



KINGDOM CULTURE VIDEO TRANSCRIPT

WEEK TWO

Teaching Video Transcript | Week 2: Kingdom Culture is Grace-Based

The world of professional sports leagues can feel like different kingdoms where there are kings and queens and princes and princesses with lavish displays of wealth and power. The royalty are the stars who win the Super Bowls bringing more fame and fortune to a few. But in these kingdoms failure is despised and in particularly big games there is often no grace of forgiveness for the losers. The kingdom of professional sports is not grace-based.

Nobody knows this more than the long-suffering fans of the Buffalo Bills who lost four Super Bowls in a row in the beginning of the 1990s. And the one person who may feel the greatest loss in that period is field goal kicker Scott Norwood. With 8 seconds left in Super Bowl XXV the New York Giants were leading by one point. Norwood was called out to win the game and all he had to do was make a 47-yard field goal but he missed. Twenty years afterwards he said he still gets choked up thinking about how he let his teammates down. Upon the team's return to Buffalo they were greeted by almost 30,000 fans and Norwood was shocked to hear them chanting: "WE WANT SCOTT!...WE WANT SCOTT!" Norwood said he just wanted to stay behind the scenes that day but as the chants intensified he was brought to the microphone and he told the fans: "I know that I have never felt more loved than I do right now." Norwood expected to be judged and condemned but for a moment experienced grace of love and forgiveness.¹

Look up the word grace in the Merriam-Webster dictionary and you'll read this definition: "...unmerited divine assistance given to humans for their regeneration or sanctification..."² The Kingdom of God is a grace-based culture. Early in his ministry Jesus showed up at his hometown of Nazareth and he spoke in the synagogue and he read these words from the prophet Isaiah: "The Spirit of the LORD is upon me, for he has anointed me to bring Good News to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim that captives will be released, that the blind will see, that the oppressed will be set free, and that the time of the LORD's favor has come. (Luke 4:18-19, NLT) Then Jesus explained the meaning of this prophecy saying: "The Scripture you've just heard has been fulfilled this very day!" (Luke 4:21, NLT) Jesus told his hometown congregation that he was the fulfillment of this prophecy, and while they were amazed this was Joseph's son, they were also amazed at his message of grace. John, the disciple of Jesus, who wrote the Gospel that bears his name, makes it clear in the beginning of his gospel that Jesus came to establish the kingdom of God in grace.³

To say that the kingdom culture is grace-based means that those who enter the kingdom discover that they are given assistance from God that they did not earn by their hard work or good deeds. As the Merriam-Webster dictionary explained, grace is unmerited. That means it cannot be earned by anything that we do. It's a free gift offered to us by the King of the kingdom. The Apostle Paul explains grace like this: 8 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—9 not by works, so that no one can boast. (Ephesians 2:8-9, NIV)

This reality of the grace-based kingdom culture is that anyone can be saved for eternity and enter the kingdom of God if they believe in what God has done for us through Christ's death for our sins. It's based on God's grace not on our good works. That's good news because any good works that we do are ultimately invalidated before God by our sinful actions. And because of the holiness of God all sin must be punished. Before Jesus came forgiveness for those sins could be received only by sacrificing a living animal.⁴ But that was a finite forgiveness, only for the sins committed, so when more sins were committed sacrifices would have to be made again. When Jesus came this is how scripture explains what God did to deal with our sins, once and for all.

23 For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard. 24 Yet God, in his grace, freely makes us right in his sight. He did this through Christ Jesus when he freed us from the penalty for our sins. 25 For God presented Jesus as the sacrifice for sin. People are made right with God when they believe that Jesus sacrificed his life, shedding his blood. (Romans 3:23-25, NLT) Jesus made the ultimate and final sacrifice for sinful people who did not deserve his act of grace.

Through this grace the Bible tells us that God ...has qualified you to share in the inheritance of his holy people in the kingdom of light. 13 For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, 14 in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. (Colossians 1:12-14, NIV) Do you see the culture of grace in the Kingdom? This grace-based culture brings us into the kingdom of God by redeeming us from our sins and offering us forgiveness which gives us hope for our future.

I think it helps to personalize this reality to take in the full gravity of the grace that we have been given. So "Imagine you are brought to trial for vehicular homicide. You were driving on the road, exceeding the speed limit, and you hit a child on her way home from school. You were brought to trial, the evidence is presented, and from his bench the judge states, "I find you guilty and sentence you to death." But then he does a strange thing. With compassion in his eyes, he gets down from his bench, walks down to where you stand, embraces you, and says, "But I love you. The penalty must be carried out, for I am an honest and good judge, and what you did was wrong and it must be paid for. But I love you and do not want to see you your life end this way. Justice must be carried out. So I will go in your place." And then he walks out of the quart room and toward the electric chair. That's what Jesus did for you."⁵

- Do you feel sense of shock of having someone save you from the just penalty for your sins? That's redemption.
- Do you feel the disorienting nature of being forgiven for an act you know you are guilty of?
- Do you experience a sense of hope rising in your heart?

The power of the grace-based culture of the kingdom of Jesus Christ is that it brings redemption, forgiveness and hope. So live in that grace and share that grace in both your words and actions with a world which does not operate in a culture of grace.

Valley Brook Community Church All Church Study: Video Transcript Week Two

¹Adapted from Paul Harris, "Can Anything Good Come From Buffalo?" Mockingbird blog (1-20-16)

²<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/grace>

³John 1:14, 17

⁴See Leviticus 4:5

⁵James Emery White, *Christianity for People Who Aren't Christians*, Baker Books, © 2019, pp. 110-11

