

CORNERSTONE

DISCIPLESHIP

GROUPS

ALREADY ACCEPTED | PART 4
PASTOR ANDREW BURNS
SUNDAY, AUGUST 16, 2026

Overview

Core Scriptures: Romans 5:1, 9, 20; 1 Thessalonians 5:9; Galatians 3:1–5; Luke 19:1–10; Titus 2:11–14; 2 Corinthians 5:17–19

Overview

Pastor Andrew brought the series to its conclusion by turning from what we have received to how we now live. Being already accepted is not a truth to admire from a distance — it is the ground we stand on daily. Grace is not permission to sin; it is the power that changes us. And communion, rightly understood, is not a reward handed to those who performed well this week. It is a standing reminder that our seat at the table was always secured by His invitation.

Main Takeaways

1. Salvation is far more than forgiven sins and a future in heaven. It includes justification, adoption, sonship, intimacy with God, and union with Christ — all of it received in a moment, by grace, through faith.
2. Many believers live on a treadmill: sin, guilt, shame, rededication, condemnation, repeat. That cycle grows out of mixing law with grace, and it places faith in self rather than in what Christ has already finished.

3. God has not destined believers for wrath. Every ounce of it fell on sin at the cross, and those who are in Christ are hidden in Him and fully shielded from it (Romans 5:9; 1 Thessalonians 5:9).
4. Grace does not produce more sin. According to Titus 2:11–14, grace is precisely what trains believers to renounce ungodliness and live self-controlled, upright lives right now.
5. The ministry of reconciliation belongs to every believer (2 Corinthians 5:17–19), not to pastors and evangelists alone.
6. Communion is not a reward for good behavior. It is a reminder that our acceptance before God rests entirely and permanently on the finished work of the cross.

Discussion Questions

Opening Question

Before this series, how would you have described your standing before God on an ordinary week? Did it tend to rise and fall depending on how you felt you were doing spiritually? Share honestly with the group.

Section 1: Life on the Treadmill

Sin, guilt, shame, forgiveness, rededication — and then back to the beginning. Have you ever lived that cycle personally? What did it actually feel like day to day, and what finally interrupted it, if anything has? Pastor Andrew made the case that fear of punishment is often the engine driving performance-based Christianity. Has that fear ever shaped the way you approached God? Where do you think it came from?

Section 2: The Trouble with Mixing Law and Grace

Read Galatians 3:1–5 together. The Galatians were not being rebuked for obvious moral failure. They were being corrected for adding law-keeping to faith as the basis of their righteousness. In what ways do believers today do the same thing without ever noticing it?

Consider Romans 5:9 and 1 Thessalonians 5:9 — God has not destined His people for wrath. If that is settled, what does it change about the way you interpret hard seasons, discipline, or your own failures?

Section 3: Grace That Actually Changes People

In Luke 19, Jesus moves toward Zacchaeus with grace before a single thing about Zacchaeus has changed. Transformation follows the welcome; it does not earn it. What does that order tell us about how God relates to us in our unchanged places?

Titus 2:11–14 claims that grace itself is the trainer — that it teaches us to say no to ungodliness. How does that challenge the common worry that emphasizing grace too much will make people careless about sin?

Section 4: The Table and Your Identity

On the night Jesus instituted communion, every disciple at that table had already failed Him or was about to. Their place was based on His invitation, not their record. What does it mean to you personally that the same is true of your place?

Pastor Andrew offered a series of identity statements rooted in what Jesus accomplished — “Because of Jesus, I am forgiven,” “Because of Jesus, I am a child of God.” Which one is hardest for you to receive as personally true, and what makes it difficult? Then ask the harder question: how would your ordinary week look different if you were fully convinced your acceptance was already settled?

Practical Application

This week, try one or more of the following:

Identify the treadmill. Pay attention to the moments when your sense of closeness to God rises or falls based on how well you think you are performing. When you catch it happening, stop and return to Romans 5:1 — you have peace with God because you have been justified by faith, not because today went well.

Carry one identity statement. Choose a single “Because of Jesus” statement and return to it daily, especially in moments of failure or discouragement. Say it out loud on the days it feels least true.

Sit with Titus 2:11–14. Read it slowly and repeatedly this week. Ask the Holy Spirit to make one idea real to you in particular: that grace itself is what trains you toward holiness.

Find where you have mixed law and grace. Name one area of your spiritual life where you have been striving to earn or maintain something that has already been freely given. Bring it to God in prayer and ask Him to trade your striving for rest.

Practice the ministry of reconciliation. Think of one person in your life who does not yet know how God actually feels about them. Pray for an opening this week to show or tell them something true about His grace.

Closing

Pastor Andrew described a prisoner freed from the worst prison imaginable who then walks willingly back into the cell. Most of us recognize ourselves somewhere in that picture. Before you close, take a moment of quiet and let each person consider what they keep walking back into — and why. Then remember Romans 5:20: where sin increased, grace abounded all the more. Paul is not the exception to that promise. He is the example of it.

Close your time together in prayer, asking specifically:

- That each person would grow in the settled assurance that they are already accepted
- That grace would do its transforming work without striving or performance
- That each person would walk as a son or daughter with confidence and boldness
- That this group would grow into its calling as ministers of reconciliation to the people around them

News & Events

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UPCOMING EVENTS:

- September 2 & 20 – Communion
- September 13 – Intro to Cornerstone Life
- September 27 – Guest Speaker, Jeremiah Johnson

