

DAY 2: June 3, 2025, Tuesday (Love and Obey)

Titus 2:11, *“For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people,”*

Ephesians 2:8-9, *“For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.”*

2 Corinthians 5:17, *“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.”*

How thankful I am that God doesn't turn his back on anyone. If so, I most certainly would have been left out long ago. I was that socially awkward, shy, didn't fit in anywhere person. I still feel like that most of the time. I get the feeling I'm being tolerated in some circles. But God brings salvation, love, grace, and mercy to me...even me! We are all his beloved.

It took me a very long time to internalize that no matter what, God loves me exactly the way I am. Because you know what? He's the one who made me the way I am. Do I still need to allow him to work on me and make me more like him? Of course. But my quirki-ness, and yours by the way, are who he made us to be.

Those Ninevites who were unlovable to Jonah, they were God's beloved as well. Whatever it was that Jonah hated about them, God made them and had a purpose for them. Jonah had been given a calling and he eventually did it but out of duty not love.

Jesus had been given a calling, too. He carried out his calling in love, not duty. Right after Jesus was baptized he went into the desert for 40 days and nights, fasting and praying. He was intensely preparing himself for his calling. He wanted to be the best. What an example! The best showing us how to be the best.

- We want to teach the children that prayer is important. More than just asking for forgiveness and praying for certain requests. It is introduced as a simple act to them when they are little. But as they grow in faith, they need to truly understand the power and purpose of prayer.
- Read Jonah chapter 2. What characteristics do you see Jonah exhibit to God? What promises does he make to God? What does he ask of God?
- Read Matthew 26:36-42. What characteristics do you see Jesus exhibit? Is Jesus making promises? What does he ask of God?

- Application to our prayer life:
 - ⇒ Make time for regular prayer. God will listen when we pray. But we shouldn't take advantage of his willingness. He deserves our faithfulness. Colossians 4:2, "Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful."
 - ⇒ Pray in faith, believing God will answer your prayers. Doubt leads us to bargaining with God. James 1:6, "But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind."
 - ⇒ Know that God wants to hear about all of our ups and downs. Ephesians 6:18, "And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people." 1 Thessalonians 5:17, "Pray continually."

MEMORY VERSE: John 13:34-35, "I give you a new command:...You must love each other as I have loved you. All people will know you are my disciples if you love each other."