

Main Idea: In John 1 we’re told that grace and truth came to earth, and why it matters. Two things are true of Jesus according to John 1:14 and 17, and these two truths have tremendous implications for our lives.

- I. Jesus is full of grace and truth (14).
 - A. Grace is unmerited kindness and help towards undeserving sinners.
 - B. Truth is the God-pleasing standard of what is good and right.
 1. Grace without truth is shallow and sentimental.
 2. Truth without grace is harsh and legalistic.
- II. Jesus brought grace and truth (17).
 - A. Jesus gives us what we lack.
 1. To be right with God we need grace and truth.
 2. If we are right with God, we still need grace and truth.
 - B. Jesus gives us an example to follow.
 1. He exhibited grace and truth towards a Pharisee (John 3).
 2. He exhibited grace and truth towards the woman at the well (John 4).
 3. He exhibited grace and truth towards 5,000 hungry men (John 6).
 4. He exhibited grace and truth towards a woman caught in adultery (John 8).
 5. He exhibited grace and truth towards two grieving sisters (John 11).
 6. He exhibited grace and truth towards some dirty feet (John 13).
 7. He exhibited grace and truth at the cross (John 19).
 8. He exhibited grace and truth towards Thomas (John 20).
 9. He exhibited grace and truth towards Peter (John 21).
 - C. What Jesus gives us, we are to share with others.
 1. If we are like Jesus, we will exhibit grace.
 2. If we are like Jesus, we will exhibit truth.
 3. If we are like Jesus, we will exhibit the beautiful balance of grace and truth.

Application: If we are to put grace and truth on display...

1. We need to ask some questions.

Taken from *The Grace and Truth Paradox*, by Randy Alcorn...

--*The grace question*: Why did sinners want to be around Jesus, but don't want to be around us?

--*The truth question*: Why did sinners crucify Jesus, but have no problem with us?
2. We need to stop justifying any lack of resemblance to Jesus.
3. We need to live in constant communion with Jesus.

We come to yet another wonderful “grace text” in our series “Amazing Grace.” We’ve been looking at pinnacle texts in the Bible that teach us about grace. This morning we come to John 1:14 & 17. Let’s begin by reading the fuller context.

Scripture Reading: John 1:1-18

We’re being confronted by a new atheism these days. Bold. Aggressive. Caustic. Blunt. The new atheists are on a mission and none of us are immune from their agenda. Listen to the following which comes from an article found on newatheism.org.

New atheists like Oxford biologist Richard Dawkins and journalist Christopher Hitchens are selling millions of books and drawing people by the thousands to their call for an uncompromising atheism. For example, Hitchens, a columnist for *Vanity Fair* and author of the book *God Is Not Great*, told a capacity crowd at the University of Toronto, "I think religion should be treated with ridicule, hatred and contempt, and I claim that right." His words were greeted with hoots of approval.

Religion is "sinister, dangerous and ridiculous," Hitchens tells NPR, because it can prompt people to fly airplanes into buildings, and it promotes ignorance. Hitchens sees no reason to sugarcoat his position.

"If I said to a Protestant or Quaker or Muslim, 'Hey, at least I respect your belief,' I would be telling a lie," Hitchens says.

** Note: This is an unedited manuscript of a message preached at Wheelersburg Baptist Church. It is provided to prompt your continued reflection on the practical truths of the Word of God.

¹ For a previous look at this text, see the sermon preached in the John series on 5/2/10.

Asked why he feels compelled to be so blunt, he responds: "I believe it's more honest, more brave, more courageous simply to state your own position."

The more outrageous the message the better, says PZ Myers, who writes an influential blog that calls, among other things, for the end of religion. On Blasphemy Day, Myers drove a rusty nail through a consecrated Communion wafer and posted a photo on his Web site.

"People got very angry," he recalls. "I don't know why. I mean, it's just a cracker, right?"

