

Part 1: The Good News about Yeshua, Yahweh's Son (Read Ephesians 2:1-10)

I want to do my best to fill up your tank with Yahweh's Word and Yahweh's Promise. Yahweh's word is Yeshua. Yahweh's Promise is Yeshua. If you're in Messiah (the Word of Yahweh made flesh), all of Yahweh's promises are yours. In spite of your failures, regardless of your faults. All those are nailed to the tree that the Messiah died upon. He became a curse for you. He took upon himself the punishment that you deserved because you had broken Yahweh's unalterable, perfect standard: His Law.

I'd like to share with you an allegory. I've shared this with many people throughout the past 20 years or so, but I've never placed it into a sermon. I feel compelled to do this today.

There once was a man named Joe. Please don't take offense if that is your name (who knows who may hear this sermon in the future). It really doesn't matter what name I use, as you'll see, because this allegory applies to us all across the board.

Joe was a man who lived a terrible life. Joe was born, but was abandoned. His birth mother left him inside of a garbage can about a mile from the shack that she birthed him in, just barely. Joe never knew his birth mother, much less his biological father. Joe was told later in life that someone found him as a newborn and transported him to the nearest orphanage. There he grew up with no parents. There he began his life of theft. There he learned how to cheat well. There he learned how to steal so well that few ever even noticed.

Joe never had anyone want him. Some families had come to the orphanage over the years, but always glanced over Joe. He was just too rough of a kid to love. He didn't even clean up well. At the age of 16, Joe had to leave the orphanage. The thing is, Joe had nowhere to go. He had no parents or grandparents, no aunts or uncles, no friends, no neighbors or relatives. Joe was on his own, shoved into a dark world.

Joe only knew how to steal to make a living, so steal he did. He not only stole, but he lived a life of sexual promiscuity. Each week he involved himself in robberies and fornication. He had no clue as to what love really was. He had no idea about commitment, covenant, and love to a wife. He didn't know how to vow, he only knew how to lie. He did know how to *act* like he made promises, but in reality the whole time he planned on cheating the person he spoke craftily to.

It only grew worse from here for Joe. At one point, the only way for him to successfully steal from a particular store was for him to attack the owner. He beat the owner until the man was barely alive. Joe didn't care though. He needed the money for his drug addiction. The man could have been beaten to death and Joe would have never thought twice about it.

This led to more violence in Joe's life. He committed a few murders after this, a few murders that the police could not track. He began to commit such crimes boldly, because he thought he was untouchable. Joe began to rack up large sums of money for himself. This meant more drugs, more women, more of what Joe wanted, until something happened.

One night while Joe was asleep, only because he had passed out from being drunk, the police raided the place he was staying. They came in with weapons, forcefully pulled Joe from the bed, shoved him onto the floor, and slapped handcuffs around his wrists. By

the time Joe actually realized what was happening, he was behind bars in a prison cell, with men who were Joe's equals. What I mean is that all of them lived lives just like Joe.

He had been living life by doing everything he wanted to do, but here he was now, locked in a room that was barely big enough to stand up in or take a few steps.

The time came for Joe to stand before the Judge to face the penalty for all that he had done. He knew he was guilty. He wasn't up for even trying to argue his "innocence." That lie was even too big for Joe to tell. He was standing there, knowing that what he was about to hear was going to be awful, but there was no way he could escape the verdict.

As the Judge began to list off Joe's crimes, Joe knew that there were more crimes. The Judge was only convicting Joe for what the officials knew about, but Joe knew that it his evil was much deeper.

At the end of the reading by the Judge, the Judge looked up at Joe and said this: "Well sir. We haven't much of a choice here. You deserve to be punished to the most severe extent of the law. You deserve to die for what you have done."

Joe stood there with his head hanging low. He didn't want to look at the Judge.

While the courtroom was silent, Joe began to hear footsteps from behind him walking up to where he was standing. There was something different about these footsteps, but Joe couldn't put his finger on it.

