

The Gift of Grace

by Paul D. Tripp

Paul D. Tripp's sermon explores the profound gift of grace and the internal struggles with sin that affect our relationships and faith.

Duration: 42:28

Scripture: Matthew 22:37, Romans 3:10, Romans 5:1, Romans 6:6, Romans 7:14-25

Topics: "Grace"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker provides a quick overview of the book of Romans. He explains that in Romans 1-3, Paul establishes the universal sinfulness of humanity, highlighting the need for God's grace. In Romans 4-5, Paul emphasizes that acceptance with God cannot be achieved through keeping the law, but rather through the gift of grace in Jesus Christ. In Romans 6, Paul teaches that believers have been united with Christ, breaking the power of sin over their lives. The speaker concludes by emphasizing the incredible gift of grace that God has given to his children, highlighting the importance and beauty of this gift.

Transcript

Part of the gathered body is to encourage one another and meet one another, love one another. Actually, we're supposed to actually stimulate one another, the love and good deeds, it is a part of worship, it is a part of the gathered body. So, we always enjoy that and rejoice in that.

We had a special day yesterday and we have the privilege of having Paul Tripp with us and he is very well-known to me. I've been reading his books for years and he continues to write them and they in fact, I just read one yesterday, a brand new one on relationships that really piqued my interest, especially the title, the messy part, that relationships are messy. And the amazing thing about it was very, very encouraging and challenging at the same time.

I wanted you to know if you weren't here yesterday that he is a pastor at 10th Presbyterian Church, where maybe you are familiar with James Montgomery Boyce and his ministry over the years. He's come from that context, been a seminary prof at Westminster and adjunct faculty, is that correct? And also at Southern Baptist, which we won't hold against you. And just really, really, I got issues with that, sorry.

But we were just so blessed yesterday. And so I wanted you, as he comes today and opens up God's word, would you just welcome him with one of those great Faith Bible Church welcomes, Paul Tripp. Chris,

I thought you were just going to stop and say, I've got issues.

Well, it's been good to be with you. And thinking about the important work of family and parenting. What I would like to do this morning is talk about what is the real reason for all of the struggles that we have in our families and in any other relationships that we have.

And I want to start this way. I gave birth to a son that just didn't understand gifts. My wife and I would go out when he was a little guy to buy what we thought was the quintessential Justin gift.

He would tear open the gift and he'd end up playing with the box. It drove us crazy. We decided one Christmas that we were going to find the quintessential Justin gift.

We would find the gift of gifts that he would not be able to resist. We shopped and shopped. We found the gift.

We were so excited. We were much more excited at that moment when that gift came out from under the tree and he was about to unwrap it, much more excited than he would ever have been. He ripped open the gift like a little boy would, not thinking about recycling.

And actually got out this toy and began to play with it. I had a feeling of such victory. I went into the kitchen to get something to drink, was in there for a few minutes, and came out and he was sitting in the box.

I couldn't believe it. Now, you may be sitting there this morning wondering why is this man telling us this cute family story? Well, hear me say this. If you're one of God's children, you have been given the most awesome gift that could ever be given.

It's gorgeous from every perspective. It's a gift of such grandeur that it's hard to wrap human vocabulary around it and to explain it. It's beautiful from every vista.

It is the most essential, important gift that you could ever be given. It's the gift that every human being needs. It's a gift in all of your work and all of your effort and all of your achievement.

You couldn't have earned. You could have never deserved. You could have never achieved.

It is absolutely, without question, the gift of gifts. It's the gift of the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is an amazing, life-transforming gift.

But I want you to hear me say this. I am deeply persuaded in the face of that gift, there are many Christians who are content to play with the box. They're content with a little bit of Christianity.

They're content with a faith that lives its most on Sunday. They're content with a episodic participation in ministry or a little bit of giving. They're not holding on to this gift with both hands saying, I'm going to hold on to this gift until it's done everything that it was intended to do for me.

No, they're playing with the box. They're not holding with a deep sense of need and a deep sense of appreciation to that gift of grace. Now, I want to give you a bit of a principle here before we look at our passage of scripture.