Myers, who teaches biology at the University of Minnesota, Morris, says he received about 15,000 hate e-mails. He says one reason he favors the provocative approach is that it works, especially for the next generation of atheists.

"Edgy is what young people like," Myers says. "They want to cut through the nonsense right away and want to get to the point. They want to hear the story fast, they want it to be exciting, and they want it to be fun. And I'm sorry, the old school of atheism is really, really boring."²

What strikes you as you hear this? Perhaps the hostility of the proponents of this new atheism, or their brash in your face approach. I'll tell you what grabs my attention.

The 15,000 hate emails. This Minnesota biology professor who promotes his anti-God message says he has received 15,000 hate emails, apparently from offended people who say they believe in God.

What kind of email would Jesus write to this biology professor? How would the Son of God Himself respond to a new atheist who not only doesn't believe in God but mocks those who do?

With that question in mind, this morning I want to explore carefully a phrase in John 1. It appears twice. We see it first in John 1:14, "The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, *full of grace and truth.*" We see it again in verse 17, "For the law was given through Moses; *grace and truth* came through Jesus Christ."

That phrase grabs my attention because I'm *not* that way far too often, yet want to be and need to be. How would Jesus respond to an aggressive atheist? Would He write a hate email? No, there's no grace in that. Would He ignore his anti-God criticism as if it didn't matter? No, there's no truth in that. And Jesus was *full of grace and truth.*

I've entitled today's message, "*When Grace and Truth Came to Earth.*" That's what happened at Christmas. Grace and truth visited earth in the person of Jesus the Christ.

There are two straightforward points to today's message, and I'll give them to you now, develop them, and then we'll talk implications regarding them. And there certainly are significant implications, for those of us who believe in Jesus, and those who don't.

Point one, Jesus is full of grace and truth—that's what verse 14 says.

Point two, Jesus brought grace and truth—that's what verse 17 says.

I. Jesus is full of grace and truth (14).

There's actually an Old Testament background to "grace and truth," but you have to look for synonyms to see it. For instance, on the day that God revealed Himself to Moses in the cleft of the rock, He said this in Exodus 34:6, "The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in *love and faithfulness.*" Love—the Hebrew word is *hesed*, which speaks of God's unmerited covenant love

² The article appears at <http://newatheism.org/>

towards His undeserving people. And faithfulness—the Hebrew is *emet* which means trustworthy and true. It could well be translated, “abounding in grace and truth.”

And it’s not just here. Throughout the Hebrew Scriptures we see God Himself exhibiting this beautiful balance of grace and truth. For instance...

Psalm 85:10 “*Love and faithfulness* meet together; righteousness and peace kiss each other.”

Psalm 86:15 “But you, O Lord, are a compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in *love and faithfulness*.”

Psalm 89:14 “Righteousness and justice are the foundation of your throne; *love and faithfulness* go before you.”

Psalm 115:1 “Not to us, O LORD, not to us but to your name be the glory, because of your *love and faithfulness*.”

The LORD is full of grace and truth, says the Old Testament. To which John 1:14 says, so is Jesus, for Jesus is God.

We need to define our terms, so let me offer a couple of working definitions. First of all, what is grace?

A. Grace is unmerited kindness and help towards undeserving sinners. It’s *unmerited*—not based on what a person does or doesn’t do. It’s unmerited *kindness*—there’s no grudging frown on the face of grace. It’s unmerited *kindness and help*—it takes action; it feeds the hungry and reaches out to the lonely. And does it all towards *undeserving sinners*—no one ever deserves grace so there’s no calculating involved.

Interestingly, the word “grace” doesn’t appear in the gospels written by Matthew, Mark, and Luke, and never after the opening prologue of John’s gospel. But that doesn’t mean grace is absent from the four gospels. In reality, while the word is seldom seen, the display of grace is on every page.

