

Faith in the Home

The Fifth Sunday After Pentecost, Romans 7:1-13, "God's Verdict of Grace."

In 2012, the Green Bay Packers were ahead of the Seattle Seahawks 12-7, and on the last play of the game Russel Wilson threw what is known as a "Hail Mary." A pass that is so unlikely to score, it is likened to putting up a prayer for a miracle in order to win. But in this particular play, the Packers should have gotten the ball on an interception. The play should have failed the Seahawks and the Packers should have won. However, the referees called it a "touchdown," instead of a "interception." This "Hail Mary," is now called the "Failed Mary." The Seahawks should have lost, but they won. It was a complete gift from the referees. The record book will always show this score as a win for the Seahawks, and a loss for the Packers. It was not fair, but it is how it is.

Our eternal salvation isn't fair, and thank God it isn't! When we look at the righteous law of God, and compare our works to the law, we stand as sinners against God, worthy of Hell. But how does God see those who believe in His Son? Paul wrote in Romans 7, "Likewise, my brothers, you also have died to the law through the body of Christ, so that you may belong to another, to him who has been raised from the dead, in order that we may bear fruit for God." What Paul is saying here is that Jesus Christ's death on the cross did something that forever changes our lives. In faith, we died with Christ on the cross. He took the punishment for us. He took what we deserve and God sees us through that death. We are forgiven. When Paul says we are dead to the law, he doesn't mean that we can sin freely, but He means that we free from the punishment of the Law, and our desires change.

The Law points us to our need of Jesus. The Devil uses the law with the hope that when we see ourselves in the mirror, we despair over how we fall short. We see everything that is wrong, and we work and work to fix it, but it doesn't get any better. Trying to make yourself righteous by following God's Law is about as futile as trying to dig yourself out of quicksand. Likewise, my brothers, you also have died to the law through the body of Christ, so that you may belong to another, to him who has been raised from the dead, in order that we may bear fruit for God. However, not only has Christ defeated the curse of the Law for us, but He has made us righteous. We have a clean slate. That is who you are. You are not your sin. You are God's child. With faith, that is just how it is. Thank God we didn't get what we deserve. God's verdict for us is, "forgiven!"

How do we teach these things to our children?

1. Does your happiness or joy depend on how your "to do list is going?" Do you find yourself desiring better things because you think they will improve your life? We put so much stress on ourselves with what must get done, or what we wish we had. God has given us Himself. He wants us to trust in Him to meet all our desires and to be our source of joy. Our kids are watching. If they see our joy in God, they are more likely to find joy in Him as well.

2. Forgive freely because you are forgiven freely by God. We all have pain, and people we need to forgive. Remember that forgiveness sets you free. If that is a struggle ask God in prayer to help you forgive.

3. The grace of God offends many people, we can even find it offensive ourselves. Why? Simply we want to be able to be good on our own. Instead of worrying about being good. Rejoice that God values you enough to give everything for you. He gave His Son for you. God treasures you.

4. Because God has freely given you grace, you can give yourself grace to. "If the Son sets you free, you are free indeed."