

The Grace to Be Wrong

by Jack Hayford

The sermon emphasizes the importance of acknowledging our imperfections and limitations, and being willing to seek guidance and wisdom from others in order to maintain balance and humility in our relationships and decision-making.

Scripture: Proverbs 11:14, Acts 15:28, 1 Corinthians 7:6, Ephesians 4:2, Philippians 2:3, 2 Peter 3:15

Topics: "Christian Humility", "Grace And Mercy"

Description

Jack Hayford emphasizes the importance of believers having grace towards one another, allowing room for imperfections and the willingness to be wrong in perspective while being right in purpose. He shares instances where this grace was needed in ministry consultations, interviews, and counseling sessions. Hayford highlights the early Church's approach of seeking wisdom and consensus before making decisions, showing a non-authoritarian and humble attitude. He encourages a teachable spirit, acknowledging the value of receiving wisdom from others and being open to modifying personal inclinations within the community of believers.

Transcript

I am becoming increasingly sensitive to the need for grace in believers which will allow them to be wrong.

Not to do wrong. But to be wrong.

There are far too few who simply acknowledge their own humanity when their own doings, calling, efforts, or sincere goals are called into question.

This past week I encountered three occasions where this grace was needed: at a gathering of men who were consulting together over a specific ministry to the Body of Christ; in a conversation over the radio, in which I was being interviewed on the subject of the believer and his willingness to acknowledge his failures; and in a private counseling session in which we discovered a man's preoccupation with his sense of God-given mission, to the point that he couldn't see the need for balance. He was too taken with his sense of the importance of what he felt he was supposed to do.

Somehow, "being right" isn't as easy as one thinks. Our own sense of dimension on a matter is the key to balance, and the fact is that when something seems important or necessary to me, it tends to become ALL important... ABSOLUTELY necessary. And the time for the answer to this important/necessary matter is

always NOW! Especially if God and His will are involved in the matter.

Thankfully, I am discovering a small but growing band of folks who are willing to trust the Lord to cover their imperfections--whether it be in timing, in understanding, or in sense of urgency. They are gaining the capacity to be wrong in their perspective, as right as they might be in their purpose.

I find that grace was powerfully present in the early Church. I hear the apostles and elders at Jerusalem say, concerning a decision that would reshape the Church's future, "It seemed good..." (Acts 15:28). Before they invoke the ultimate of divine authority, they simply says, "We thought a lot about it. It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us." History confirms the decision they made, but I am most impressed by the non-authoritarian air with which the judgment was communicated.

Paul says twice in 1 Corinthians 7 that his counsel is offered "as a concession, not as a commandment" (v. 6); and that his directives concerning marriage and the single life were "according to [his] judgment" (v. 40). He does affirm that he believed himself to have the mind of the Holy Spirit on the subject, but again, the authority is exercised with wisdom. There is an apparent willingness to hearing others out on the subject.

I love Peter's capacity to not know as much as another brother, and still to love and trust that brother's words toward him. Second Peter 3:15,16 manifests a readiness to receive the gift of another's wisdom and expertise, without denying or having to hurriedly insist that you have received much already yourself.

Somehow, you and I experience a painful reluctance to utter the words, "I don't know." Or, "I may not be entirely right." Or, "I need your balancing counsel on this, my friend." It's hard for us to say these things and mean them with a truly teachable spirit.

Some matters, of course, are not negotiable. But my personal inclinations, however "sure" I might feel about them, must be kept available to modification within the circle of those who love me in Christ.

Such vulnerability is the only safety valve against the recurrent problems which "rugged individualism" has wrought in personal and family lives, in business and government matters, and in the Church of the Lord Jesus throughout history.

Let's keep hands joined in trust. Mine and yours may not be perfectly clean, but keeping hold will sure help us keep our balance.

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