Then when we come to the epistles, the word “grace” is all over the place. It appears 123 times in the New Testament, with the majority in the epistles. Peter, James, Jude, the writer of Hebrews, and especially Paul use the word again and again.

Jesus is full of grace. And truth, too. What is truth?

B. Truth is the God-pleasing standard of what is good and right. It is the *God-pleasing* standard—for God is the One for whose pleasure the universe exists. Truth is the God-pleasing *standard*—a standard that never changes, so that what’s true today will always be true; truth is not relative. Truth is the God-pleasing standard of *what is good and right*—God’s standard is not harsh but good and right, morally good and right as well as good and right for us.

Like the word “grace,” the word “truth” is all over the place in the New Testament. It appears 183 times. It’s worth noting that one of Jesus’ most repeated statements was, “I tell you the truth” (“Verily, verily” in the KJV; 77 times in the four gospels). Jesus made it clear that what came from His lips was *the truth*. How could it not be so? Jesus is full of truth.

He’s full of grace, and He is full of truth. Not grace sometimes and truth sometimes, but grace and truth together in perfect balance all the time. Our text says that Jesus came from the Father “full of grace and truth.”

What comes to mind when you hear the word “balance”? I think of riding my bike when I was about seven or eight years old. I lived in a subdivision in Dover, Ohio that had a nice block for bike-riding, and I used to go round and round that block without touching the handle bars. You feel the wind in your face when you learn to practice *balance*.

Then I think of riding a Honda 70 trail bike with my friend, Bryan, in the seventh grade. I can still feel the brief thrill of leaving the ground after going over a little hill, and the not so pleasant crash that resulted when my friend and I hit a rut in our landing and lost our balance.

Balance. It's so important in life, and not just for bike riding. Someone has said, "Balance is the brief experience you achieve every so often when you cross the line from one extreme on your way to another."

We're so prone to go to extremes, to champion one vital quality to the neglect of its biblical counter-balance. It's what a man does when he says to his wife, "You may not want to hear it, but I'm going to tell you anyway because it's true," and then blows her out of the water with a verbal assault. That's truth without grace.

Then there's the mother who keeps shielding her teenage son from feeling the painful consequences of his sinful choices, with the justification, "Oh, I just can't stand to see him get hurt. I love him too much." That's a pseudo-grace (at best) that's keeping her son from facing the truth.

Think what happens when we lose the balance. On the one hand...

1. *Grace without truth is shallow and sentimental.* But on the other hand...

2. *Truth without grace is harsh and legalistic.* In his book, *The Grace and Truth Paradox* (which I recommend), Randy Alcorn talks about this need for balance:

Truth without grace breeds a self-righteous legalism that poisons the church and pushes the world away from Christ. Grace without truth breeds moral indifference and keeps people from seeing their need for Christ.

Truth is quick to post warning signs and guardrails. Yet it fails to empower people to drive safely, to avoid plunging off the cliff, and fails to help them when they crash. Grace is quick to post ambulances and paramedics at the bottom of the cliff. But without truth, it fails to post warning signs and build guardrails, and therefore encourages the very self-destruction it attempts to heal.

Grace without truth deceives people, and ceases to be grace. Truth without grace crushes people, and ceases to be truth.³

Jesus did neither. Jesus, of course, exhibited grace and truth in perfect balance, and He did it all the time. When the Son of God came to earth in the form of a man, grace and truth came to earth. Jesus is full of grace and truth.

II. Jesus brought grace and truth (17).

That's what verse 17 says, "For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ." Notice the verse "came." Grace and truth *came* to earth. How did it get here? It came, not through the law, but through the person of Jesus Christ. Jesus brought grace and truth to planet earth.

So let's ponder a question carefully. If grace and truth came through Jesus, what does that say to us about Jesus? Many things, but let's talk about three.

