

OUR GIVING GOD

Givens as Gifts
Various Scriptures
Sunday, December 13, 2020

1. God's _____ of judgment and _____ of judgment.
2. The _____ and _____ of the created world.
3. The _____ and _____ of the created world.
4. The ability of humankind to know, understand, create, accomplish and _____.
5. The _____ of evil through the human conscience and how the world generally works.
6. _____ and _____ as institutions to promote human flourishing.
7. The _____ and _____ of the church in the world.

TAKE A NEXT STEP

This week, as we approach Christmas, take 15-30 minutes to ponder one of the 7 gifts above. What would it be like if that gift were absent or missing from our world? Use some of your time to thank God for this gift we too often take for granted.

NEXT WEEK: *God So Loved the World that He Gave* | Various Texts

Today's Scripture Reading

Our scripture reading today is a compilation of several texts, which are printed here for your convenience.

The Lord is good to all, and His mercy is over all that He has made. The eyes of all look to you, and you give them their food in due season. You open your hand; you satisfy the desire of every living thing. (Psalm 145:9,15-16)

You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, 'love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.' (Matthew 5:43-45)

We bring you good news, that you should turn from these vain things to a living God, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and all that is in them. In past generations He allowed all the nations to walk in their own ways yet He did not leave himself without witness, for He did good by giving you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, satisfying your hearts with food and gladness. (Acts 14:15-17)

Today's Message

Today we continue our 2020 Advent Series, "Our Giving God", with a look at the many things we take for granted as givens, but which are really gifts of our extravagantly generous God. So let's ponder together 7 gifts of God to all humanity, which are often referred to as "common grace" . . .

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Growth Groups are the glue that holds our church together, the way we find and follow Jesus together. If you are not involved in a Growth Group, now is the time to jump in at gracecentralcoast.org.

This year, our aim is to see our Growth Groups embody our 3-fold identity as followers of Jesus: Family, Servant, and Missionary. To that end, we're framing our Growth Group Interaction Guide to help groups move in that direction.

During the COVID-19 crisis our groups are meeting live and virtually using Zoom and other online platforms.

CONNECT *(ask these questions to check-in with your group)*

What will be different this Christmas because of Covid? What will you do to compensate for Covid, so that it doesn't rob you of your joy?

DISCUSS *(use some of these questions to process God's word together)*

1. Read the Scripture reading at the top of the outline again together. How did you "come under" God's Word in the text and message this week? How did God speak to you or challenge you?
2. Why is it so natural for us to take God's gifts as givens and to take them for granted? How can we change that?
3. Which of the 7 gifts most grabbed you? Why?

4. Read Matthew 5:43-45. What is the command here and how does it relate to God's generosity? What is the rationale and logic of this argument?
5. Can you share a recent instance where you were conscious of practicing generosity or receiving another's generosity? (Remember, generosity is not just financial!)
6. Growth Group as a FAMILY: As we wrap up our calendar year, reflect and share instances of generosity in your Growth Group over the last 12 months.
7. Growth Group as SERVANT/MISSIONARY: Christians have historically practiced great generosity toward the broader world, and yet we aren't always perceived as generous. Why is that? What other barriers or stumbling blocks do we create that wash away and/or cancel out our generosity? (Remember, the life of Jesus teaches us that even the most extravagant generosity is sometimes spurned and rejected by the world.)

PRAY

- Pray for those suffering through this Covid-19 pandemic and pray for it to end soon.
- Pray for the ongoing conversation around and practice of generosity in the family of Grace Central Coast.
- Be generous in your listening and encouragement as you share other needs and pray for one another.