

LAST WORDS: THE OFFENSE OF GRACE

Life Group Questions | Sunday, March 1, 2020

Luke gives us an intimate look into the conversation of three men, hanging on the cross together. The thieves' responses are vastly different, and yet Jesus' extension of grace is both amazing and offensive.

Take a few minutes to read and reflect on Luke 23:35-43.

What do you notice about the second criminal's response? What do you think caused this man to have a change of heart? How does Jesus' reply impact you?

We live in a graceless world; a world that is predicated on performance. At a basic human level, we desire that people get what they deserve and deserve what they get. Can you think of an instance in your life (in your past or recently), where this has held true? How has this innate desire and our performance driven culture affected your view of justice, mercy, and grace?

How would you then define justice, mercy, and grace in light of the exchange between the two thieves and Jesus?

Read Luke's account of the prodigal son in Luke 15:11-24.

The prodigal son returns seeking mercy (to repay and work off his wrongdoing); however, he is met with unconditional welcome and grace.

Can you identify a moment/time in your life, where you were met with this kind of grace? Has there been an occasion where God has asked you to extend this grace to someone?

Close in prayer. As you pray, keep these statements in mind:

- *I cannot do anything to earn God's favor. God has already accomplished it. This is the good news of the gospel.*
- *Nobody is as they should be. God loves us just as we are.*
- *Grace is costly - it cost Jesus his life. Yet he was pleased to die on our behalf, so that we might freely receive this salvation and grace.*