

Sermon Title: **Spiritual Discipline 1 - In Grace**

Bible: Luke 2:39-52 (NIV)

Where & When: Sunday Service at Gilroy UMC on October 13th, 2019

Audience: about 33 English-speaking Church Members

Opening Prayer

Gracious God, you love us! Your grace is always with us! Your grace invites us, changes us, and guides us to your presence. We want to grow in your grace. Please be with my lips in your love and grace. In Jesus' name. Amen.

1. Jesus' Growth

In the Bible that we have, it is not easy to find out much about the childhood of Jesus. The Gospel of Luke has one story about Jesus as a boy. In this story that we read, even a young Jesus was very special and smart. What came to me were verses 40 and 52. Jesus' growth is not only by Himself, but also by the grace of God and in divine and human favor. Even Jesus's life was in grace and love of God.

2. By Grace - Sanctifying Grace

In the Methodist tradition, the spiritual life is an ongoing process in grace. Our life is all by Grace. God invites us through prevenient grace to the relationship with God. By Justifying Grace, we experience a new beginning and new birth, personal transformation or conversion. We grow and bear fruits by Sanctifying Grace. Because we are born to be loved and to love one another, God's love and grace are with us.

We can stay in God's grace in many ways. Wesley's means of grace are the public worship of God (for example, coming to Sunday Worship), the ministry of the Word (reading the Bible), the supper of the Lord (joining the Holy Communion), family and private prayer (praying privately or together), searching the Scriptures (Bible Study), fasting or abstinence (fasting from food, Facebook or coffee), and Christian conferencing (meetings, small groups).

3. Spiritual Life Questions

To me, the means of grace is spiritual discipline, and spiritual discipline is the means of grace. Without God's grace, we cannot grow and we cannot be mature. For 2020, I prepared one survey, spiritual life questions, because I want to serve you more and better. In the fellowship hall, I put copies of the survey. You can fill out the form during Coffee Time. You can take it to your home and submit it next Sunday. Please feel free to write down your name. There are two big questions. The first question is "In which spiritual disciplines do you want to grow?" Similar to Wesley's means of grace, there are many ways of spiritual discipline. You can choose one or many.

The second question is "What is your plan for your continued spiritual growth and development?" In this survey, there are 4 areas; connecting with God, connecting with others, exploring the arts, and caring for the body. Our souls can experience God's grace in many ways.

4. 2020 Goals - Lunch for the Homeless & Vacation Bible School

To serve others is one way of means of grace or spiritual disciplines. Our lay leaders set up two goals for the next year. The first goal is to serve the homeless more. One idea is providing

lunch to the homeless. In the winter season, we have fed the homeless on Monday evenings at the Armory. We want to do more! That's because feeding the homeless is joyful and meaningful to us. Our leaders are thinking about providing lunch, too. After a couple of discussions, we will make decisions of when, where, how often, and how to provide lunch to the homeless.

The second goal is to have a 2020 Vacation Bible School. We need to have a warm up exercise to get ready for having a Vacation Bible School. I want to show off our steadfast love for the kids and the community. We are here for you. We are thinking about you. We care about you. We are knocking at your door with God's love that we have. So, this coming church Halloween event will be the first warming-up. It will be a Church Trunk or Treat activity.

5. Church Trunk or Treat

I would like to spend some time on explaining this event, because we need many volunteers. I see the potential of many teachers and volunteers for VBS. What we need is children. Our passion and love for children led me to think of planning Church Trunk or Treat. In the church parking lot, I plan to have 4 cars, 4 trunk or treats. I suggest that 3 or 4 people make one team. Each team brings one car, decorates the trunk, and prepares candy and some alternatives. It would be better to have some creative alternatives such as play doh or bubbles. We will decorate the outside of the church with two games; pumpkin bean bag toss game and spider ring toss game. As Jesus is the light, we plan to put out some yard signs of pumpkin lanterns. There will be Children's Halloween music.

To advertise this event will be challenging and fun. I printed out some posters. I hope for us to post these posters in some public places, after getting permission. And I myself plan to pass out flyers near the church: Church St. and Rosanna St. There will be a volunteer sign-up sheet in the fellowship hall. I hope that we can make it all happen together!

I do not know how many kids and families might come and enjoy our event. To me, the children and families are a gracious gift of God. A gift that is neither warranted by our efforts nor limited by our weakness. I just want us to let the grace flow from us to the community. Yes, we have God's grace. God's grace is in us, and is overflowing. Just let it be overflowing to the community.

Closing Prayer

Gracious God, we are your people. We are your loved ones. We have your love. Now we want to share your love through our actions. Please pour out your love and grace upon us. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Possible Qs.

1. When do you experience God's Grace?
2. What spiritual discipline do you practice or want to have?