

GRACE TRANSFORMS

WEEK 1

BELIEVE

*...because, if you confess with your mouth that
Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that
God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.
¹⁰ For with the heart one believes and is justified,
and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.*

Romans 10:9-10 (ESV)

SERMON NOTES — BELIEVE :: 1

TOPIC _____

SPEAKER _____

DATE _____

TESTAMENT OLD NEW

SONGS/HYMNS _____

MOOD 😄 😊 😐 😞 😓 😴

TODAY I AM GRATEFUL FOR _____

KEY POINTS _____

SCRIPTURES _____

NOTES _____

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

What stuck out to you as you read this weekend's Scripture passages?

Did these verses raise any questions as you read?

Where do we see Jesus Christ in these verses?

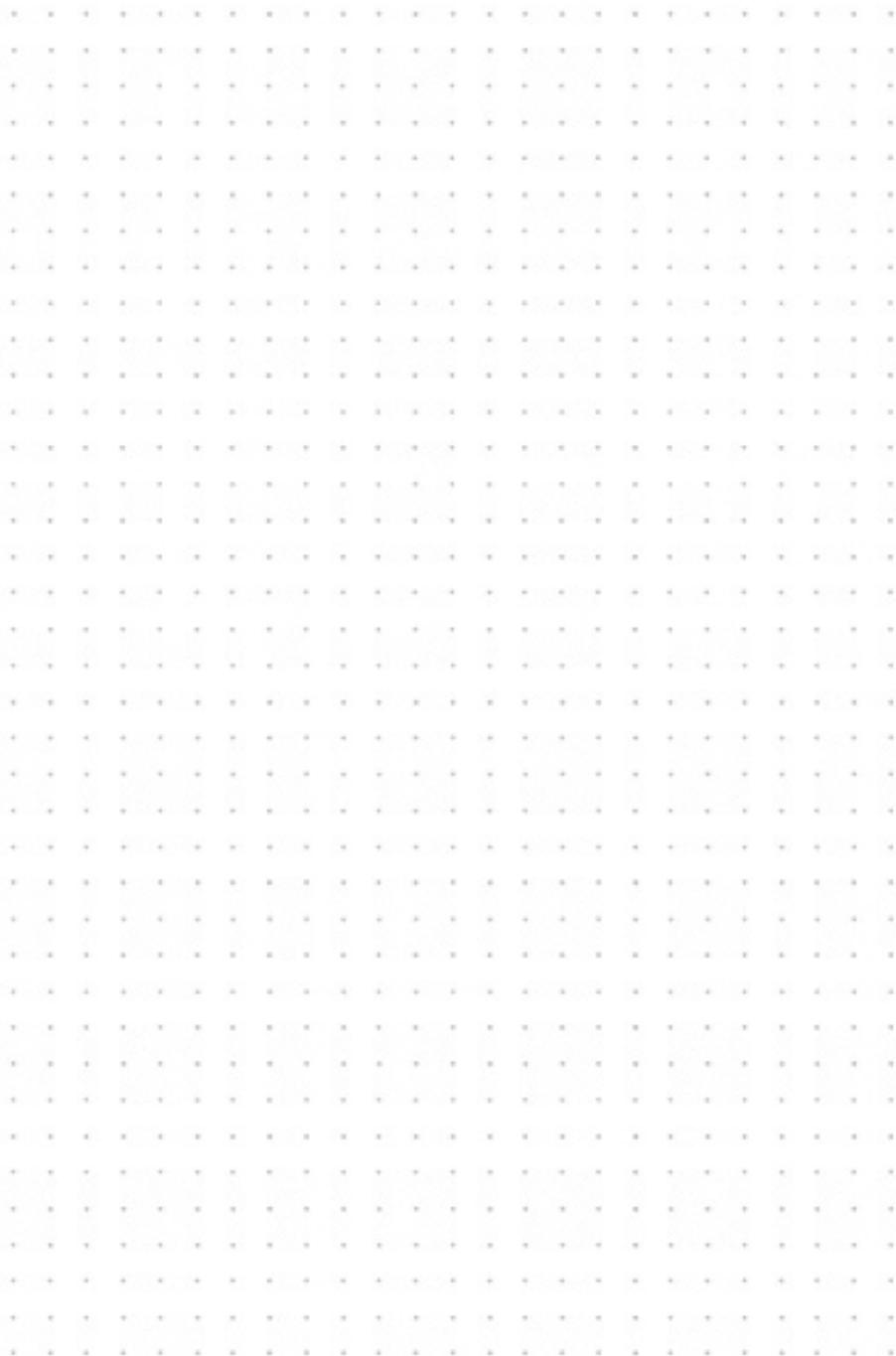
As you read this weekend's Scripture, ask yourself, "Are these verses...

