

Guest Speaker: Lee Strobel

## The Case for Grace

Titus 2:11

June 14, 2015

According to the life and words of our Savior, Jesus Christ, God's grace is the favor shown by God to sinners. However, when Jesus taught of grace, He did not read a doctrinal treatise that He wrote on the subject. Rather, He told stories that illustrated this truth. In like manner, our special guest teacher Lee Strobel shared some amazing stories intended to remind us that only a God of grace could have accomplished the transformation in the lives of these people. For this recap, we will focus on the first story he shared.

The story emphasized that God seeks to adopt all men and women as His sons and daughters (see Titus 2:11). After the Korean War, a local girl gave birth to a daughter as the result of a relationship with a young U.S. soldier. The mother loved and cared for her baby, but eventually a farmer made her an offer of marriage. However, the farmer's condition for marriage was that the baby girl could not be part of the package. So her mother shipped her off on a train to nowhere. She became an orphan at four years old, joining other abandoned children on the streets. Even among them, she was called *tookki*—*alien devil*—a reference to her biracial heritage. At age six, weak and dying from cholera, she lay down atop a pile of trash to die. A World Vision nurse—a missionary looking for abandoned infants on the streets—found her and brought her to an orphanage. The girl lived there as the oldest orphan, caring for the younger children. One day, when she was almost nine, an American couple came to the orphanage to adopt a baby boy. As was her custom, she cleaned up all of the baby boys so that the couple could choose one to make their own.

Many years later, she recalled how the man seemed like Goliath, with enormous hands. He and his wife went from baby to baby, compassion etched on their faces, tenderness in their touch. Somehow, she knew that if they could have, they would have taken every one of those babies home with them. Then something remarkable happened. As she sat and watched—skin tattooed with ingrained dirt, hair white with lice, one eye lazy from malnutrition, a belly full of worms that crawled up her throat in search of food, scrawny and weighing less than thirty pounds at the age of nine, face pocked with boils and scars—the enormous man came over to her, knelt down as low as he could, and ever so gently laid his hand

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on the side of her face. His intention was clear in his gesture: *This is the one I want.*

She had never received such a gracious and loving gesture before. She panicked, spit in his face twice, then ran and hid in the closet. This was her moment of grace, and she rejected it and fled. Like God Himself, this couple was patient and gracious, and days later, they came back to the orphanage and adopted her into their family. They named her Stephanie, and she ended up coming to faith in Jesus. She serves Him to this day as a wife and mother who ministers to children who are also in seemingly hopeless situations, sharing God's grace with them. **Read Proverbs 3:34, Titus 3:5, and Hebrews 4:16. Have you ever rejected God's grace? Can you recall why? Was it fear, pride, shame? Remember, He wants to shower you—and, through you, others—with grace. Have you learned to receive God's grace? How can you be a beacon of grace like the couple that adopted Stephanie?**

The Bible uses the imagery of adoption to describe what God does for all who come to Him according to the gospel of His grace. J.I. Packer said, "Of all the gifts of grace, adoption is the highest. To be right with God the Judge is a great thing, but to be loved and cared for by God the Father is the greater." Paul wrote, "We also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body" (Romans 8:23). If you are God's child by His gracious adoption through His great gospel, then be encouraged that, though you might have turned your back on God, He has never turned His back on you. Remind those who are not yet His children that He loves them, died and rose for them, and so desires to lavish them with His love and grace. **Read Romans 8:15 and John 8:34-36. What does it mean to be adopted by Christ? What has He set you free from? What is one way you have become more like Him? What is one way you want to become more like Him?**

Finally, be encouraged and inspired by this declaration with which Strobel closed: "The grace of God is undeserved forgiveness, unmerited favor, outrageous compassion, and incredible clemency."

*Adapted from Lee Strobel's teaching*

## The BIG Idea

*God sees you differently than you see yourself—through the grace of heaven's eyes.*