As the steps approached the front of the courtroom, the man put his arm around Joe's shoulder. The man opened his mouth and said this to the Judge: "Your honor, Joe here has done nothing but cause trouble. He's guilty of theft and murder, and beyond this he is guilty of sexual immorality, drunkenness, swindling, hatred, greed, and such like. I know he deserves to die, but I am willing to take his place. I am willing to be put to death instead of Joe so that he can be free from the penalty of the law. If you will accept this your honor, I am willing and ready."

Joe was speechless. He thought to himself, "Who is this man? Where did he come from? Why in the world would he want to give his life for my sake? It doesn't make any sense. For me? What have I done to deserve this?"

The Judge looked at the man standing beside Joe and said, "Very well, I accept. I will place all of Joe's crimes onto the account of this man, and he will be punished in Joe's place." The Judge then looked at Joe and said, "You are free to leave."

Brothers and sisters, we are Joe. You may say, "I've never murdered anyone!" But Yahweh's Word teaches that hatred towards your neighbor is the same (Matthew 5:21-23). You may say, "I'm not guilty of those sins!" But Yahweh's Word teaches that if you keep the whole law, yet offend in one point you're guilty of all (James 2:10).

We often hear stories about people like Joe, and we think, "Well, we're not that bad." The problem with this thinking is that we really are that bad. We think, "But Yahweh knows my heart though," and we act like that's a good thing, when Jeremiah 17:9 says that the heart is deceitful above all other things and it's desperately wicked. Yeshua says in Mark 7 that what comes out of people, out of their hearts, defiles a person. I'll quote Mark 7:21-23 "For from within, out of peoples hearts, come evil thoughts, sexual immoralities, thefts, murders, adulteries, greed, evil actions, deceit, promiscuity, stinginess, blasphemy, pride, and foolishness. All these evil things come from within and defile a person."

The fact is this: we are all guilty. Each of us, in standing before the judgment seat of the Almighty, are short from the glory of Yahweh. Yahweh doesn't grade on a curve. He

doesn't see 10 good deeds and 9 bad deeds, and say, "Well, your good deeds outweigh your bad."

We know that judging like that is not even just. We know that if a man goes 100 days without stealing, but steals on the 101st day, he is guilty of theft. Those 100 days of not stealing do not make the sin on the 101st day irrelevant or unpunishable.

Our opening text of Ephesians 2, verse 1 says "And you who were dead in trespasses and sins." Paul is writing to the believers here. He doesn't go down a list of names and say, "Well, you are more worthy than this guy," or "You are worse off than the next girl." No, he says YOU, meaning EVERYONE he is writing to. All of you were dead in trespasses and sins, just like Joe in our allegory. We all lived in our fleshly desires, carrying out the inclinations of our flesh, and were by nature the children of wrath as much as any other person.

And what is the remedy according to Ephesians 2 verse 4? Is the remedy us? Is it that we stop doing bad and all of a sudden start doing good? No. Not according to the Scripture. The remedy is Yahweh. "But Yahweh," verse 4 says, because of *his great love that he had for us*, made us alive with the Messiah, even though we were dead in trespasses.

You think Joe's walking out of the courtroom as a free man doesn't make sense? Listen, Matthew Janzen's walking out of the courtroom as a free man doesn't make sense. Your walking out doesn't make sense either.

We think that Joe must suffer the penalty himself. But Yahweh loves Joe, and accepts the life of Yeshua in Joe's place. He accepts the life of Yeshua in the place of all those who place their faith in he and his Son.

You say, "But Joe didn't deserve mercy!" And you know what? You're right. Mercy is always undeserved. Mercy is withholding from you the punishment that you do deserve. Grace is giving to you the gift of salvation that you don't deserve. Joe deserved neither. I deserve neither. Yahweh has not dealt with us as our sins deserve. He has not repaid us according to our offenses. (Psalm 103:10)

But Yeshua? He needs neither grace nor mercy. He deserves salvation because he earned it. He met the demands of Yahweh's standard which is perfection. He needs no mercy because he's never done anything wrong. And our heavenly Father accepts him, Yeshua the Son, in our place. We get his perfection, and he takes our punishment.

