



**Grace & Grit**  
**Part 5 – On the Way to the Cross**  
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Today, we are concluding our series called Grace & Grit. The title of today's message, Part 5, is *On the Way to the Cross*. This is Holy Week or Passion Week as it is called, leading with this Palm Sunday. This is a very special time for the church. As followers of Jesus, we acknowledge and celebrate daily the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ because it is in that we are saved through grace and we're grateful for that.

But this is a tradition in the church where we set aside a Sunday to specifically focus on the resurrection and celebrate that. And in that, we recognize Jesus' last week that he walked the earth, starting with Palm Sunday, and the events that took place during Holy Week or Passion Week, leading up to the resurrection.

With that, as we talk about Grace & Grit, we acknowledge that we can receive grace because of Jesus' grit. It is the grit that Jesus expressed in those last days especially that provide us the opportunity to receive grace through his sacrifice.

So, today's message is really kind of a message of response. We're not talking about obligation like legalism like *Jesus did this for me therefore I'm going to do this for him*, but rather receiving grace should elicit a response in the believer.

There are many ways we can respond to the grace that we receive and one of those ways is that we can respond with grit. In this Holy Week or Passion Week, we see, as we read through the events of the last week of Jesus' life, many ways that Jesus expressed grit, and we can learn from his examples and we can figure out how to apply those examples to our own lives. And we can learn a lot about grit from Jesus' last days.

Today, we're going to be looking at three specific examples of how Christ had grit in his last day. From that, we're going to be asking three specific questions for reflection. As a follower of Jesus, we desire for you to take these, reflect upon them, and see how you would respond to the grace that you have received from Christ.

The first example that we are going to look at is when Jesus cleared the Temple. Palm Sunday is when he entered into Jerusalem and the next day, on Monday, is when he went to the house of his father, the Holy Temple, and discovered that they had turned it into a place of trade.

We read the account of it in scripture in John 2. **13 The Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. 14 In the temple he found those who were selling oxen and sheep and pigeons, and the money-changers sitting there. 15 And making a whip of cords... So, you can see his attitude here, his passion. ...he drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and oxen. And he poured out the coins of the money-changers and overturned their tables. 16 And he told those who sold the pigeons, "Take these things away; do not make my Father's house a house of trade." 17 His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for your house will consume me."**

The example that we are seeing, here in Christ on this Monday when he cleared the temple, is that he had **grit in confronting**. Now, I'm not talking about confronting in picking a fight. You may have known someone who was always looking for a fight. I played football in high school and college and there were some guys, maybe because of too much testosterone, I don't know what, but they were always literally looking for a fist fight. You may not know someone like that, but maybe someone that's always looking for an argument, always wanting to mix it up, always looking for a fight. That's not what we're talking about. We're talking about confronting something that needs to be confronted.

I want to share something personally about myself with you. I consider myself a non-confrontational, rule-following, justice-seeker. So, let's walk through that. The rule-following justice-seeker – first of all, I tend to believe rules are in place for a reason and that they should be followed. Some of you believe that rules are made to be broken, right? And then there is the justice-seeker part. I believe if the rules are not followed, there should be consequences, and those non-rule followers should be brought to justice. Are there any other rule-following, justice-seekers among us today?

One of the ways that can play out is that you rejoice when you see that the police have pulled over Pastor Ted for going 70 in a 45. I have three speeding tickets so I can't say much. But that's wrong; you shouldn't rejoice in the transgressions of others. But that's the rule-following justice-seeker. You have rules in place that should be followed and if not, there should be consequences.

And then there's the non-confrontational part. Not that I'm afraid of confrontation; it's just that I tend to not like it. It's not my reflex. It's not the thing I go to. So how does being a non-confrontation, rule-following, justice-seeker play out. I'll give you another highway scenario where there is a lane that is closed for road construction. You see a big, flashing sign that says, "Merge Here." Rule followers, that means what? It means merge here. So, you fill up both lanes leading up to the "Merge here" sign.

