.
But I have made Grace Capital in these days for this area.
As you have freely received
So freely give.

2. **On "Grace" in the Greek word**—The Greek word for grace is χάρις (*charis*). It is rich and deeply meaningful. Strong's lexicon defines it as "*favor, disposed to, inclined, favorable towards, leaning towards to share benefit*" – properly, *grace*. [5485](#) (*xáris*) is preeminently used of the Lord's *favor* – *freely extended to give Himself* away to people (because He is "always leaning toward them"). The verb, χαρίζομαι (*charizomai*) derived from *charis* involves the deliberate act of extending forgiveness, grace and mercy. Most pertinent to this study is the fact that the charismatic gifts Paul describes in 1 Corinthians 14 are called χάρισμα (*charisma*). These are gifts of grace, designed to extend God's power, life, love and indeed grace into the lives of the recipients. An understanding of the "upside-down" kingdom Pastor Bonanno was talking about, brings the inevitable perception that the bearer of these supernatural gifts is on a mission to deliver these gifts to the objects of His love and mercy. The gifted is NOT the healer...but the healed. The healer merely delivers the gift, then, and becomes the first to place the least...first. That is grace.

For further study:

Take a moment each day this week to apply the **SOAP**... (**S**cripture—Copy the scripture. / **O**bservation—Write what you see. / **A**pplication—What is God saying? / **P**ray—What is your response?) ...method to some of the scripture we looked at this week:

Monday: 1 Corinthians 1:18-25
Tuesday: Matthew 20:13-16
Wednesday: 1 Samuel 30:4-6
Thursday: 1 Samuel 30:21-24
Friday: Romans 5:7-9
Saturday: Romans 4:7-8
Sunday: Psalm 32:1-5

Once again, some passages suggested here have more than the usual number of verses. This is not to increase the burden but to provide clarity of context. Pick the verses that speak to you most clearly, and run these through the SOAP steps.