

**Series - God's Grace**

**4. God's grace – for our families (2)**

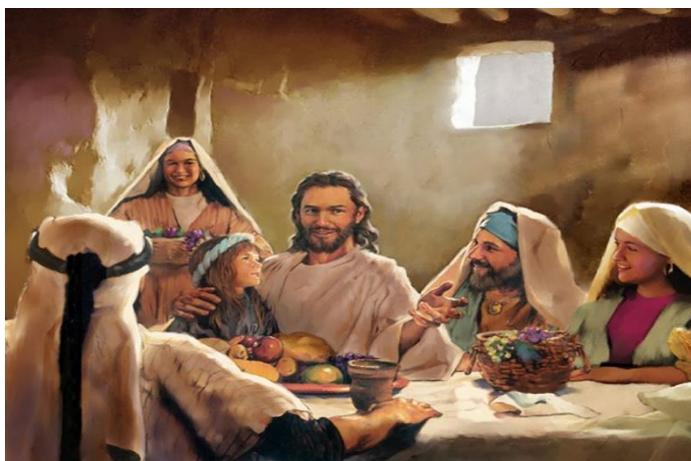
**Read Judges 10: 6-18**

This is a very challenging reading which throws up a number of questions across a range of subjects. However, focusing on our theme of God's grace, consider first the words 'forgiveness' and 'grace'. Do they mean the same? How would you explain any difference?

Do you think it possible for us individually or collectively to do something 'beyond the pale' that would be too much for God to extend his grace? Even some of the horrendous acts history records?

Verse 16 "and he (God) could bear Israel's misery no longer". How does this verse speak to you? What picture does it paint of God?

**Read Matthew 12: 46-50**



What a mixed bunch Jesus' disciples were! Have you wondered about Jesus' criteria for picking them? Yet they were the 'hands and feet' he used to change the world forever. Do you find that encouraging or alarming?

In this passage Jesus endorses the concept that those who are followers of Jesus are united into one family, God's family. Is that your experience? How united do you feel with other Christians in the church? And in the local area?

As followers of Jesus and therefore members of God's family, what do you see as the benefits of family membership? Are there any disadvantages?

Regarding obtaining family membership, what sort of balance do you see between what you have done in Christian service on the one hand, and what God has done by accepting you on the other? Does your answer throw into question why you offer Christian service at all? Discuss.

Right through the Bible the family unit is endorsed as the 'ideal fellowship' unit. Whether it is the Godhead Trinity, Abraham, Jacob, Ruth or David, the family unit is the model used to suggest strength and security of foundation and opportunity for growth. Is this relevant to the church? If so, how?

**Prayer**

*Creator God and loving Father: you knew it was not good for us to be alone; you made us dependent on one another. You have set us in families. In our need of company, we thank you for one another. Father in heaven, from whom every family on earth takes something, since we are made in your likeness, receive our thanksgiving for our childhood, our parenthood, our roots, and our belonging in your family, through Jesus Christ. Amen.*