I'm not doing anything wrong by using that left lane up to the "Merge Here" sign. Once we get there, we go one car at a time and zipper into place in the one line in the right lane that's open. But, for the non-rule followers, every now and then, we get that guy that thinks that extra quarter mile in the left lane past the "Merge here" sign, before the cones, is for him to just zip on up ahead of the rest and pull into the line. If you do that, you need to confess and repent because it's against the rules. Merge here!

Okay, so that's the rule-following, justice-seeker. I'm like, *that's wrong and they need to have consequences*. Non-confrontational says *I'm not going to do anything about it*. But then there's that blessed person who decides they are going to take matters into their own hands and they're going to pull halfway into the left lane that's open so they can go no further. Do any of you do that. Bless you;

you're doing the Lord's work. I'm non-confrontational so I'm not going to do that because that's not really my domain and the highway is not my responsibility to make sure people are following the rules.

But for me and for every single follower of Jesus, there are places where the Lord has called us to confront. I want to talk about two specific places – in our family and church. Every single one of us has a family in one way or another – followers of Jesus and a church. If you don't have a home church and you're just visiting with us, maybe you have a home church somewhere else, but if this is your church, we consider that you should confront on behalf of your church.

There is one thing in particular that I'm talking about in confronting. That's something we face called heresy. If you don't know what heresy is, it means untruth. We talk a lot about our sources of truth, with scripture being our primary source of truth in the driver's seat, driving all things. Anything that we recognize that comes into our family, tries to creep into our family or into our church that we recognize as heresy, we are called to confront that. That can be hard. It can require grit, so that's one way that the Lord is calling on us to have grit in confronting.

I want to say something that might ruffle a few feathers but here it goes. Jesus did not clear a government building. Jesus cleared the church and, yes, I believe fully that our government should be held accountable. This is where I want to say something and I want the Lord to lead, through the Holy Spirit, as he might. Follower of Jesus, may we be most concerned about confronting sin and heresy in our family and in our church, more so than in the government. These are our priorities, these are the institutions first established by God – family and church. Even with Adam and Eve, he established the family and then his church. May we be more concerned in those areas.

There's another way that we can confront sin. We have to be really careful about this one. We're not talking about legalism. This is something that Shay talked about last week and he did a great job; it was a wonderful message. If you haven't heard it from last week, it was about freedom from legalism as we talk about grace and grit. But with this one we have to be careful. This is confronting sin in someone with whom you have what I call relationship equity, or you have relational liberty to speak into their life.

One of the more important parts of this is that we first acknowledge any plank that we have in our own eye before we go confronting the speck in our brother or sister's eye. That's very important. And then how we go about this when we see someone: a family member, a friend, a loved one, or a close brother or sister that we have relationship equity with that we need to confront the sin. We see them driving towards a cliff or they are teetering on that cliff and we are calling something out that we see.

We have to be careful about how we do it. One of the ways we can tend to do it is that we are going to get a big, bright, shiny spot light and we're going to shine the spotlight right on their sin and say, "This is what's going on; you need to repent." This doesn't require any grit. This tends to happen with either social media or gossip. Some people will do this, and they'll say, "But you know what, I've done Matthew 18. I went to them personally and they didn't repent. I took someone with me and they didn't repent. And now it's time that everyone knows. And this is what we do."

Two things about Matthew 18. The first one is that is a method of confrontation that's used when someone sins against you. The other thing that's very important here is that Matthew 18 confronting of sin never leaves the church walls. It's with the individual taking another person and then brought before the church. It's never with the spotlight for the world to see, shining a light exposing someone of their sin.

We're called more so to confront someone's sin in more of a personal setting. When we have a loved one that we see in a sin, it doesn't require the big shiny spotlight to confront their sin. It only takes a little bit of light to expose darkness. The gentle approach of a friend in a personal setting is how we are to do this. Confronting a sin in a friend with whom we have relationship equity, that we can sit down and have a conversation and say, "Look, friend, brother, sister, I know that you've been doing 70 in a 45. Frankly, I think you should be in jail." But this gentle approach, how much more effective and how much more likely is a person to be receptive and potentially repentant with the gentle approach more so than the spotlight. The spotlight drives away. The gentle approach draws in. This is what the Lord desire of us. And confronting those who are sin, we acknowledge that we have relationship equity with them.