Romans 5:6 says: "6 For while we were still helpless, at the appointed moment, Christ died for the unholy."

Romans 5:8 says: "But (the) Almighty proves His own love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us!"

Romans 5:9-10 says: "Much more then, since we have now been declared righteous by His blood, we will be saved through Him from wrath. For if, while we were enemies, we were reconciled to (the) Almighty through the death of His Son, then how much more, having been reconciled, will we be saved by His life!"

We are here described as helpless, unholy, sinners, and enemies. We are Joe. But through faith in Christ we are declared reconciled and righteous. And it is all because of Yahweh's plan of Yeshua's perfect life, substitute sacrifice, and victorious resurrection.

The law of Yahweh is holy and perfect. We are unholy and imperfect. The law shows us what our sin is, but it doesn't have the power to remove our sin. This doesn't mean the

law is bad, the law is good; it's 100% flawless. But it doesn't have the power to save. The law is always Yahweh's first word, but the gospel is Yahweh's final word.

See, I'm beginning to learn that the problem inside many churches today isn't necessarily "cheap grace" but rather "cheap law." They have concocted an outward set of regulations that make people feel like if we obey them, the Lord then loves us.

Don't smoke, don't drink, don't chew, and don't hang with people who do.

You then produce a bunch of self righteous Pharisees who think they are in good standing with the father because they keep *these* three things or *those* three things. That's cheap law. That's a bunch of false gobbledygook.

Cheap law leads to self righteousness. Cheap law leads us to works righteousness. We think that Yahweh grades on a curve, or that if we get up and read our five chapters, pray for an hour, and rebuke 3 people each day, we are good. It's good to read Scripture and pray, but these things do not make us righteous before Yahweh.

Yahweh requires perfection. Don't turn that into cheap law. He doesn't lower and raise his standard constantly to accommodate different human beings. He demands perfection, and apart from perfection you cannot be righteous or innocent before Him.

This is why we must trust in the one who is perfect. The one who did no sin. The one who was tempted in all points as we are, YET without sin. (Hebrews 4:15)

Yahweh only accepts Yeshua's life because his is the only life that is perfect.

Our placing faith in him causes all of our sin to be washed away. Our sin is gone, and the perfect righteousness of the Son is credited to our account. If we say we have no sin we deceive ourselves, but if we confess our sin, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sin, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:8-10)

That's good news isn't it?! That's the gospel. It does what the law could not do, because of our sin. It's not that the law was bad, it's that we broke the perfect law and therefore *we* fell under the bad category.

The law is Yahweh's first Word. It condemns, convicts, reproves, and rebukes. The gospel is Yahweh's final Word. It frees the sinner, gives new life, reconciles, and restores. The law is for the hard hearted man, and that's all of us, but the gospel is only for the broken hearted man.

So, what do you think Joe's response was? How did Joe react to this gift of grace and mercy from the Judge because of this other fellow stepping in and taking his place? Well, how would you react? Would it make you want to leave the courtroom and go back out and do the same things that put you there to begin with? Of course not.

Joe's response was one of gratitude and thankfulness. He didn't understand what had happened. He didn't realize how someone could love him like that. But he was thankful that someone loved him enough to take his place.

Before, Joe had heard only law. Don't steal. Don't kill. Don't fornicate. But this did not give him the power to do anything. Now, Joe had experienced gospel, forgiveness, grace, and mercy. This made Joe not want to steal, not want to kill, and not want to fornicate.

I'm afraid that too many of us haven't experienced the sweetness of the gospel, because we haven't yet realized that we are Joe. We think that Yahweh loves us because of the few outward things we do for Him. We haven't come to grips with the truth that we are helpless, sinners, and enemies of the Almighty.

