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# Christ Church Blackpool

## Foundations Reflection Guide

### Part 1: Grace Changes Everything

This reflection guide is designed for uses for those who have listened or watched **Part 1: Grace Changes Everything**.

It provides space to process the scriptures and apply the "Foundations" teaching.

The Big Idea through this session is that God's grace isn't just a topic; it's the atmosphere—a way of life that flows into every area of church life and our existence. God freely offers His mercy and favour because of who He is, not because of anything we have done. Not because of who we are but because of what Jesus Christ has done.

## 1. From Death to Life

- **Read Ephesians 2:1–10.**

*As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath. But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.*

*Ephesians 2:1–10*

- **The Diagnosis:** Before Christ, we weren't just "off track"; we were spiritually dead. Dead people cannot choose to live; they need a miracle.
- **The Pivot:** In verse 4, we see the words: "But God...".
- **Reflection:** How does it change your perspective to know that you are God's "handiwork"—His poem or masterpiece—created for good works He already prepared for you?

**Write:** Are you currently treating God's love like a *gift* to be enjoyed, or a *bill* you are trying to pay off?

## 2. The Courtroom: Justified by Faith

- **Read Romans 4:4–5 and 5:1–8.**

*Now to the one who works, wages are not credited as a gift but as an obligation. However, to the one who does not work but trusts God who justifies the ungodly, their faith is credited as righteousness.*

*Romans 4:4-5*

*Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we boast in the hope of the glory of God. Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.*

*You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*

*Romans 5:1-8*

- **The Verdict:** God doesn't "owe" us salvation as a wage for our work. Instead, He justifies the ungodly who trust Him, crediting their faith as righteousness.
- **The Result:** Because we are justified, we have peace with God. This isn't just a feeling; it is a permanent legal status.
- **Reflection:** Jesus died for us while we were still sinners—at our absolute worst. Does knowing your status is based on His work, not yours, give you more confidence to approach Him?

### 3. Living Under Grace vs. The Law

- **Read Romans 7:1-6.**

*Do you not know, brothers and sisters—for I am speaking to those who know the law—that the law has authority over someone only as long as that person lives? For example, by law a married woman is bound to her husband as long as he is alive, but if her husband dies, she is released from the law that binds her to him. So then, if she has sexual relations with another man while her husband is still alive, she is called an adulteress. But if her husband dies, she is released from that law and is not an adulteress if she marries another man. So, my brothers and sisters, you also died to the law through the body of Christ, that you might belong to another, to him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit for God. For when we were in the realm of the flesh, the sinful passions aroused by the law were at work in us, so that we bore fruit for death. But now, by dying to what once bound us, we have been released from the law so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit, and not in the old way of the written code.*

*Romans 7:1-6*

- **The Analogy:** Paul describes trying to earn salvation through deeds as a "marriage to Mr. Law". He is perfect and always right, but he never lifts a finger to help you; he only points out your mistakes.
- **The Freedom:** In Christ, we have "died to the law" so we can be joined to another—Jesus.
- **Reflection:** The Law is like a mirror; it shows you that your face is dirty, but it cannot wash you. Only Christ can wash us. Where are you still trying to use "rules" to fix yourself instead of turning to Jesus?

## 4. Understanding the Voice You Hear

Use the table below to distinguish between condemnation that comes from the Enemy and conviction which comes from God the Holy Spirit:

### Condemnation

Vague and heavy.

Says: "You are a failure; God is done."

Leads to shame and hiding.

### Conviction

Specific and clear.

Says: "This behaviour doesn't fit who you are."

Leads to hope and change ("Let's fix it").

- **No Condemnation:** *There is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ. If you have put your faith in Jesus, he took all the punishment for your sin past present and future upon himself at the cross.*

*There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.*

*Roman 8:1-4*

- **Reflection:** Next time you fail, practice identifying the voice. Is it pushing you away from God (Condemnation) or drawing you toward Him to be healed (Conviction)?

## 5. Grace as Your Trainer

- **Read Titus 2:11–12 and Luke 7:47.**

*"I tell you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven – for she loved much. But he who is forgiven little, loves little."*

*Luke 7:47*

*Note how living in the grace of God daily equips us to live purposeful lives: For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age.*

*Titus 2:11-12*

- **The Motivation:** We don't obey to avoid punishment; we obey because we are in love with the One who saved us. Grace actually *trains* us to say "no" to ungodliness.
- **Reflection:** Think of the woman who anointed Jesus' feet. She loved much because she was forgiven much. How does remembering the depth of your forgiveness fuel your worship today?
- **Read Hebrews 4:14–16.**

*Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.*

*Hebrews 4:14 -16*

- Jesus is not distant or annoyed by your weaknesses; He sympathizes with them. You can approach His throne with **confidence** to find help in your time of need.
- When we sin God wants us to run towards him, it is the enemy who wants us to run and hid.
- **Reflection:** Do you run towards His love or away when you sin?

## Questions

1. **Receiving God's free Gift:** Have you put your faith in Jesus Christ, accepted Him as your Lord and saviour and received His free gift of grace?
2. **The Gift vs. The Bill:** Are you currently living as if God's love is a gift to be enjoyed, or a bill you are constantly trying to pay off through your behaviour?
3. **The "But God" Moment:** We were all "dead in transgressions" before Christ intervened. Can you identify the specific moment or season where God's mercy moved you from "death" to "life"?
4. **The Voice of Grace:** When you fail or make a mistake, do you respond to the heavy, shaming voice of **Condemnation**, or the hopeful, correcting voice of the Holy Spirit's **Conviction**?
5. **Motivation for Good:** How does knowing your "good works" cannot *earn* salvation change the way you serve others this week?
6. **The Throne of Grace:** Is there a specific area of weakness in your life right now where you need to stop hiding and instead approach the "Throne of Grace" with confidence to find help?