Question number one is this. **What is the Lord calling you to confront?** Is there a sin in a close friend's life that you need to acknowledge and confront? Is there something in your family or in your church that you see, that you feel needs confronting. Is there untruth that's creeping in and your beliefs and our beliefs about God, man's sin, salvation, eternity, heaven, hell. Are there ways that we need to confront to protect the house of God? That's question number one.

The next example we're going to look at happened on Thursday of Holy Week. This is when **Jesus washed the disciples' feet**. This was the same night that he took of his Last Supper that we celebrate with communion. This is the model we use for celebrating the Lord's Supper together. But that night, we also washed the disciples' feet. Let's read that account in scripture from John 13.

***2 During supper, when the devil had already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him, 3 Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going back to God, 4 rose from supper. He laid aside his outer garments... So, we see that Jesus is taking off his outer garments, which is really kind of a move of vulnerability. ...and taking a towel, tied it around his waist. 5 Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was wrapped around him.***

Then we get a little bit of banter between Jesus and Peter in the next verse with Peter saying, "No, you can't wash my feet." And Jesus saying, "No, you don't get it. I have to wash your feet."

***12 When he had washed their feet and put on his outer garments and resumed his place, he said to them, "Do you understand what I have done to you? 13 You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for so I am. 14 If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. 15 For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you.***

Giving you an example. What we are seeing here in this example from Christ is that he showed **grit in serving** in these last days. Some of my parents' generation, most of you probably recognize this guy right here (picture of John Wayne) when you think of grit. That might be who you think of, right. I think of it mainly because he starred in a movie called True Grit, so it makes sense. John Wayne starred in this movie. He played a US Marshal that went on a manhunt, seeking justice for a murder that had taken place. This is one way sometimes that we think of someone who has grit – "I don't take nothing from nobody." We don't generally think of a man who takes off his outer garments, wraps a towel around his waist, gets on his knees, takes the water and washes the feet of his friends and those that he is discipling. Those are two very different pictures there. But what we see is Jesus showing grit in his serving.

We're not talking about spiritual gifts here today. A couple of weeks ago, Ted did a message on that out of Romans about spiritual gifts and the body of Christ and serving one another in that way. What we're talking about though is the 80/20 rule of serving. And this is the 20% that we're really talking. The 80/20 rule is that we believe that you should spend 80% of your Christian service in your primary and secondary spiritual gifts. Then there is this 20% where you just simply see a need and you help take care of it. All Christians are called to serve. All Christians are called to give, to confess, to repent, to pray, to read scripture, to serve. This is our Christian service, our Christian ministry, not the spiritual gifts that we are talking about. So, the 80/20 rule is important to understand. Sometimes there is just a need that you see that needs to be filled.

Jesus was going to die and yet he served. He was in the midst of struggle, probably the greatest struggle that you can imagine, and not only was he going to suffer physical pain and death, but he was going to suffer spiritual pain. He was going to take upon himself the consequence, the spiritual death consequence of all mankind in which his heavenly Father was going to forsake him, turning his face from him in that moment, and he continued to serve.

What we're saying here is we should have grit in serving in that we are all dealing with things. Every single one of us are dealing with struggles, hard times, whatever. Yet each of us are called to serve and we should continue to serve. I will qualify this by saying sometimes a person needs to back away from serving. They need a time to heal spiritually, emotionally, physically even, and that's okay. But let's not get complacent in our service to say, "You know what" I'm dealing with this right now and it's not the time for me to serve." "I just came off of that, it's not the time for me to serve. We're all dealing with things." Jesus was dealing with his ultimate suffering and death and yet he continued to serve. He was going to die. And he didn't go skydiving. He didn't go Rocky Mountain climbing. He didn't go 2.7 seconds on a bull named Fu Manchu. He served. Think about what he was in and he served.