A. Jesus gives us what we lack. How so?

1. *To be right with God we need grace and truth.* That's what the Bible teaches, a sinner needs grace and truth for salvation. And Jesus is the source of both. A sinner is saved by grace, not his works, and Jesus is the source of that grace. And to be saved, a sinner must embrace the truth, and Jesus is the truth. Because Jesus brought grace and truth, Jesus alone can give us what we lack so that we may be right with God.

³ Randy Alcorn, *The Grace and Truth Paradox*, quotes taken from the official website of Randy Alcorn: http://epm.org/books/the_grace_and_truth_paradoxDetail.php

This of course is why every person on earth needs Jesus, I mean, needs Jesus. Acts 4:12 says, “Neither is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved.”

But our need for Jesus doesn't stop once we pray the sinner's prayer. Think about it.

2. *If we are right with God, we still need grace and truth.* Grace to get along with that difficult person at school, and truth to navigate when the boss says to cut corners to get the deal. We may be saved from our sins, but we still struggle to respond with grace (when someone takes advantage of us) and truth (when a chunk of money is on the line).

This means we still need Jesus, to save us from our tendency to go our own way, which always compromises either grace or truth. And what we need we have, for Jesus gives us what we lack. For salvation. For living. For serving. For suffering. He who brought grace and truth gives us precisely what we lack.

We learn something else about Jesus from this phrase in verse 17, “grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.” It's that...

B. Jesus gives us an example to follow. Look at His life and what do you see? You see the balance of grace and truth in living color over and over again. It's true. John wrote this gospel, John, a man who followed Jesus for three years and served Him for the next fifty-plus. Let's walk through John's Gospel to see a few examples of how Jesus interacted with people with a perfect balance of grace and truth.

1. *He exhibited grace and truth towards a Pharisee (John 3).* In John 3 a Pharisee named Nicodemus came to see Jesus. Remember, the Pharisees are the ones who ultimately put Jesus in their cross-hairs and instigated His murder. But when a Pharisee came to Jesus, what did Jesus do? He met with him (3:2)—for that's what grace does. And He told him he needed to be born again (3:3)—for that's the truth. This religious sinner needed both, someone to love him in spite of the self-righteous company he kept, and someone to speak the truth concerning his hell-bound soul.

And in the end grace and truth transformed this Pharisee and turned Him into a humble, devoted follower of Jesus.

2. *He exhibited grace and truth towards the woman at the well (John 4).* What kind of woman? A Samaritan woman. A woman with five failed marriages who was presently living in adultery with another man. How did Jesus treat her? He spent time with her and offered her living water—that's what grace does. And He brought up the painful subject of her immoral lifestyle and corrected her faulty thinking about worship—because He is full of truth.

And she too was transformed by the personification of grace and truth.

3. *He exhibited grace and truth towards 5,000 hungry men (John 6).* When He saw the hungry crowd, He did something about their need. He fed them—that's grace. And when they tried to get more bread out of Him the next day, He confronted them with their need for eternal life (6:26)—for that was the truth.

4. *He exhibited grace and truth towards a woman caught in adultery (John 8).* “Should we stone her?” the religious leaders wanted to know. “If you are without sin, throw the first stone,” Jesus said. That's grace. And then He told the woman to leave her life of sin, for that's the truth of what she needed to do.

Oh how we need this example the next time we talk with a person who says they are homosexual or transgender. No stone throwing, for their problem is no different from yours and mine, for we all have sinned and fallen short of God's glorious standard, and need grace. But they do have a sin problem, and they need to hear truth, painful truth, about what God says about their sin, and the solution He provided for it.

5. *He exhibited grace and truth towards two grieving sisters (John 11).* John 11:35 says, “Jesus wept.” That’s grace, weeping with those who weep. And then Jesus proclaimed, “I am the resurrection and the life,” for that’s the truth these grieving sisters needed to hear.