1. teaching me something?"
2. telling me to stop doing something I am doing?"
3. correcting some wrong thinking or behavior?"
4. preparing me to live more effectively for him?"

Write down the name of someone who might benefit from hearing what you've seen in the Bible.

Why is this passage in this particular book of the Bible? What might the Bible lose if this passage was left out? What's the author's main point? *(Try to sum up your answer in one sentence.)*

JOURNAL



INTRODUCTION — BELIEVE

Grace Transforms residents of earth into Citizens of Heaven who Believe in Jesus Christ.

We are Big Valley Grace Community Church. Grace is at the center of who we are, in fact Grace is our middle name. The Bible teaches that it is by grace, through faith, in Jesus Christ alone that we can know the salvation of God.

“For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.” Ephesians 2:8-10 (ESV)

Paul wrote this to the believers in Ephesus who had been transformed by the grace of God to believe in Jesus Christ.

“And it happened that while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul passed through the inland country and came to Ephesus. There he found some disciples. And he said to them, ‘Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?’ And they said, ‘No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit.’ And he said, ‘Into what then were you baptized?’ They said, ‘Into John’s baptism.’ And Paul said, ‘John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in the one who was to come after him, that is, Jesus.’ On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.” Acts 19:1-5 (ESV)

NEXT STEP :: *The grace of God begins to transform a life by providing authentic faith that enables a person to believe in Jesus Christ. Have you placed your faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior of your life? Share your story of how grace is transforming you to believe in Jesus Christ.*

REFLECT

What did you hear? _____

What do you think? _____

What will you do? _____

Now talk with God... _____

DAY 1 — BELIEVE

Believe

2 Corinthians 3:12-18

Unbelief is a veil that lies over people's hearts holding them prisoner to the bondage of sin. That was true of the God's people under Moses, as well as us today. But when one turns to the Lord—when we believe and repent of our sin—Jesus unlocks the prison doors and sets us free. We cannot set ourselves free. “For by grace you have been saved through faith...it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.” Ephesians 2:8-9 (ESV)

Just as our salvation is by grace through faith, so is our sanctification. Sanctification is the process of our lives being transformed into Christ's image from one degree of glory to another. We cannot set ourselves free, nor can we transform ourselves. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit. Both are His work. Our part is simply to believe. Where salvation takes place when we first believe, sanctification takes place as we daily continue to trust and believe.

As we daily turn to the Lord, the Spirit of the Lord transforms us more and more from a “Resident of Earth” into a “Citizen of Heaven.” He is transforming us, not just for ourselves, but to use us to influence, win, equip and multiply others for Jesus Christ, until the day He calls us home to be with Him forever. So, believe! It transforms our lives and others also!

NEXT STEP :: *Lord, remove the veil of my unbelief and help me with each new day to believe and trust You fully!*

REFLECT

What did you hear? _____

What do you think? _____

What will you do? _____

Now talk with God... _____

DAY 2 — BELIEVE

To Whom Shall We Go?

John 6:28-40, 68-69

John 6:68-69 says, “Simon Peter replied, ‘Lord, to whom would we go? You have the words that give eternal life.’”

Academics, athletics, professional expertise, and politics are just a few examples of things that we place our belief in. I’m not talking about an intellectual transaction, but a deep faith. After all, that’s what “to believe” means in this context. Our GPA, top 10 ranked status, list of certifications, and pundit subscriptions all help us find some semblance of security in a chaotic world. Or at least until they fail, and they will fail. Then, we are just left hopelessly scrambling in the dark.

I can relate to Peter in this passage. Peter’s identity was wrapped up into being a professional, expert fisherman. I was obsessed with my academic and athletic prowess. Unfortunately, both our souls remained empty and lost until Jesus spoke into the depths of our purposelessness. Then, and only then, did abundant life (John 10:10) become possible.