Look at Mark 10. This is Jesus. **45 "For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."**

Dishes are made for serving, right? I've got a fork and a knife and spoon here and you can see we've got plates and glasses. Dishes are made for serving. When you go to a restaurant you prefer that those dishes you are being served with are clean. Have you ever gotten dirty fork at a restaurant? Most of us have and we politely ask the server, "Can I get a different fork because this one didn't get quite clean?"

And the manager and the owner of the restaurant may be extremely embarrassed about that. They want the dishes that they are serving on to be clean.

A couple of week ago, Kari was emptying our dishwasher. She held up a spoon and said, "Hey Babe, our dishwasher doesn't really get almond butter off of spoons. As a matter of fact, it kind of cooks it in, so could you do me a favor and clean off the almond butter from the spoon before you put it in the dishwasher?" And that confused me. So, I clarified, "Okay, you want me to wash the dishes before I put them in the dishwasher?" She said, "Yeah." "Okay!" Do any of you have to wash your dishes before putting them in the dishwasher? What kind of a scam is this? So, now we do not have a dishwasher, we have a dishwash againer. Because if I'm washing them to put them in, it's not doing its job.

Followers of Jesus, a lot of times, we feel like we have to be spotless before we can be put on the table of service. You need to know something. There is only one thing that is required to serve in Christian service and that is to receive the grace that is offered to us through Christ. He washes us completely clean, perfectly suited to serve. We don't need to presoak, we don't have to prewash anything else. We don't have to post wash. That one dishwasher cleaning by the blood of Christ is all that it takes, and we are perfectly suited to serve. Many times, we sit complacent, not serving, thinking *I'm not smart enough. I'm not mature enough in my faith. I'm not enough of a Bible scholar, I don't know enough about scripture. I've never led before. I've never... whatever.* And we sit back, seeing a need, thinking *I'm not good enough, I'm not clean enough, I'm not whatever enough.* I want to tell you that you are. The cleansing of Christ is all that it takes.

The caveat there is, yes, church leadership or other ministerial leadership, every now and then, are going to say you're not suited, in the condition that you in, to serve in this capacity. That doesn't mean you can't serve period. There is always something you can do behind the scenes or whatever else. You can always serve. Those who have been washed with the blood of Christ are suited to serve

We talk a lot about the five purposes of the church as well. I can't think of anything else, other than service, that touches on all five purposes, with by the way, the five purposes of the individual Christian as well. Look at what service does. Worship – when you serve as unto the Lord it is an act of worship. Fellowship – whenever you serve generally, you're alongside other believers. Discipleship – I promise your kids or others are watching your faith walk from your service. Evangelism – I promise you'll be given opportunity from those whom you are serving to tell them of the hope that is in you. Service is rooted in ministry, meaning the physical, spiritual, emotional, and relational needs of others. Service is important to the follower of Jesus.

Question number two is this. **Where is the Lord calling you to serve?** Maybe it's that 20% that you're not hitting on, realizing there is need that needs to be met. Maybe you're sitting complacent, thinking *I've got too much going on and I shouldn't be serving.* I want to encourage you. Jesus was facing suffering and death, spiritual death even, and yet he served. Maybe you don't think that you're clean enough. If you've received Christ, you are clean enough and ready enough to serve.

The third example we are going to look at is the triumphal entry into Jerusalem. This is where we rewind in what we've talked about and come to what we acknowledge today, which is Palm Sunday.

This is the day that Jesus rode into Jerusalem, the Holy City, knowing what he was facing and yet others did not. So, before entering into the city, Jesus told the disciples, “Go into the city, get a donkey and its colt and bring it back so I can ride it into the city,” for this **triumphal entry that he knew he was to face**.