6. *He exhibited grace and truth towards some dirty feet (John 13).* Just a few hours before He would be arrested, mocked, abused, whipped, and nailed to two pieces of wood, Jesus washed His followers’ grimy feet. On so many levels, that’s grace. And He also told them why He washed their feet, and exhorted them to do the same with each other. That’s truth, the perfect balance of grace and truth.

And then came the greatest display...

7. *He exhibited grace and truth at the cross (John 19).* “Dear woman, here is your son,” the Master told Mary, thus entrusting His earthly-mother’s future care to the apostle John. That’s grace. And then moments later the Savior announced, “It is finished,” thereby declaring that the ransom payment He had just made for sinners was paid in full and final, for that was the truth regarding His reason for dying such a horrible death.

The examples continue in John 20...

8. *He exhibited grace and truth towards Thomas (John 20).* “Reach out your hand and put it in my side,” was His invitation to Thomas, the man who actually expressed his doubt that Jesus was alive. That’s grace (patient, sin-overlooking grace). But then He looked Thomas in the eye and said, “Stop doubting and believe,” for that’s the truth of what Thomas needed to do.

9. *He exhibited grace and truth towards Peter (John 21).* Peter, the one who spent three years up close and personal with Jesus. This Peter denied His Master three times, swearing, “I don’t know the man.” But now Jesus invites Peter to breakfast—that’s grace. And asks him three times, “Do you love me?”, because before restoration can occur a sinner must face the ugly truth of his sin. And then the One who came full of grace and truth gave Peter a new ministry, “Feed my sheep”, more grace and more opportunity to speak truth to yet others who need grace and truth.

And that’s just a sampling, my friend, for the examples of grace and truth in beautiful balance abound in the life of Jesus. “Whom having not seen, you love,” said Peter in 1 Peter 1:8. And so we do love Him, trust Him, and devote our lives to Him, for there has never been another like Jesus. Never.

You say, “I’m not sure about that.”

Okay, then compare. Study the life of Jesus. Read John’s gospel, and Matthew’s, Mark’s, and Luke’s. Look at His life. Look at His death. Look at His resurrection. Look at the way He related to people. You will see what millions have seen. There is none like Jesus. Which is why you need Him too.

But the accounts we’ve just seen aren’t bedtime stories, beloved. Nor are they Sunday stories. No, no.

C. What Jesus gives us, we are to share with others. These are for 24/7 life. If Jesus exhibited grace and truth, ought not His followers? Yes! Let’s start with grace...

1. *If we are like Jesus, we will exhibit grace.* Indeed, the Bible commands us to do so...

Colossians 4:6 “Let your conversation be always *full of grace*, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.”

2 Corinthians 8:7 “But just as you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in your love for us—see that you also *excel in this grace of giving.*”

1 Peter 4:10 “Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully *administering God’s grace* in its various forms.”

2 Peter 3:18 “But *grow in the grace* and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”

In Acts 20:24 Paul says he lived to help people see God’s grace, “I consider my life worth nothing to me, if only I may finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me—the task of *testifying to the gospel of God’s grace*.”

Brothers and sisters, we are Jesus’ people, right? So if we are walking in the footsteps of Jesus the world ought to see a lot of grace in our lives. Gracious speech. Gracious responses to attacks. Gracious attitudes towards immigrants...and towards those who insist we build a wall to keep them out.

We are grace people. But not just grace.

2. *If we are like Jesus, we will exhibit truth.* Again, as with grace, the Scriptures exhort us to exhibit truth. The ungodly suppress the truth (Rom. 1:18). They exchange the truth of God for a lie (Rom. 1:25). But not us. We’re truth-people.

Romans 9:1 “I *speak the truth* in Christ—I am not lying, my conscience confirms it in the Holy Spirit.”

1 Corinthians 13:6 “Love does not delight in evil but *rejoices with the truth*.”

2 Corinthians 4:2 “Rather, we have renounced secret and shameful ways; we do not use deception, nor do we distort the word of God. On the contrary, by *setting forth the truth plainly* we commend ourselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God.”

