

Building A Community of Grace

Luke 15:11-32, Luke 7:36-50

Every church has a culture, consider the culture of our own church- Aldersgate Methodist Church, and remember its namesake and the heritage behind the name. Remember also the position that our church is placed in- amidst the schools, technology and research facilities, within the 'brain' of Singapore. Our church serves as church of encounter as well, a place where people will have a heartwarming encounter with Christ and His grace.

But how do we develop this culture of grace?

Consider the gravity of our sins

Knowing ourselves and our besetting sins

In reference to the story of the prodigal son, both the elder and younger son were just as wrongful towards the father. The elder son's jealousy and his act of calling out his father was humiliating to him- and yet the father reacted in tenderness and mercy, just as he did for the younger son.

Refer to Father Rohr's interpretation of the Enneagram, to see the 9 Enneagram personality types with their virtues, compulsions and paths towards spiritual growth.

Knowing the cost of these sins

The sacrifices of an innocent lamb and the Lamb of God: (Hebrews 9: 22, 10:4)

'Indeed, under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins.' – Hebrews 9: 22

'For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.' - Hebrews 10:4

Discovering that God **likes** us

Know that God is kind, and He loves us beyond a love that is simply obliging out of His kind nature. God likes us as well!

'The LORD your God is in your midst,
a mighty one who will save;
he will rejoice over you with gladness;
he will quiet you by his love;
he will exult over you with loud singing.'

- Zephaniah 3: 17

'...but the LORD takes pleasure in those who fear him,
in those who hope in his steadfast love.'

- Psalms 147:11

Refer to 'I am there' by James Dillet Freeman

Knowing that God likes You, remember that God likes the people whom you find difficult. Focus on the good in them, and fast and pray for them if they continue to be difficult, and let God change your attitude towards them.

Living in the atmosphere of grace

Relax and rest in the Lord

Learn to play and enjoy in the Father's pleasure.

Allow the Lord to surprise You by His Grace

Learn to recognize moments where He extends His grace towards you. Enjoy it, remember it, and share that grace.

Reflection Points

1. Look at the Enneagram 'scripts'. What is the Lord saying to you in His grace?
2. What difference does it make for you to know that God likes you (beyond just loving you) and is kind? What difference does it make for you to know that He likes and is kind to a difficult person in your life? Is He asking you to also extend His grace to them? Consider even praying or fasting for them as well.
3. Share an experience when you were surprised by His grace. How did that make you feel? What difference does it make for you in your life?
4. For this week, seek to find rest and relaxation in the Lord. Play and enjoy in His presence and feel His pleasure over you.