

Life-Giving Generosity

An Adventure of Grace



NOVEMBER 17-19, 2018



Galvanized by Gratitude

A Message from Matt Heard, Lead Pastor

Read about Pastor Matt at northlandchurch.net/pastormatt.

SCRIPTURE FOCUS

Psalm 103:1-2 (NLT)

Let all that I am praise the Lord; with my whole heart,
I will praise his holy name. Let all that I am praise the Lord;
may I never forget the good things he does for me.

2 Corinthians 9:10-11 (NIV)

Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness. You will be enriched in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God.

Paul said, “See that you also excel in this grace of giving” (2 Corinthians 8:7). Like piano playing, giving is a skill. With practice, we get better at it. We can learn to give more, give more often, and give more strategically. We teach the pursuit of excellence in our vocations. Why not make giving something we study, discuss, and sharpen, striving for excellence?

– Randy Alcorn, “The Treasure Principle”

UPCOMING SERVICE

WEEK 47 » November 24-26 | Communion

Leveling Up Thanksgiving | Luke 17:11-18 | Pastor Nathan Clark

WEEK 48 » December 1-3

Christmas Shopping: Looking for Life | Where is the Healing? | Isaiah 6:1-3 | Pastor Matt Heard

Grace. It's a word most people in and out of the church have heard. But do we understand it? God's grace is His loving posture toward us that gives us not what we deserve but what we need. And instead of being gracious toward us in a sparse or grudging way, He does so in an extravagant fashion. In Paul's letter to the Ephesians, he refers to "the riches of God's grace that He lavished on us" (Ephesians 1:7-8, NIV).

Amazement over this grace God has exhibited toward us through Christ is what feeds our relationship with Him, our submission to Him and our engagement with one another. God took the first step toward us, and our response to His graciousness is what should fuel our lives, our relationships, our fulfillment, our obedience and our stewardship of everything He's given us.

This new season at Northland presents an exciting opportunity for us to embark on a Life-giving adventure that is fueled by our new vision: Engaging people to be fully alive in Jesus. And being fully alive includes taking a swan dive into the ocean of God's grace and experiencing it on a daily basis, which will also shape our impact on others.

In his letter to the church in Corinth, Paul refers to one particular gauge of grace that would surprise many. He explained, "We want you to know about the grace that God has given the Macedonian churches. In the midst of a very severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity" (2 Corinthians 8:1-2, NIV). And later Paul even used the phrase "this grace of giving" (v. 7).

A biblical truth that can transform a person's walk with Christ - and a church community's health - is a simple, but liberating, cycle of reality: *experiencing extravagant grace leads to practicing extravagant generosity, and practicing extravagant generosity can lead to a deeper experience of God's extravagant grace.*

As we've seen earlier in this series, our generosity and patterns of giving (with our time, our abilities and our finances) can provide a "thermometer" reading of the degree to which we are grasping the grace of God, and our generosity can also serve as a "thermostat" that actually influences the climate and health of our walk with God and others. Today we will look at some biblical and practical guidelines for our generosity.

While celebrating Thanksgiving this coming week, may we not only thank God for His many blessings to us but also commit to enhancing future Thanksgiving celebrations in the lives of others by letting our gratitude galvanize us toward greater generosity. As Paul refers to in 2 Corinthians 9:11, that "generosity will result in thanksgiving to God" (NIV).

Grace

This week we're learning about God's grace and how His grace comes from a deep well and supply.

WATCH THE VIDEO

NorthlandChurch.net/Studies

Afterward have someone read the discussion questions in the "Hear God's Story" section and start the conversation.



Share Your Story

Begin by praying together. This should be a brief, simple prayer in which you invite God to give you insight as you study. You can pray for specific requests at the end of your time together or stop momentarily to pray if a particular situation comes up during your discussion.

Then begin your time together by discussing the following questions.

- When have you experienced grace in your life?
- What makes it hard to give grace to others?