Until we do, brothers and sisters, we will continue to try to love Him in our own power, and we will try so hard that we will experience burn out. When that time comes, it just may be the first time in our life that you see clearly your need for the Savior. Until you acknowledge that you are helpless, you won't be helped. Until you acknowledge that you can't save yourself, you won't be saved.

But the moment you do acknowledge these things, placing your faith in the Savior, you are declared innocent in the courtroom. The gospel has come to you, you who were broken hearted.

Part 2: Response to Gospel Preaching (Read Romans 9:1-16)

There are many places in the Bible where the author is teaching on a specific point; he is carried along by the Holy Spirit and is imparted the ability to write concerning a key doctrine.

Sometimes after writing about the doctrine, the author knows what type of response the teaching will receive. So, he anticipates the response, gives the response to his audience, and then he answers the response.

Let me start off with an example. In Romans 9, what we just read, Paul writes concerning predestination. He writes of how just because someone is an Israelite doesn't automatically make them a child of promise.

He writes of how being a son of Abraham doesn't mean you are chosen, because in Isaac shall the seed be called (vs. 7). He narrows it even further by saying that just because you are a son of Isaac doesn't mean you are chosen (vss. 10-12). His point is that children which are merely of the flesh, that is the fleshly descendant of the proper genealogy, are not the children of the promise. The conclusion is that not all who are descended from Israel are *truly* Israel. You must be a child by the spirit and not only by the flesh.

Paul goes on to explain in this chapter that Yahweh has the power and free will to show mercy to whom he wills, and to pass-over whom he wills.

He did it with Jacob and Esau before they were ever born. He said I loved Jacob, but I hated Esau. Both boys came from the same father and mother, both were flesh and blood sons of Abraham through the promised seed Isaac.

But only one was chosen as a child of promise: Jacob. Esau was passed over, and it is Yahweh's sovereign right to pass over Esau, simply because he is Yahweh. He can do that.

Paul says that this took place before these children were born, and before the two boys had done anything good or evil. Paul goes on to say, this is so Yahweh's purpose according to election would stand, not based upon works, but based upon the one who calls. In Romans 9:16 Paul writes something that so many people, including myself, have a hard time with. He writes: "So then it does not depend on human will or effort, but on (the) Almighty who shows mercy." He closes this loop with Romans 9:18 where he writes: "So then, He shows mercy to whom He wills, and He hardens whom he wills."

That's a tough pill to swallow, but that is exactly Paul's point in Romans 9. Yahweh is sovereign, not just in His creating the world, not just in storms, earthquakes, tornadoes, not just in setting up leaders and taking down leaders. He is sovereign even in salvation,

and this makes salvation a total work of Yahweh and nothing to do with us. Once again Romans 9:16 - "So then, it does not depend on human will or effort, but on Yahweh who shows mercy."

You know, when you share that with people - people in church or out of church - you usually get the same response. You get something like this: "Well if THAT'S true, why then does Yahweh get upset or find fault with the people He doesn't choose? They couldn't resist His sovereign will anyway, right?"

That's the response you get, and that is the response that Paul anticipated in Romans 9. See, Paul knew that what he was writing would receive a particular type of response. Thus he writes Romans 9:20-23.

Here's my point in beginning with all of this. If you are interpreting Paul correctly in Romans 9, you too will get the same response from people that you share with. They will hear you explain Romans 9, and they will respond with a Romans 9:19 response.

Here's the thing though. If you DO NOT interpret and explain Romans 9 correctly, you will get a different response, or maybe no response at all. If your interpretation of Romans 9 doesn't receive the same response that Paul anticipated in Romans 9:19, then you are interpreting Romans 9 incorrectly.

