

Growing Deeper
Flipping the Iceberg

Week One: *In My Failures – The Grace of Forgiveness*
Luke 23:32-34

Spend FIFTEEN – Day One

1. As we begin our FIFTEEN this week, take some time to read Luke 23:32-34. What stands out to you in that short section of the account of the crucifixion?
2. When we read the account that Christ was crucified with two criminals, the shame of the cross is revealed. This is the worst way for a person to die. What is the significance of Jesus being crucified with criminals outside the city?
3. Read Isaiah 53. Call to mind all that stands out to you, especially all the ways a substitute role was taken by the “Lord’s Servant”.
4. What is the benefit of Jesus bearing the sin and punishment that we deserved? How do you perceive the peace and healing that the suffering servant brought you?
5. The punishment we deserved fell upon the sinless Son of God. Finish your FIFTEEN in prayer with thanksgiving for the ways that God provides for you.

Spend FIFTEEN – Day Two

6. Begin your FIFTEEN today recalling a time that you have been the beneficiary of something good that you did not deserve. What impact did that have on future actions?
7. Write down the way you define “grace.”
8. Read Romans 5:18. Justification is defined as “the action of declaring or making righteous in the sight of God.” What is the difference between thinking that the justification presented to the whole world by Christ applies to some and thinking that it applies to all? How might those different ways of thinking influence the way you interact with and relate to others who do not share your faith?
9. The forgiveness of God is complete and total. It is a reflection of his grace showered down upon all humanity. If you are called to dinner and you refuse to come, it does not change or alter the fact that dinner has been offered and is not presently available. Read 1 Timothy 2:1-7. How is grace consistent with the aims of God?
10. If we have been declared righteous before God, what role does faith play in your salvation? Read Ephesians 2:8-10.

11. As you finish your FIFTEEN in prayer, rest in the fact that there is nothing we can do to earn salvation. That this gift is indeed “free.” Ask for God’s Spirit to lead you into a greater realization of the price of this free gift, allowing you to see his Son more clearly.

Spend FIFTEEN – Day Three

12. Today we will spend some time further investigating the grace of God. Let’s go to the Old Testament and see how God describes himself in Exodus 34:4-10.
13. In this description, which words remind us that God is full of grace?
14. Which words call to mind that his grace will not be mocked?
15. Read Exodus 6:6-8. How does God reveal his grace?
16. What has Jesus freed you from? How does he do it? Where does Jesus promise to lead you?
17. What role does faith play in taking hold of the promises of God?
18. As you finish your FIFTEEN in prayer, ask for a strengthening of faith to see how God’s faithfulness and provision for your life can renew your commitment to him and see that he indeed promises good for you.

Spend FIFTEEN – Day Four

19. Read Matthew 22:1-14 and the parable of the wedding feast.
20. What happens to all our excuses for declining God’s free invitation?
21. In the times of Jesus, it was customary for wedding banquets to last for days and for the host to provide the wedding attire. When someone enters dressed not in the robe provided but in their own garment, they are thrown out of the feast. How have you been guilty of coming to accept God’s grace only on your own terms?
22. Have you been using a tougher standard than God when it comes to people who sin against you?
23. For all of us who tend to add to God’s gift of salvation or tend to think that it does not apply to us, heed the call that Jesus makes in Matthew 11:28-20.

24. Finish your FIFTEEN by asking God for mercy and grace. Ask for assistance by the Spirit to extend God's grace not just to others, but to yourself as well.

Spend FIFTEEN – Day Five

25. When recalling your relationships, how has the grace of God provided guidance or influence when conflict arose or when one of the parties was offended? Describe it.

26. Going back to Golgotha, what in Jesus' words in Luke 23:34 provides guidance for us in how we deal with forgiveness with others?

27. What about when we throw ourselves at the offended party's mercy and accept responsibility for our sin against them, and they refuse to acknowledge it or extend forgiveness? How should we determine our relationship and actions with them moving forward?

28. Look for guidance from Paul and meditate on the words of Romans 12:14-21.

29. If we are to grasp how deep grace is prevalent throughout our life, we need to consistently go back to the source of grace and be reminded often of the character and nature of God. Pray over Psalm 103 to end your FIFTEEN today. Ask for his grace to make its way into all of your relationships.