

*The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and **gracious**, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children and the children's children, to the third and the fourth generation.*” Exodus 34:6-7

## OPEN

- Do you find it easier to give grace or to receive grace? Why?

## DISCOVER

Read Exodus 34:6-7

The Hebrew word for gracious is *khanun* which is related to *khen* which means ‘grace or favor.’ The word most often occurs in the idiomatic expression ‘to find favor in someone’s eyes.’

Read Esther 8:3-8

- Esther makes her request on the basis of the King’s *khen* – ‘favor’ (v. 5). What do you learn about *khen* from the king’s response to Esther?<sup>i</sup>

Read Genesis 32:3-8 and 33:1-11

- What does Jacob have to fear (v.7; Gen 27:35-36, 41)?
- How does Esau show *khen* to Jacob?
- When Esau receives Jacob’s gift, if he receiving a bribe or a gift of thanksgiving?<sup>ii</sup>

Read Exodus 33:3, 16-17.

- Why does the LORD change his mind and say he will go with Israel?<sup>iii</sup>

Read Isaiah 30:18-19.

- What keeps the LORD’s people from experiencing his *khen*?

- How does the LORD continue to show *khen*, even when the people do not cry out to him?

Read John 1:14-18.

- The Greek word for *khen* is *kharis*, which means gracious gift. How is Jesus the ultimate expression of the LORD’s *kharis*?

## DEEPEN

Read Ephesians 2:1-10.

- Make a list of all the reasons we do not deserve *kharis*. On what basis can we dare ask the LORD for anything?
- What actions does the LORD take toward us because of his *kharis*?

## SO WHAT?<sup>iv</sup>

- A friend says to you they want to “receive” Jesus (see John 1:12). They ask how you do that. What do you say?<sup>v</sup>
- Why is the LORD *kharis* toward you?<sup>vi</sup>
- What would motivate you to act with *kharis* toward others?
- How is *kharis* viewed in our world? Where is *kharis* lacking in our world? What might it cost you to act with *kharis* toward people in your neighborhood or workplace?

- Jesus is “full of *kharis* and truth” (John 1:14). How does truth relate to *kharis*?
- How do you experience the LORD’s *kharis* in a worship service?

## PRAY

This week, [1] give thanks for one way God has shown his graciousness to you, and [2] pray for one person who needs to experience the LORD’s graciousness. If you can’t think of anyone, ask the LORD to show you someone this week who needs some grace. Remember: keep it simple: *“LORD, thank you for your grace in forgiving me when I didn’t deserve it. LORD, Joe thinks your judgmental and mean. Help him see your graciousness. Amen.”*

<sup>i</sup> Obviously the king grants her request, but note how generous he is and how life changing his favor is for so many.

<sup>ii</sup> Esau shows grace before receiving the gift. He doesn’t need the gift to show grace. The gift is received as an affirmation of Esau’s favor, not as a bribe.

<sup>iii</sup> Theologians argue endlessly if God can change his mind. Save that question for another time. The LORD in his dealings with people presents himself in ways people can understand. To Moses he appears to change his mind.

<sup>iv</sup> SO WHAT questions remind us that the goal of studying the Bible is not more information, but life. Jesus says he comes to give us life, abundant life (John 10:10). The Word calls for a response. We can respond to the Word many

## Prayer Requests

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different ways. We can repent, believe, trust, pray, give thanks, share, meditate, forgive. What is the LORD calling you to do in order to live an abundant life with him?

<sup>v</sup> Why did his people not receive him (v.11)? They didn’t believe he was the Christ. To receive Jesus is to believe (v.12). To believe is to have faith in who Jesus is and what he has done. This is more than an intellectual ascent (the demons believe at this level). This believe includes trust and dependence upon Jesus for life now and forever. To believe is to give your allegiance to Jesus – you’re betting your life he is the way, the truth, and the life.

<sup>vi</sup> This question has no answer beyond the LORD is gracious to you because the LORD is gracious.