

DEEP SIX STUDY

April 12th, 2026

Divine Encounters with Jesus – “Dinner Parties”

MESSAGE HIGHLIGHTS *(You can view the full message online at capecodchurch.com)*

Opening: Those who observed Jesus noticed something very unusual about him: he hung out with all the wrong people. Instead of spending his time with the religious, the righteous and the “good people,” he surrounded himself with folks the “good” people had given up on – including the worst of the worst. The friends he chose to spend time with tell us much about the power of grace and about how it works.

1. Grace is Not for Good Guys and Girls (Matthew 9:10-13)

- Matthew’s account of how Jesus called him as a disciple would have been shocking to his first-century Jewish readers, because he was a tax collector – the worst of the worst. Tax collectors were Jewish traitors and extortionists hired by Rome to tax their own people; they were outcasts, considered religiously unclean and beyond redemption.
- When the “good” Pharisees asked why Jesus ate with “such scum,” Jesus answered directly: “Healthy people don’t need a doctor — sick people do.” His point wasn’t that some people need grace and others don’t, but that *everyone* needs it – some just know it, and some don’t.
- The key insight: you can be given grace and never accept it. God can extend the gift, but if you don’t recognize your need for it, it goes unopened. Grace is for those who know they need it.
- Jesus doesn’t build his family out of top performers — he makes “top performers” out of the people he rescues. Luke 15’s trio of parables (the lost sheep, the lost coin, the lost son) all say the same thing: the heart of God leans toward the lost.
- The church isn’t a country club, it’s a hospital – a hospital with a “maternity ward”: a place not just for healing but for new birth, where people come to find faith and follow Christ.

2. The Confrontation of Grace is More Powerful than the Condemnation of Guilt (Matthew 9:9)

- When he called him, Jesus walked past Matthew’s tax booth and said simply: “Follow me and be my disciple.” No confrontation of his past, no guilt trip, no conditions — just an invitation. Grace came first, and Matthew responded by leaving his booth and following Jesus.
- To “get to grace,” there are **4 questions** we should ask ourselves as we seek to show others the grace we’ve been shown by Jesus:
 - a. Have I been patient with the process? – Patience is the surest sign of grace.
 - b. Will this help them? – Much of what we call ‘correction’ is really about relieving our own frustration with someone’s behavior.
 - c. If God blessed them, would I be bothered? – If I am, there’s bitterness (not grace) in my heart.
 - d. Is there an offense to be forgiven? – Unforgiven wounds often block the pathway of grace.
- “You can shame someone with guilt. You can change them with grace. You can show superiority with guilt, but you can’t show solidarity. You can only do that with grace. You can win an argument. But you can’t win a heart.” Jesus showed that over and over during his walk on earth as he sought to bring the lost home to God – and we’re called to do the same.

ADDITIONAL SCRIPTURE

These passages may provide additional insights related to the subject of this week's message. All verses are NLT unless otherwise noted.

Luke 15; Romans 5:8; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Ephesians 2:8-9

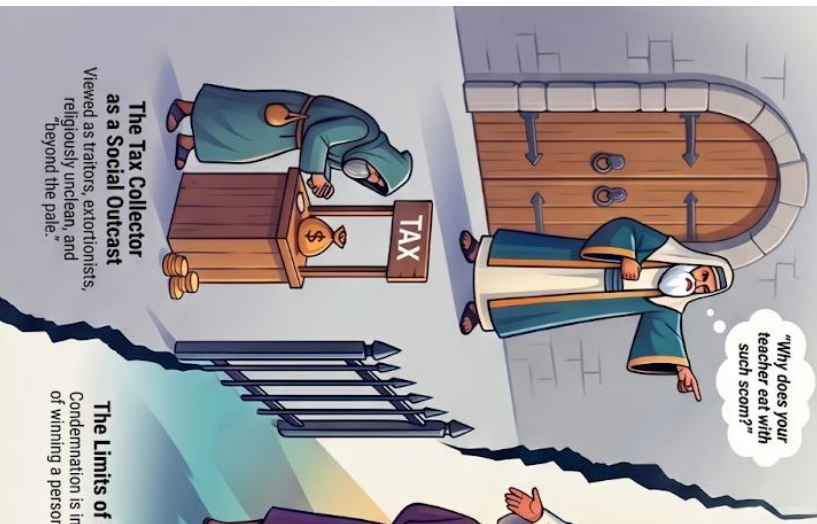
Video of the Week: [Grace – Character of God](#) by Bible Project

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

1. If you're being honest, where would you say you tend to land on a scale of "I'm pretty much okay" to "I desperately need grace"? Explain your answer.
2. If you were hosting a dinner party for Jesus next weekend, who would you invite to have dinner with him at your house? Explain your answer.
3. Read Matthew 9:13 again. Why do you think Jesus said that he didn't come to call those who "think they are righteous"? Didn't he come to save everyone?
4. What lessons should Jesus' followers today learn from the way that Jesus called his followers (disciples) while he was here on earth – including a "notorious sinner" like Matthew?
5. Look at the "4 questions to grace" again. As you seek to show and tell others about Jesus, which of the four questions is most difficult for you? Explain your answer.
6. What's one tangible way you could extend unexpected, undeserved grace to a "difficult" person in your life this week? What would it cost you to do that?

Divine Dinner Parties: Why Grace is More Powerful than Guilt

THE PROBLEM: The Barrier of Condemnation



The Tax Collector as a Social Outcast
Viewed as traitors, extortionists, religiously unclean, and "beyond the pale."

THE SOLUTION: The Radical Nature of Grace



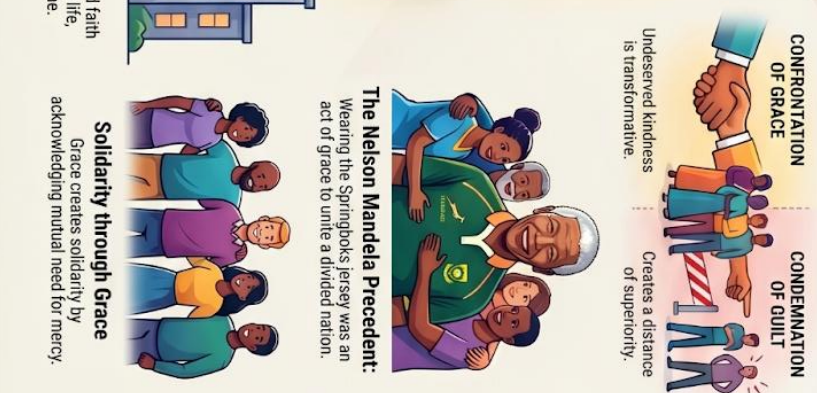
Grace is Not for "Good Guys"
Jesus targets those who know they are sinners, not the self-righteous ("sick people need a doctor").

The Limits of Guilt:
Condemnation is incapable of winning a person's heart.

The Call Before the Change
Grace is offered before requiring behavioral reform.

A place where people find faith and are "born" into new life, not just a nursing home.

THE TRANSFORMATION: Grace in Action



The Nelson Mandela Precedent:
Wearing the Springboks jersey was an act of grace to unite a divided nation.

Solidarity through Grace
Grace creates solidarity by acknowledging mutual need for mercy.

THE PATH FORWARD: 4 Questions to Grace