Hear God's Story, and Create a New Story

READ 2 CORINTHIANS 9:10-11 (NIV) & EPHESIANS 2:4-10 (NIV)

- What have we done to earn God's generosity?
- What role does Jesus play in God's grace?
- When is a time you treated God poorly but received grace from Him instead of punishment?
- Why did God treat you differently?
- When has someone you loved treated you poorly? What would grace have looked like in response? What would it have taken to extend that grace?
- What's the difference between grace and weakness? Where does the strength for grace come from?
- Who models a grace-filled life to you? How can you encourage them or thank them for revealing God's character to you?

Give each person an opportunity to share prayer requests.

Find Your Story in God's Story

If you feel God is nudging you to go deeper, take some time between now and our next discussion to dig into His Word. Explore the Bible passages related to this session's theme on your own, jotting your reflections in a journal or in this study guide. Want to go deeper? Select a few verses, and try paraphrasing them, writing them in your own words. If you'd like, share them with the group the next time you meet.

If there's a lesson to be learned from parenthood, perhaps it's that grace is a process rather than an event. Childhood is an exercise in repeated mistakes, and accordingly parenthood is a practice of repeated forgiveness. In much the same way, God the Father extends grace after grace after grace to us – never because we've accumulated enough goodwill for Him to overlook our faults; rather, because God's love for us runs deeper than our sin. God stands ready, time and time again, to generously bestow upon us His grace and His love even while we continue to fall short of His glory and goodness.

READ 2 PETER 1:2-3 (NLT)

- When have you experienced “more and more grace” as you’ve grown closer to God?
- What has helped you get to know God? How has that deepening relationship helped you better see God’s grace and generosity in your life?
- Whom are you able to extend more and more grace to as a result of God’s grace to you?

READ PSALM 103:1-2 (NLT)

- A significant part of the grace experience is our recognition of and response to grace in our lives. How are we called to respond to God’s grace to us?
- What are some of the good things God has done for you?
- Who needs to hear you sing praises of God’s grace?

This week’s study is also available on Northland’s apps or at NorthlandChurch.net/Studies.

What's Current

Get info and sign up at NorthlandChurch.net, or ask a connection team member for assistance.

Christmas Eve Worship Times

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 22 | 5 P.M. |

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 23 | 9 A.M. | 11 A.M. |

MONDAY, DECEMBER 24 | 1 P.M. | 3 P.M. | 5 P.M. |

northlandchurch.net/christmas

Volunteer at one of the Christmas services!

Sign up at

northlandchurch.net/christmas

Deck the Halls

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 20 | 10:30 A.M.–4 P.M. | THE FOYER | northlandchurch.net/deckthehalls

Christmas House

DONATE GIFTS BY DECEMBER 5 | SIGN UP TO VOLUNTEER | northlandchurch.net/christmashouse

Prophets & Promises

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 30 | 7–8:30 P.M. | THE SANCTUARY | Search: [prophets & promises](#)

The Nutcracker

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 7 | 7–9 P.M. | THE SANCTUARY | northlandchurch.net/nutcracker

New Giving System

In the coming weeks, we'll be migrating to a new giving system which will make giving easier, more convenient and more secure. Before we do that, we need your help. First, we need you to create an account in our new giving system. Once you create a new account, we will transfer your information over to the new system. So once you set up your new profile, you won't ever need to log back into your old one. Get set up on the new giving system at northlandchurch.net/give. Questions? Contact our Finance Team at financeteam@northlandchurch.net

Stewardship Report

Week ending November 5, 2018

\$173,546	\$219,388	\$472,314*	\$729,251
AMOUNT EXPECTED	AMOUNT RECEIVED	BUDGET DEFICIT YEAR-TO-DATE	DEBT PAID YEAR-TO-DATE

**We have reduced this deficit by spending \$322,168 less than budget during the first nine months of 2018. The current shortage is being covered by our beginning cash balances.*

How to Give – There are three ways to give tithes and offerings:

- At the kiosks in the foyer (electronically or by cash/check).
- Online at NorthlandChurch.net/Give.
- Mobile via text. Text the word "northland," followed by the amount to 77977. (e.g. northland 5)