NEXT STEP :: *How about you? Are the things you believe in filling that hole in your soul? Do they offer the peace that can only be found in the words of Jesus? Is what you believe in guaranteed to satisfy every time? To whom else can you go that has the words of life?*

REFLECT

What did you hear? _____

What do you think? _____

What will you do? _____

Now talk with God... _____

DAY 3 — BELIEVE

Real Cleansing Power

Titus 3:4-7

Modern washing machines coupled with today's detergents offer an able parallel to God's salvation. We put in the dirty clothes and the soap; the washer does the rest. Here, Paul stresses that salvation is not of our own doing, but by the washing of regeneration.

We are not justified by works of law (Romans 3:20). No boasting! (Ephesians 2:8-9). We have all tried to witness to people who believe they must "clean up" before they can come to Christ. But there are no "self-made" followers of Jesus. It is not by any works of righteous that we have done, but our salvation and justification is entirely based upon the mercy of God through the regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit (Titus 3:5).

Justification simply means to be made right in the eyes of another. God has arranged that by faith we can be made right in His eyes. It is through no effort of ours, since Jesus paid the price for sin, and that "pay off" is applied to us by faith in God's Son, Jesus. Payment is credited to all who receive Jesus by faith. We are made right by washing of regeneration.

So, we experience real cleansing power. Like putting the dirty clothes and soap in the washer and letting them do the work, we commit our lives to Jesus and HIS finished work on our behalf cleanses us from sin, not only in justification, but day by day.

NEXT STEP :: *Heavenly Father, thank You for giving your Son on my behalf, for my justification, for my cleansing, for my salvation.*

REFLECT

What did you hear? _____

What do you think? _____

What will you do? _____

Now talk with God... _____

DAY 4 — BELIEVE

We All Love Something That's Brand New

2 Corinthians 5:16-19

We all love something that's brand new. What's more exciting than buying a new car? Or getting an upgraded iPhone or the latest pair of shoes? New is bigger, better, fancier, and more desirable. However, there's something even better than tons of new things. We can be new!! And everything around us can become new! How can this happen?

In this passage, Paul tells us that by God's transforming grace we can all become new. We are changed from the inside out and our perception of the entire world changes and becomes new.

Christ offered to change us forever and to bring us joy and peace, despite the fact that we have been living our lives for ourselves rather than for Him. We don't deserve this offer, nor will we ever be able to be worthy of it. The God of the universe is graciously willing to forgive us our sins, take it upon Himself, change our very nature, and offer us an abundant and eternal life. Behold, new things can really come for anyone!

NEXT STEP :: *Have you ever received something you did not deserve? Have you thought about changing from inside rather from the outside?*

Dear God, I want to be changed from the inside out. I want to be reconciled with You, become a new creature, and let old things pass away.

REFLECT

What did you hear? _____

What do you think? _____

What will you do? _____

Now talk with God... _____

DAY 5 — BELIEVE

Zacchaeus—A Wee Little Man

Luke 19:1-10

Growing up and going to Sunday School, we sang a song about Zacchaeus, a wee little man. From the encounter that Zacchaeus had with Jesus we can learn much more about him other than that he was short in stature.

1. Zacchaeus had a desire to see Jesus, and he didn't let his circumstances limit his opportunity. The large crowd made it difficult for him to see Jesus, but he made the effort to climb a sycamore tree.
2. Jesus saw Zacchaeus and called him down out of the tree. Jesus invited Zacchaeus to allow Him to stay at his house and to develop a relationship with Him.
3. Zacchaeus received Jesus joyfully. Zacchaeus made haste and came down from the tree joyfully receiving Jesus' invitation. This is a stark contrast to the rich young ruler in Luke 18. When Jesus invited him to receive eternal life, his wealth caused him to be sorrowful and turn away.
4. Zacchaeus responded to Jesus and was a changed man. Zacchaeus recognized his sinful past and gave half of his goods to the poor and repaid those from whom he had falsely collected taxes. Zacchaeus' encounter with Jesus changed him from a tax collector who took from people to a giver who repaid them fourfold.

Jesus continues to change lives today for those who recognize their need for Him and accept His invitation to allow Him into their lives. "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold the new has come." 2 Corinthians 5:17

NEXT STEP :: *Father in heaven, make my heart more like Zacchaeus, eager to see Jesus and obedient to the promptings of Your Holy Spirit!*

REFLECT

What did you hear? _____

What do you think? _____

What will you do? _____

Now talk with God... _____
