

ESSENTIAL GENES ; THE WAY WE LOOK AT LIFE

THE ESSENTIAL DUO : PS. Jonathan Dove

Contrasting:

An impressive life (without divine purpose)

An unimpressive (or possibly unimpressive) life with divine purpose

GRACE

You're fine

We love you regardless

Unconditional love

Forgiveness

Relationship (warmth/hugs)

Come as you are

TRUTH

You're accountable

Tough love

Justice

Consequences

Rules

Don't stay as you are

Does either remind you of one parent or both parents?

Which do you connect with?

A Grace family will give approval, love, a Truth family may have good ethics but no warmth, a child must earn approval.

Do we tend to give grace to people we like and give truth to those who mess up?
Grace to a friend who is hurting, and truth to a friend who hurts us?

How do you respond in life? In grace or truth?

We would probably rather receive grace than truth. There's a tension between the two.

How do we know which to do? How did Jesus minister? Was his ministry about grace or truth?

Sometimes it seems all about truth, see e.g. Luke 18.18-25

At other times, about grace. See e.g. Luke 23.39-43

Can you think of other examples of truth or grace in Jesus' ministry?

John, Jesus' disciple, describes Jesus in John 1.14.

How did he see Jesus' ministry?

As he was, so the church - we - are called to be the same

Read John 8.1-11. How does this example show Jesus full of grace and truth?

Religious leaders were determined on truth, and they wanted to catch Jesus out. After all, they had the law on their side. But their truth was very selective.

Where was the man concerned in this sin? They were trying to trap Jesus, they

didn't really care about truth, and were certainly not interested in grace, but they suspected that Jesus might be.

If Jesus agrees to stone the woman, the crowd would see that he had no compassion, but if he just forgives her, where is truth?

Jesus said nothing, he stooped and wrote in the dust. What did he write?

Is he buying time?

Is he writing the sentence as a Roman magistrate would do?

Is he writing the names of the mob?

Is he writing the sins of the crowd?

We aren't told what he wrote, but the mob wanted an answer. What was his answer? Then he wrote again. What happened next?

How do we react to accusations about others?

What comments/judgments might we make?

In such situations we tend to

1. Bring selective truth – You were a mess, you are a mess, or just one decision from becoming a mess.....

2. Ignore grace.

Jesus didn't condemn the woman – this was grace

He told her to go and sin no more – this was truth

He receives her as she is, and frees her to live a new life

We all come to Jesus with the stains of sin – in our words, thoughts, actions which aren't perfect.

Jesus says the same to us – I don't condemn you, I forgive you – go and sin no more.

Jesus took our sin, our shame, our judgment on himself so that we too can be free to sin no more.

Like Jesus, we need, our church needs to be full of grace and truth.

People can come as they are and be welcomed and received, but as well, we can tell them – Don't stay as you are, let God transform you, set you free.