2 Corinthians 13:8 “For we *cannot do anything against the truth*, but only *for the truth*.”

Galatians 2:14 “When I saw that they were not acting *in line with the truth* of the gospel, I said to Peter in front of them all...”

Ephesians 5:9 “For the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and *truth*.”

Ephesians 6:14 “Stand firm then, with the *belt of truth* buckled around your waist.”

1 John 3:18 “Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but *with actions and in truth*.”

2 John 1 “The elder, To the chosen lady and her children, whom I *love in the truth*—and not I only, but also all who *know the truth*.”

3 John 1 “The elder, To my dear friend Gaius, whom I *love in the truth*.”

3 John 3 “It gave me great joy to have some brothers come and tell about your *faithfulness to the truth* and how you continue to *walk in the truth*.”

3 John 4 “I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are *walking in the truth*.”
Now let’s put the two together.

3. *If we are like Jesus, we will exhibit the beautiful balance of grace and truth.*

Listen to Randy Alcorn again:

John 1:14 boils down for us what it means to be Christlike. It means to be full of only two things: Grace and Truth. Instead of a dozen, this gives us just two balls to juggle. It’s succinct, a two point checklist of Christlikeness. Everything we do can and should be measured by the test of grace and truth.

Christlikeness means living by grace and truth, extending both to others. Instead of the world’s apathy and tolerance, we offer grace. Instead of the world’s relativism and deception, we offer truth.

If we minimize grace the world sees no hope for salvation. If we minimize truth, the world sees no need for salvation. To show the world Jesus, we must offer full-

orbed, unabridged truth and grace, magnifying both, never downsizing or apologizing for either.⁴

Several years ago Gracia Burnham spoke in chapel at Cedarville University. As you may know, Gracia and her husband, Martin, were missionaries in the Philippines for 17 years when a militant Muslim group took them hostage. More than a year later, a firefight freed them, but Martin was killed in the crossfire. I'd like you to listen to part of what Gracia had to say (taken from Cedarville's *Inspire, Spring 2010*). Behold the power of grace and truth in action:

While Martin and I were held captive, we met a young man named Nadim. One day, after he finished his Koran reading, I asked him what it said, and he replied, "I don't know. It's written in Arabic, and I don't speak Arabic." Nadim based his entire life and his eternity on a book he had not read.

How will Nadim hear the Gospel without a preacher? We need preachers willing to go to the hard places. Missionary C.T. Studd said, "Some people like to live within the sound of church or chapel bell. I want to build a rescue shop within a yard of hell." Working within a yard of hell is not a pleasant place. But we need people willing to go to those hard places, and hard places are what are left in this world.

God has a plan to fix this problem — and we are it. God gave the job of winning and caring for this world to us. You might look around and think, "Well, that's a bad plan." But if we're willing, God will use us to accomplish His work.

Jesus said to love your enemies, to do good to those who hate you, to pray for those who spitefully use you. Maybe our job is to love Muslims, to do good to them, to pray for them. We can hope against hope that God can use us to make a difference in the lives of these blinded people.

My children and I have been praying for those guys who held Martin and me captive. We're praying that they get to hear the Gospel in their own language so the Holy Spirit can start working in their hearts. And why are we so surprised when God does something awesome and answers our prayers?

Just recently, I learned that Nadim and several of our other captors are in jail in Manila for the rest of their lives. They're reading through the Scripture in their own dialects and going to Bible studies. I paid for boat tickets so family members could visit one of the prisoners. I am also supporting two of the poorest so they can buy soap and extra food. Three of the men have come to know the Lord as their Savior. We just can't believe what God is doing!

Had I known, when we were going through our hard year in the jungle, that even one of those guys would come to know Jesus because of our experience, I think the days might have been easier to bear. I kick myself and say, "Would it not have been enough to trust a good God with the days of my life?"