We read about it in Matthew 21 – **6 The disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them. 7 They brought the donkey and the colt and put on them their cloaks, and he sat on them. 8 Most of the crowd spread their cloaks on the road...** We read that most of them spread the cloaks, but cloaks Sunday doesn't have the same ring to it. **...and others cut branches (palm branches) from the trees and spread them on the road.** That's where we get Palm Sunday. **9 And the crowds that went before him and that followed him were shouting, “Hosanna to the Son of David! Hosanna meaning save now.**

Many of the people thought this was a celebration of a political redemption, but Jesus knew that this was more of a funeral procession. **Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!” 10 And when he entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred up, saying, “Who is this?” 11 And the crowds said, “This is the prophet Jesus, from Nazareth of Galilee.”** So, people thought there was going to be this political redemption and Jesus is riding in on what seems like an awesome setting; people cheering him on. But Jesus knew what he was about to face – his betrayal, his beating, his crucifixion, and his death.

Yet, we see that Jesus **showed risk in commitment**. He was here for this purpose. He was committed to it. He knew the Father had sent him to die for the sin of all mankind. And yet he stayed committed to it – grit in commitment. He knew the struggle and yet he rode into it.

Last week, Shay said that one of his kids puked on their RV trip to the Grand Canyon. Every now and then, Kari will ask me, after one of our kids pukes, she'll say, “You're the doctor; what's wrong with them? Why did they puke.”

Kids are kind of like dogs; they just barf every now and then. We have kids and dogs, and neither are very discriminating about where they puke and what they might get it on. Some of you can picture the scene because you've been there. And the way that you approach that scene is you see it and here's what you want to do – Nope! And you turn around and walk the other direction. In the military they call it an about face. In marriage, we call it “Honey, it's your turn. I did it last time.” We see the situation that's going to be difficult and how many situations are you committed to that you can see the mess, the difficulty that you're facing and yet you're committed? You must stay committed as you walk right into it.

I'm going to list a few things that we might be committed to. Maybe they apply to you. With a spouse – there can be a difficulty that you're facing with a spouse that you are committed to. Maybe there's a physical disability that you now have to deal with and yet you're committed to that spouse. There may be some dishonesty or some other struggle in the marriage that you see up ahead that you have to face and you're going to have to deal with, but you're committed to this marriage and you're going to work through it.

Maybe you're the bread winner in the house and the pandemic wasn't so good for your career and you're out of the work that you were in for so long. You're committed to putting food on the table of your family. They are relying on you. That's a commitment.

If you have kids, oh the commitment. They need your spiritual leadership. They need your physical provision. They need your discipline. This one's hard, parents. How many times have you seen or heard a behavior in your kid and your like, "Did I just hear that? Can I pretend I didn't hear that? Can I pretend I didn't see that?" "I don't have the time or the energy to deal with that discipline right now. I don't want to deal with it," and yet, you must stay committed even though it's difficult.

Teachers – not just in a classroom setting. You're committed to your students. Anyone that's teaching anyone anything. I was pondering this in my own life and the teachers that I've had and the commitment they showed for me in my training for medical school and residency. They had to stay committed in order for me to establish good practices in medicine and surgery. Look at the downstream effect of all that. All of my patients are now relying on those teachers that were committed. That doesn't just apply in my field. Look at any other field. In the culinary arts... We talked about service and a table. People preparing food... How many people are relying on the person that you're teaching? Your commitment to this person that you're teaching in the culinary arts, how many people are relying on you to stay committed to what it is that you're doing.

How about an electrician? Teaching someone the practice, the trade of being an electrician. How many people are relying on that teaching of that person for everything. You look around and there was someone that taught the electrician that wired this building, and we are all relying on that person for the safety and the provision of light. Look at the downstream effect of the commitments that we have in place.

How about a bus driver driving kids or even in transit? The people riding on the bus or flying in an airplane and pilots. The people that are relying on your commitment to doing your job. Business people, bankers, attorneys, people are relying on you and your commitment to take care of business.

