

Life Group Discussion Guide

The Arrival: Looking at Jesus, Seeing God
Week 3: Fullness of Grace • John 1:15–18

Christmas fills us with hope because it marks the arrival of God to remake the world. Jesus has come, and with Him the arrival of life, the arrival of light, and—as we will see today—the arrival of **grace**.

How has the coming of Jesus ushered in grace? Our text this week reveals three ways:

1. Jesus Alone is the Savior

Our text begins with what feels like a parenthetical comment by John the Baptist: “This is the one I spoke about when I said, ‘He who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.’” (1:15)

We see similar statements recorded in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, as well as the book of Acts. In each case, John’s message is the same. Despite his great influence and large followership, he keeps insisting on one thing: “I’m **not** the one you’re looking for.”

Why is this statement significant enough to be reported across five books of Scripture? Because we live in a world filled with voices that promise, “I **am** the one you’re looking for.” Whether influencers, advertisers, mentors, or romantic partners, we’re surrounded by people who claim to be what we’ve always needed—the key to our happiness and wholeness. And we’re all-too-willing to believe them.

- Whether spoken or unspoken, who is promising to be the one **you** are looking for? What voices can you identify in our culture and in your own life?
- Why are we lured by their promise? What happens when we buy into it?

This is what makes John’s message so refreshing. He doesn’t make promises he can’t keep, or pretend to be anybody’s savior. Instead, he points to the One who is.

- What changes when we recognize that no one and nothing can fulfill us apart from Jesus, who alone is Savior?

There’s something else John’s statement does. In its honesty, John’s message set him free from trying to be the savior he could never be. In other words, it takes the pressure off.

“If you’re thinking of becoming a Christian, one of the things you want to know is that becoming a Christian is incredibly freeing—because you can fully accept and internalize: I am not anyone’s savior. It feels so good to know that. If people try to put that on you, you can just let it roll off your back. And you actually can love people better, not as a savior, but as a human. Or, if you’re tempted with a savior-complex, Jesus can cure you from it really fast. Because He alone is the Savior.”

- How does Jesus' position as the only true Savior take the pressure off of us?
- Are you striving to be a savior to anyone in your life? Take time now to surrender the situation to Jesus' authority.

2. Jesus Alone is Fullness

"Out of his fullness we have all received grace in place of grace already given." John 1:16

What does it mean to speak of Jesus' *fullness*? One way to understand the fullness of Christ is in contrast to our own emptiness. As Pastor Jon put it, every person enters this world with "a deep deficit constantly needing to be filled." This is the human condition. It's why children snatch at toys, adults grapple for significance, and nations wage war.

- How have you personally experienced the "deep deficit" Pastor Jon spoke of? The emptiness of a life apart from Christ?

Yet Colossians 2:9-10 states, "In Christ all the fullness of Deity lives in bodily form, and in Christ you have been brought to fullness." While humans consume out of emptiness, Jesus gives out of fullness. And it's by His fullness that we are made full.

"Jesus leaves people fuller than He finds them. The Gospels record all kinds of people coming to Him and asking for stuff, and He gave and gave and gave. That's what grace is: Jesus giving to us when we don't deserve it, when we have nothing to give Him in return."

- How have you personally experienced the fullness of Christ?
- Is there an area of your life where you're looking elsewhere to be filled, instead of to Jesus? If so, take time now to surrender your desires, fears, etc. to Him, believing His grace is sufficient for you.

Out of Jesus' fullness, the Apostle John writes, "we have all received grace in place of grace already given." (1:16) This is a bit of a tongue twister, but verse 17 unpacks it for us: "For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ." In other words, the law given through Moses was a gift of grace. God's people were given what no other nation had—the patriarchs, the very words of God, the promises of God, the covenant with God. But now, in Jesus, the fullness of grace and truth had come. In other words, everything Moses gave them, Jesus surpassed.

- Explain in your own words how Jesus surpassed the grace that came through Moses.
- Do you ever find yourself looking to the law (good works, self-righteousness) to save you? Take time now to reflect on the grace given through Jesus, which fulfills the law. Have you received that grace?

3. Jesus Alone Makes God Known

"No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God and is in closest relationship with the Father, has made him known." John 1:18

With these words, John gives us the greatest reason that the arrival of Jesus is the arrival of grace: Jesus came to make God known.

"Jesus is one with the Father. He is of the same essence. He belongs to the same realm. He shares the same glory. He is in closest relationship with the Father. He came to earth and showed us the Father. This is what we celebrate at Christmas. We can finally see God."

- Explain in your own words how Jesus has made God known to us. What do we know of the Father because of the Son?

As we marvel at the God of the universe making Himself known to us, Pastor Jon pointed out that there's even more to the story:

"From the perspective of John's Gospel, humans have a big problem. We reject the light. We love the darkness. Our deeds are evil. And, therefore, the wrath of God is set against us. It would do us no good for Jesus to make God known and what we find out is that God is angry with us because we hate each other and hate Him. We need a Savior to do more than show us the Father. We need one who will make peace between us and the Father. And that's what Jesus has done. From the cross, He says to us, 'I emptied myself of life to give you my fullness of grace.'"

- Take time now to reflect on your own sinfulness, the wrath it deserves, and the grace you haven't earned. Pray together in awe and gratitude for the fullness of grace Jesus gifted you on the cross.