

This Week @ Good Shepherd *1-16-21*

The Perfect Parent

The grace of God will be active and at work in your life during this year, in fact, every single day of this year. Of course, it helps for a person to know some of the things to expect, that is, what God will be doing in our lives this year.

What God will be doing in a person's life and how God's grace will be at work is based on who God is. Jesus tried to explain who God is toward us in the word "father" or "abba." The Lord's Prayer starts out with "Our Father in heaven, hallowed by your name" (Matthew 6:9). Jesus was telling us that God is a person, not a "power," or "principle," or "hypothesis." He was also telling us that God will act in a certain way toward us, namely, as a perfect, loving parent.

Our personal experiences of earthly parents can lead us to a warped understanding of what God as "father" would be like. The flaws and failings of earthly parents sometimes get projected onto God. Jesus, on the other hand, was teaching about a heavenly Father who is without flaw or failing. So, if God is personal and acts as the perfect parent toward us, what, according to the Bible, is that like?

First, God is a caring father or parent. The Psalmist says, "As a father has compassion on his children, so the Lord has compassion on those who honor him, for he knows how we are formed, he remembers we are dust" (Psalm 104). God knows our weaknesses and our potential. He has a stance of mercy toward us. That mercy is found in his care for us. Peter says, "Cast all your anxiety on him, because he cares for you" (I Peter 5:7).

God also cares about our daily needs. Jesus teaches us in the Lord's Prayer to ask "our Father in heaven" for our daily needs. In fact, Jesus, in his work of teaching the people, relied each day on his Father's provision. That's why he teaches us in the Sermon on the Mount that we should rely on God's care. Jesus said, "So don't worry saying, 'What shall we eat? ... or what shall we wear? ... Your heavenly Father knows that you need these things'" (Matthew 6:31ff). God cares about the details of your life. As a person trusts God for their daily needs, it allows that person to lay aside their anxiousness and, as Jesus says, "seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness." Trust of the grace of God's care leads to the opportunity not only for inner peace, but also to draw closer to God.

Second, God is a consistent father or parent. Again, that's different from earthly fathers and mothers. The best earthly parents aspire to be consistent with their kids. But, the fact is that consistency is not always there. Some parents can also be very unpredictable, moody, fickle, unreliable, etc. That can leave children pretty confused. God is, according to Jesus, the absolutely consistent parent.

Paul in Second Timothy has a wonderful way of speaking about the consistency of God. "If we are faithless, he will remain faithful, for he cannot disown himself." In other words, the ground of the consistency of God's grace is found in who God is. That consistency extends not only to who God is, but what God promises. The Psalmist says, "What a God he is! How perfect in every way! All his promises prove true" (Psalm 18:30). Someone may hold a grudge against or be resentful about a parent because the parent broke a promise. But, if God promises it, you can stake your life on it.

Finally, God is always a close father or parent. In the busyness of life, a lot of parents are kind of absentee to their kids. Perhaps a parent is physically gone because of work needs. Sometimes a parent can be physically present in the home, but absent by means of internet, gaming, social media, binge watching, etc. Sometimes parents are physically present, but emotionally distant or aloof. God, on the other hand, is always present. The Psalmist says, "The Lord is near to all who call on him ..." (Psalm 145:18). Human parents may become disconnected from their children. God is always near to those who seek him.

God's grace is founded on who God is. God in his grace reaches out to us as a perfect parent. God, according to Jesus' teachings and life, is a heavenly Father who is caring, consistent and close to each of us ... to you.

Good Shepherd Notes

1) COMMITMENT SUNDAY 2021:

Generosity is at the core of the mission of Good Shepherd. Offerings are used to support the mission of God's people as the homeless are fed, children in need are blessed and new followers of Jesus Christ are made. You will see examples of that kind of generosity below.

This month each of us is asked to make our commitments and estimates of giving for 2021. Our offerings support the ministry of Good Shepherd to people, to the mission of Jesus and in worship of God. Commitment Sunday is January 31st. You are asked to make an estimate of giving for 2021 to support the ministry of Good Shepherd. You can make your 2021 commitment by using either the 2021 Commitment Cards that were mailed to you with return envelopes or electronic 2021 Commitment Cards found on Good Shepherd's website: umcgs.org.

Through the gift of generosity we serve God and the world in Jesus' name.

- 2) **Red Shield Diner Dinner:** On December 12th Good Shepherd served a meal to about 200 men, women and children who are homeless or in need. Thanks to the Good Shepherd family whose generosity made that mission work possible. Good Shepherd's next time to provide a meal for the homeless and those who are in need is February 20th. Be looking for upcoming information on how you can help.
- 3) **Angel Tree ministry:** In December Good Shepherd provide Christmas gifts and home baked desserts for forty-seven children who have a parent who is incarcerated. Gifts and desserts were delivered by folks who were part of the Good Shepherd family to the children and their families. Thanks to the Good Shepherd family whose generosity blessed so many children and families. During worship both online and in-person on January 17th, there will be a video telling the story of what was done.
- 4) **"The Grace Filled Marriage":** Couples come to the altar bursting with love for each other. Yet, after that, struggles usually start. Love falls short. That's when we need grace. This group study by Tim and Darcy Kimmel helps folks move toward grace filled marriage. Video content can be previewed through your free RightNow Media account provided by Good Shepherd. Creating your free account is easy. Simply text "RIGHTNOW GOODSHEPHERD" to 41411 and follow the link that is texted by to you. To sign up for the Grace Filled Marriage group that meets weekly, text "Grace Filled" to 405-590-1387.
- 5) **"The Gift of Grace" group study:** Pastor Michael will be leading a group study on the gift of grace on Wednesday's at 6:30-7:30 p.m. starting January 27th. Some of the topics will be: "Forgiven by grace," "Offering Grace," "Restoring Grace," "Growing in Grace." If you would like to be part of this group, text "GIFT" to 405-590-1387.

8) Giving Our Worship Offerings.

Below are listed three ways that worship offerings can be made this Sunday:

First, you can *mail worship offerings* by check to the church at: 10928 S.W. 15th, Yukon, Ok. 73099. For ease of routing, put "attn: Misha" on the envelope.

Second, you can give *worship offerings electronically* by going to Good Shepherd's website at umcgs.org. As you scroll down the page, you will see the "Give" button. By clicking the "Give" button,

you will be sent to our giving portal operated by ShelbyNext Giving. Once in the Giving portal, you will see “My Donation.” Under “Fund” is a drop down menu entitled “Choose a Fund.” You can donate to the general ministry fund of the church either through pledged or unpledged choices.

Third, you can also give your *worship offerings in-person* at our worship on Sunday morning at 10 a.m. in Good Shepherd’s Christian Life Center.

9) Good Shepherd worship online continues this week with two online worship options available at umcgs.org. One option is **Good Shepherd Worship Online (GSW)**. The other option is **Good Shepherd Classic Worship Online (GSC)** which is worship in a classic style. You will find a Good Shepherd Classic (GSC) worship order for this Sunday below.

Good Shepherd *Classic* Worship Online: 1-17-21

Welcome		Pastor Michael Burkett
Opening Prayer		Pastor Michael
Music		
Apostles Creed		Pastor Linda Truitt
Lord’s Prayer		Pastor Linda
Offertory Music		
Scripture Prayer		Pastor Linda
Scripture Reading	Acts 8:26-31, 35	Pastor Linda
Sermon		Pastor Michael
Music		
Remember This Week		Pastor Linda
Benediction		Pastor Linda