Maybe planting seeds isn't always fun; maybe it's downright uncomfortable. But all of a sudden you see what God is doing. I'm reminded how the seeds we planted in the jungle did not die. Others are reaping what we sowed seven years ago. Keep planting those seeds, my friend. Keep on when you don't see any fruit — because it's God who's going to do the work on down the road.⁵

Application: If we are to put grace and truth on display...we need to do three things.

⁴ Randy Alcorn, *The Grace and Truth Paradox*, quotes taken from the official website of Randy Alcorn: http://epm.org/books/the_grace_and_truth_paradoxDetail.php

⁵ http://www.cedarville.edu/alumni/inspire/~media/Files/PDF/Publications/Inspire/inspire_sp2010.ashx

1. *We need to ask some questions.* I have in mind the two questions posed by Randy Alcorn in *The Grace and Truth Paradox*.⁶

--*The grace question:* Why did sinners want to be around Jesus, but don't want to be around us? Do your neighbors like being around you? Do they even know you? Would they be disappointed if you moved away? My friends, people loved being with Jesus, and I mean all kinds of people—soldiers, prostitutes, tax collectors, blue collar fisherman, powerful noblemen, and more. And why? Because He could quote the Bible? No. Because He loved them and they *knew* it.

I'm not sure my neighbors know I love them, and quite frankly, I'm not sure I really love my neighbors like I should. Let alone the people in the next neighborhood. I'm way too wrapped up in my own life. I need to work on changing the answer to the grace question. How about you?

--*The truth question:* Why did sinners crucify Jesus, but have no problem with us? Have you offended anyone recently, not because you were offensive, but because you loved them enough to tell them the truth?

Young people, do your classmates even know you're a Christian? Have you told them the truth? You say, "I'm a lifestyle Christian. I don't need to talk about it." It's great you're living the lifestyle, but if you don't tell why they'll just think you're into morality.

Is there anyone who shies away from you for the simple reason that you belong to Christ and you've told them *they* need Christ? If so, be encouraged. You're in good company. Jesus spoke the truth. It's why sinners rejected Him. If not, I urge you to take a hard look at the truth question.

2. *We need to stop justifying any lack of resemblance to Jesus.* We're so prone to justify our lack of grace because "I'm a truth guy," or our lack of truth because "I'm a grace guy." But if either grace or truth are missing, then we don't resemble Jesus. And to whatever degree with don't resemble Jesus, we need to repent and change.

One more quote from Randy Alcorn:

Any attempt to "soften" the gospel by minimizing truth ultimately keeps the world from grace. Any attempt to "toughen" the gospel by minimizing grace keeps the world from the greatest truth—His redemptive work on man's behalf. Christ went to the cross, in the ultimate act of grace, because He would not ignore the truth of His holiness and our sin. Grace never ignores or violates truth—rather, it offers restitution and joy by satisfying Truth's demands. ("Go and sin no more.")

Like a binary star consisting of two suns that revolve around each other, truth and grace are equal and inseparable. Luther said the devil doesn't care which side of the horse we fall off of—as long as we don't stay in the saddle. A saddle has two stirrups. To stay in the saddle, the church needs to mount the horse with one foot solidly in the stirrup of truth, and the other solidly in the stirrup of grace.⁷

We need to learn to hate every sin but love every sinner. To do that, a third response.

3. *We need to live in constant communion with Jesus.* Remember, He is full of grace and truth. So get close to Him and you will be too. Get in His Word daily. Get with His people every time they meet. Take concrete steps to live in constant communion with Jesus.

⁶ Randy Alcorn, *The Grace and Truth Paradox*, quotes taken from the official website of Randy Alcorn: http://epm.org/books/the_grace_and_truth_paradoxDetail.php

⁷ Randy Alcorn, *The Grace and Truth Paradox*, quotes taken from the official website of Randy Alcorn: http://epm.org/books/the_grace_and_truth_paradoxDetail.php