First responders. Oh boy. Fire and police and paramedic. We are all relying on all of them on all of you for our health. There are some in the room. We could go on and on and on. There are so many things that we are committed to that are important. What's important to realize is that the most important commitments are the ones where people are relying on us because we can get distracted by things that don't really matter a whole lot, frankly. And yet, we're committed, and we're determined in something.

In the church leadership... We talk about this a lot, about how there are programs and projects, but we prioritize people. In programs and projects, we look for a passionate, committed leader. And if that person doesn't exist or they've moved on, then that program or that project needs to be done. If you don't have passion, it's going to be like cold soup. If you don't have commitment, it's going to be a flash in the pan. If you don't have a leader, then there is going to be chaos. So, we look for that passionate, committed leader in programs and projects.

But look at this. As individuals, there are people who are relying on you and your commitment to be a passionate, committed leader in what it is that you are doing that they are relying on. And the best litmus test is just that. What people are relying on me and the commitments that I'm sticking to, and in what way are they relying on me?

I want to show you a picture of the earth as we know it exists – flat and also daylight everywhere all at the same time. This is what God created. This is the earth and everything in it. God created everything there. There are a lot of potential distractions here, things that we can be committed to. But I want to show you another picture – the earth all dimly lit. The sun is down on the entire earth at the same time. But there are lights. Do you see the lights? This where the people are. God created the earth and everything in it. His favorite part of his creation is mankind. The lights show us where the people are and that's where the Lord is most concerned. Jesus, as he rode into Jerusalem, having grit in his commitment, knew the entirety of humanity was relying on him to stay committed that week in what he was there to do. He knew that the entirety of humanity was relying on him.

God has put some lights in your life. He has put some people in your life that are relying on you in your commitments. We must have grit in our commitment.

I want to look at another picture that we used a couple of years ago when talking about stewardship, that everything that we have is from the Lord and we, being the apple tree, produce fruit and bless those around us with it. In what we're talking about today, in this grit in commitment, we consider the people that have been placed in our lives that are depending on us to produce. And it's important to understand there are going to be some people that are around our tree for a time and then gone, and some people that are there for a lifetime. No matter what though, when people are relying on you, it's important that you show grit in your commitment to them.

Question number three is this. **In what ways are people relying on you to stay committed.** And the important thing is that right there – people. Remember the Lord is most concerned about people. In what way are people relying on you to stay committed.

We remember this Holy Week as we have observed things that Jesus did. He showed us grit in his last days. We remember that we can receive grace, that as we celebrate next Easter Sunday with the resurrection, we can receive grace because of Jesus' grit. We recall that Jesus showed grit in confronting, grit in serving, grit in commitment. So, what is it that the Lord is calling you to confront in your family, in your church, with a close friend with whom you have relationship equity? Where is he calling you to have grit in serving, even though you're struggling, but you're in a place where you should and could be serving? Where is he calling you to serve? And yes, if you are a follower of Jesus, you are clean enough to serve. Where is he calling you to have grit in commitment? What are the commitments in your life where people are relying on you to have grit?

We have grace. We can receive grace because of the sacrifice of Jesus, because of his grit through the Holy Week and leading up to the resurrection. We are so grateful for that and there should be a response. One of the ways that we can respond is with grit.

Let's close looking at Luke 9. **23 And he said to all, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.** That right there says grit. If you are going to follow me, you must have grit. **24 For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it. 25 For what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses or forfeits himself? 26 For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words, of him will the Son of Man be ashamed when he comes in his glory and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels.**

May we have grit in response to grace that we can receive through Christ.

Father, we love you and we are so eternally, literally grateful for the grace that we can receive and that we celebrate this week leading up to resurrection Easter Sunday next Sunday. We acknowledge, Father, that we celebrate the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus every day of the year, but what a special time in the life of the church, in ceremony and tradition, that we can participate in as we celebrate the resurrection next Sunday.

We pray, Lord, that we would look for ways that we can confront in your name, that we can serve in your name, and that we can stay committed in your name. We pray that we would glorify you in everything that we do, and we seek your truth.

It's in Christ's name we pray... Amen.