



Sermon-based small groups connect the week to the weekend!

Dig deeper into the talk each week, while getting connected, cared for and known. Challenge yourself to see how the message actually makes sense and applies to your everyday life and do it with people just like you to support you on your journey.

Message Info: Sounds Harsh, 3/26/23 - Has a close friend ever sat you down for a sobering conversation? One that, if you weren't talking with a friend, would have been offensive or painful? But knowing the conversation came from a deep place of concern and love, you were able to take it in the right context. Jesus spoke plainly, because of His great love for us. Knowing God's heart is key to understanding His message. (*Passages: Mark 8:31-38, Zephaniah 3:17, Romans 8:38-39*)

Discussion Questions: Take your time and dig into these questions.

What do you expect from others? Do you ever misconstrue what others say because you are expecting criticism or judgement? Do discussions escalate quickly, simply due to tone?

Read Mark 8:31-38. What stands out to you in this passage? Why?

At a glance, this message from Jesus sounds harsh. But that's only because of our expectations. It sounds rough because of what we infer, or how we view ourselves. We hear what we anticipate. What have you applied to God's view of you? Do you think He is angry or disappointed all the time?

Of course His words will get heavy. He loves us. It's an intimate, vulnerable, and personal relationship. And He pushes us to be our greatest. Love can be messy, but the love God offers is perfect. How can you remember God's love for you covers all?

The following are 3 keys to living like Jesus:

1. Deny self- this doesn't mean abandoning your identity. It means finding it, and abandoning selfishness.
2. Take up your cross- speaks to our willingness. Once a symbol of suffering, now the cross means victory. We're following him for something greater. It's not always easy, but it's worth it.
3. Follow Him- We emulate who or what we follow. Following the broken examples in this world will not bring victory. Your life is better in His hands.

The harder we hold onto things, the easier they slip. Follow your dreams, but hold them loosely, because God is doing more than you can see or imagine.

Group Challenge: Invite a friend to an Easter service at Grace.