I bring this up because of my sermon last week concerning the allegory with the man named Joe. I used that allegory to preach the gospel, the good news of what Yahweh has done for us through our Master and Savior, His Son, Yeshua the Messiah. This good news is not based on our works, our performance, how we feel, how good we're doing, nothing in us. The good news is that Yahweh has loved us in spite of our wrongs. We were helpless and He sent His Son to die for us. We were enemies of Yahweh, but we were reconciled to Him through the blood of His own Son. Our salvation has nothing, zero, zilch, zip to do with our own works. Our own works don't make the cut. They are not perfect, and because Yahweh demands total perfection (perfect law, not cheap law) we cannot be declared innocent in His sight based upon what we do. The only thing WE add to our justification is the sin that makes it necessary.

This is the same message that Paul taught before he even got to Romans 9. He taught it in Romans 3, 4, and 5. Let's look at a few verses in these chapters.

Romans 3:9-10

Romans 3:20

Romans 3:23-24

Romans 3:28

Romans 4:4-5

Romans 5:1

Romans 5:20-21

Paul makes it very clear here that our justification or righteousness comes through faith in Yeshua. In what HE did, in HIS works. His perfect life, His atoning death, His resurrection. His was the only life that qualified.

See, you could *hypothetically* be justified by the law, but you would have to live it perfectly from birth to death. That's Yahweh's standard. He is not a cheap Mighty One. He doesn't accept anything less. He never lessens His standard for us weaklings. His law is not cheap. His law is holy, righteous, and good. It remains perfect. He says you have to

come up to His level. The problem is: we do not. The good news is that Yahweh accepts the righteousness of His Son, and the payment for the penalty of sin paid by His Son.

When we place our faith in His Son, our sins are paid for in Yeshua's death, and His righteousness is applied to our account. We then are righteous, because of our being IN the Son.

Now, what do you think the response to a teaching like this would be? When you tell someone that there is nothing they can do to be saved, short of perfectly obeying Yahweh's law from the time they are born until the time they take their last breath, but there is a way of escape in spite of your sin, in spite of everything you've ever done wrong, there is a way of escape. It's free. It's really free. You don't work for it at all. You just trust in the One who worked for it for you. That's the gospel. What is the response that an objector would give?

Paul anticipated the response to his teaching of the Gospel, and just like in Romans 9, if you do not teach the good news properly, you will NOT get the right response. Therefore, if you don't get the same response that Paul anticipated, you've not taught the good news properly. You really haven't taught the gospel at all.

So what's the response? Look with me to **Romans 6:1**.

The only way someone would respond with the words of Romans 6:1 is if the teaching of the gospel was one that was totally FREE. If you taught a distorted gospel, one of faith plus works, one of faith PLUS Sabbath keeping, or faith PLUS honoring your parents, or faith PLUS anything, you'd never get a Romans 6:1 response. When you share the gospel with someone, and after you are through you hear them say, "Well then, we should just go on sinning so that grace may increase, right?" you be encouraged, because you've shared the gospel correctly.

Let's look at the response for a few minutes and see Paul's answer. Remember, in Romans 9 he gave the anticipated response and then he answered it. He does the same here in Romans 6.

When you tell people that they are justified freely by grace through faith and not by works, the response you are going to get is this: "Well, if that's the case then shouldn't we just keep on sinning so that we can make more grace come to our life?"

In the allegory I gave last week, this would mean that Joe should just leave the courtroom and go back to doing everything that he did to put him there.

But what's Paul's answer? Look at **Romans 6:1-2** now. Paul's answer is Absolutely not - exclamation point. How can we who have died to sin - which is transgression of the law - still live in it?

Here's a key you need to know. A truly forgiven person, like Joe in our allegory, a person who has had the grace of Yahweh placed on their life, a person who has been given a new heart, a person who has had a salvation experience with Yahweh, will not desire to live in the sin that he or she has died to. Sure, they will struggle, and have trials and tests. They will have ups and downs and they will still battle with the flesh, but their life will not be *characterized* by the same things that they once partook in. They are in Christ. They are a new creation. Old things have passed away, behold, all things are new. Look with me to **Galatians 5:16-25**.

