

# Attributes of God

## Gospel of John

### God Is Gracious

**Key Verse** – “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth...For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.” (John 1:14,17, ESV)

The goal of this week's lesson is to help the children understand the grace of God. Here is a general definition of God's grace — “All that God does in undeserved love to benefit human beings in general and His children in particular.”<sup>1</sup> This lesson should begin with the predecessor of God's grace in Christ, the Mosaic Law. It is possible to say that God's giving of the Law was a gracious act for a few reasons: 1) It revealed God's holy standard; 2) It had provision for real, temporary forgiveness for sin in the sacrificial system. However, the Law was unable to give life, despite the real, temporary forgiveness from sin it provided with each sacrifice. Today, believers now celebrate the fullness of grace that came in the Person of the Lord Jesus, whose sacrifice provides permanent forgiveness from sin and who possesses the ability to give life to dead men and women who are deserving only of judgment.

### Preparation

Materials:

- Strange Laws Game — Includes 4 corner markers, as well as a list of strange laws and answers.
- Tape
- Grace word searches
- Grace coloring page

Set-up:

- Before the children come into the room, set up 4 corners near the teaching area by taping the corner markers (Letters A-D) to the wall. Then, when you ask a question, you will have the students *walk* to the corner they think represents the answer.

### Bible Verse (5-10 minutes)

<sup>1</sup> Hollowman, Dictionary of Bible and Theology, 184-185.

John 3:16 (ESV) – “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.”

Memorization — Have the students repeat the Bible verse with hand motions 2-3 times.

Song — Have the students sing “For God So Loved The World” (SFW, ESV) at least once.

NOTE — Start the Bible Verse section at the beginning without waiting for students who may arrive late. This will preserve the allotted times for other sections.

## Lesson (20-25 minutes)

Main Idea – God is gracious.

Pray

### Introduction (5 minutes)

Today, we are going to start with a game — “Strange Laws.” In this game, I will read a strange law, and the names of four states in America. You must guess which state you believe this law exists. Each student will be given a card representing their “life”. The goal of the game is to make it to the end without having to give up your card. That’s the Law — if you fail to get the right answer, your card is taken. When you reveal the correct answer, you will take all the cards from the students who still have them and have gotten that question wrong. Students who lose their card are still allowed to play until the end.

1. In this state, you need a permit to feed garbage to a pig.
  - A. Alaska
  - B. Mississippi
  - C. Ohio
  - D. Arizona**
2. In this state, you are not allowed to use silly string outside of your home.
  - A. Texas
  - B. Nevada
  - C. Connecticut**
  - D. Georgia
3. In this state, you cannot catch a fish using a firearm.
  - A. Main
  - B. Indiana**
  - C. Nebraska

- D. South Dakota
4. In this state, you cannot throw a chicken into the air without the intent to catch them.
- A. North Carolina
- B. Utah
- C. Minnesota**
- D. New Mexico
5. In this state, you are not allowed to pump your own gas at the gas station.
- A. New Jersey**
- B. Oklahoma
- C. Louisiana
- D. Colorado

After the last question, you can have all the kids sit down and ask questions about the US Laws.

- What happens if you break the law? — You have to pay the price by giving up your life card.
- What if you didn't know you were breaking the law? — It doesn't matter if you didn't know the law, you broke it, are guilty, and have to lose your life card.

If you break the law, you must pay the price. If you lose your life card, you are going to need something very important if you want to keep living — grace!

What is grace? Grace is undeserved kindness. When a person receives grace, it is a kindness that they did not deserve that spares them from consequences that they do deserve.

Main Point — God is gracious.

Today, we are going to talk about why it is so important to understand God's grace.

### **Body (15 minutes)**

Throughout history, God's grace has been on display for His people. In the garden, after Adam and Eve sinned against God, they were in need of God's grace so that they wouldn't have to pay the penalty for sin. **What was the penalty for sin?** Death! We see in the garden that instead of dying physically, God spared Adam and Eve by killing an animal in their place to provide them with a covering for their nakedness.

Fast forward thousands of years, and God gives Israel the Law. Here is where John 1:17 begins — "For the law was given through Moses..."

**What was the Law?** The Law was God's holy standard.

**Why did God give Israel the Law?** So that Israel would know that sinful men and women — even those who were chosen by God to be His own people — cannot live up to God's holy standard.

Illustration — God’s law is like a mirror. When you look into it, it shows you your sinfulness and that you fall short of God’s perfect standard.

**What happens if you cannot live up to God’s holy standard?** — You must be judged for your sin. A holy God cannot tolerate sin. This is very bad news for sinners.

But, it’s also true that God’s gift of the Law to His people was a gracious one. Here are two reasons why the gift of God’s Law was an act of grace.

First, as we just talked about, the Law revealed God’s holy standard — If you don’t know that God has a holy standard, you cannot understand the danger you are in because of your sin. When God made known His standard to Israel, men and women with eyes to see and ears to hear His Word learned the serious danger they were in. The Bible tells us that God designed the Law for this very purpose — to show Israel their need for something greater than the Law. Which brings us to the second way.

Second, God’s gift of the Law was gracious because it included the sacrificial system. **Can someone explain to me how sacrifices worked?**

- First, a person could recognize from the Law when they had sinned against God.
- Second, a person could take the proper sacrifice to the priests.
- Third, the sacrifice — a lamb, or bull — was killed in the place of the person. The shedding of the animals blood was a reminder to the sinner that their sin requires death. And because of God’s grace, they were able to be forgiven as long as something else died in their place.

That is a gracious system! However, there was a problem. **What was the problem?** God’s grace for sin in the Law was only temporary. If you sinned again, you needed another sacrifice to be forgiven. And so while God’s people enjoyed some of God’s grace in the Law, they did not experience the fullness of His grace! God did not design the Law to be fully obeyed — because it couldn’t be obeyed fully by sinful men and women — but to show us our need for even more grace from God.

That brings us to the rest of John 1:17 — “The law was given through Moses, grace and truth came through Jesus Christ!”

The fullness of grace and truth came in the Person of the Lord Jesus! He is what we need if we don’t want to have to suffer the consequences for our sin.

First, Jesus fulfills God’s holy standard — The Law that we could never fully obey, Jesus obeyed in our place. When we believe in Him, His righteousness is transferred to us! The Law doesn’t have the ability to give life to us, but Jesus does!

Second, Jesus died the death that we deserved — The problem with the blood of lambs and bulls was that they could never provide lasting forgiveness of sin. The good news is that Jesus was the sinless Lamb of God, and His blood does provide lasting forgiveness of sin!

### **Conclusion (5 minutes)**

God is a gracious God. God’s Word is filled with example of His grace — undeserving kindness and love towards sinners who deserve only judgment. But the greatest example of God’s grace is when He

sent His Son to die for sinners. This is the good news of the gospel — and when we believe the good news of the gospel, it is the power of God that saves us.

All of us need God's grace every day. Believe in Jesus — the only way you can truly know the grace of God — and you will be saved. But reject the grace of God in Jesus, and you will perish.

Pray

## **Lesson Activities (20-25 minutes)**