I like how one fellow by the name of Paul Washer - a Southern Baptist preacher - puts it. You cannot have an encounter between you and an 18-wheeler moving 60 mph

down the highway without being changed. When that truck hits you, it is going to change you drastically, right? You say, "Of course brother Matthew, you are going to die."

Well, isn't Yahweh bigger than an 18-wheeler? How in the world can you have an encounter with the Almighty Creator and not be changed by it? Well, you just can't. You can't have a salvation encounter with Yahweh and not be changed.

A person who has a regenerated heart, like Joe, is moved by the grace that he has been shown. Such thankfulness and gratitude overwhelm his heart and he leaves the courtroom a changed man, changed by grace.

He's a man that doesn't want to steal, murder, fornicate, cheat, or hate any more. His deepest desire is now to follow the instructions within the law. The law which condemned him and smashed him to a pulp when he had a heart of stone, now instructs him, and with his new heart, he has the ability to live in accordance with the commandments, because he's been given the grace to do such. It's only by grace that you keep commandments.

Now, a person with an unregenerate heart would leave the courtroom and live the same life all over again, but make no mistake, that person was not shown grace. That person is not a forgiven person. That person is a Pharaoh, not a Moses. That person is an Esau, not a Jacob. That person is a vessel of dishonor, not a vessel of honor. They were not given the gift of faith and repentance. They may have shed a few tears, walked down an aisle, prayed a prayer, and acted like they were sorry, but it was all fake. As John says in 1 John 2:19 - "They went out from us, but they did not belong to us; for if they had belonged to us, they would have remained with us. However, they went out so that it might be made clear that none of them belongs to us."

They were a goat trying to be a sheep. They were a pig trying to clean up. But no matter how much you wash a pig you know where it returns? Back to the mud. Back to the slop. It's nature is still the same.

But, for those who have been washed clean in the blood of the Lamb. For those who sins were as scarlet, but now they are whiter than snow; should we then continue in sin that grace abound? Absolutely not. And the thing is, we will not WANT to continue in sin, because our nature has been changed. We aren't an unregenerate sinner, we are a regenerate saint. We aren't a goat or pig anymore. We are a sheep. Our life will be one of a desire to obey the law, a desire to keep the commandments.

And when we fail, we will be tormented and hurt and sick and hate it, because we let down our Lord. This is not the action of a lost person. This is the action of a saved person. A lost person sins and doesn't care. A lost person bears hatred in their heart and wishes it was stronger. A saved person has hatred rise up in their heart, and they cry and pray and long for it to be removed, because they don't want it to be their.

The weird thing is that you can ask a unregenerate sinner, a person who is engaged in gross immorality, and they will tell you that they are a pretty good person. But you can ask a saint whose life you know, if they are a good person, and they will humbly respond, "He's still working on me, to make me what I ought to be."

So is grace really free? Yes, it is. Totally.

Should you continue in sin so you get more grace? No, you should not.

How can you live inside of that which you died to in Christ? Well, you can't, and you won't. The works that Christians show forth in their life, they come because they are natural. These works are just as natural as apples growing slowly but surely on a tree.

They grow because the tree is an apple tree. It's not an apple tree because it has apples on it. It has apples on it because it is an apple tree.

Has the gospel of grace been given to you? If it has, then you have been forgiven fully in Messiah. Does that mean you go back to your old ways and continue to sin so you can get more grace? Absolutely not, you don't even want to.

Let's end with **Ephesians 2:8-10**

Notice salvation is by grace through faith and NOT of works. No one can boast. If it was by any works at all then you could boast about yourself over against any other person who did not have works.

Then notice verse 10. We are HIS creation. I like how the KJV renders it: "HIS workmanship." We are created in the Son for good works. But those works *follow* salvation. We don't work in order to get saved, we work because we have been saved.

And how should we speak of our works? Turn to **Luke 17:7-10**.

When we work for Yahweh. When we keep His commandments. We're only doing our duty, and we're only able to do it because He has performed heart surgery on us. Let us not boast, but instead, let us drop our head and say I am unworthy, but by grace.

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