Here it is. That the things that you say to you about you will determine how you handle God's gift of grace. The things you say to you about you will determine how you handle God's gift of grace.

Now, I say this all the time to people. They always laugh, but I'm I'm actually being serious. No one's more influential in your life than you are because no one talks to you more than you do.

Most of us have learned not to move our lips. Because people think you're crazy or don't change positions as you're talking to yourself. It gets scary.

You're in a constant conversation with yourself and you're saying things to you about you that are very, very important. And one of the questions that you're you're always debating with yourself is this one. What is my deepest, most important, most abiding problem? What is the struggle, the dilemma of my life? And it's real tempting to sort of locate that problem, that struggle somewhere outside of yourself.

You know, maybe when I ask the question, what is your your biggest struggle in life? You're thinking, have you met my husband? No woman is willing to smile at this point. This this guy is just not he's not the person I thought he was, or I had a wife who said to me. I know that the Bible says a soft answer turns away wrath and a harsh word stirs up anger.

But the person who wrote that didn't have these children. Or maybe you say it's it's this boss of mine. My workplace is so hard.

I never can please this guy. He's unrelentingly dissatisfied. It's it's very tempting to locate your biggest problem outside of yourself.

And and you do live in a broken world and there's a lot of broken things happening around you. It seems plausible. But Scripture would say something very humbling to us.

It is this that your deepest, most abiding problem exists inside of you, not outside of you. And when you begin to grasp that, you become a consumer after the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. You hold on to that gift of grace with both hands.

Turn, if you would, in your Bibles to Romans seven. I'm going to read Romans seven. Fourteen through twenty five, and I'm reading from the NIV.

We know that the law is spiritual, but I am unspiritual soul as a slave to sin. I do not understand what I do for what I want to do. I do not do.

But what I hate, I do. And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good as it is. It is no longer I myself will do it, but it is sin living in me.

I know that nothing good lives in me that is in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry out for what I do is not the good I want to do nor the evil. I do not want to do this.

I keep on doing. Now, if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it. So I find this law at work.

When I want to do good, evil is right there with me for my inner being, I delight in God's law. But I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members. What a wretched man I am who will rescue me from this body of death.

Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then I myself, in my mind, am a slave to God's law, but in the sinful nature, a slave to the law of sin. Now, if you're we're going to understand what Paul is doing here in in Romans seven, as he helps us to understand our struggle, you've got to sort of know where Romans seven fits in Paul's discussion of Romans.

So I want to do a quick little tour here for you. Romans in 45 seconds. Romans one through three is Paul building this devastating argument that everyone is a sinner.

And he ends by these powerful words, there's none righteous, not even one. How humbling. In Romans four and five, based on that theology of sin, Paul argues because of our sin, it's impossible for us to achieve acceptance with God by keeping the law.

And so our acceptance with God is based on the gift of the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. In Romans six, Paul helps us to understand that because we were united with the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, that the power of sin has been broken over us as believers. And he ends that discussion with these wonderful words.

Therefore, sin shall not be your master because you're not under law, you're under grace. Just when you're celebrating the grace of God, you hit Romans seven. And Romans seven is Paul's reminder that although the power of sin still has been broken, the presence of sin still remains.

Now, Romans seven is meant to alert us to the presence and power of ongoing sin, that that's its function. And and there are people who say, well, I'm not sure that Romans seven is is discussing the struggle of a believer. Well, let me give you a couple of clues in here in this passage that would point to that.

First of all, that first person pronoun, I, me, my, is used to describe the struggle of a believer. Do some 40 times in this passage. This is an autobiographical passage.

This is Paul talking about his own struggle. This is Paul being amazingly humble and self-disclosing. There is a day when I'm going to hopefully be able to talk to the apostle Paul.

I want to put my arms around him. I want to say thank you for your humility. Thank you for the way you've encouraged us as we struggle with ongoing sin.

There are other clues. Look at verse 22. It says, for my inner being, I delight in God's law.

It would only ever be a Christian who could say such a thing. Unbelievers don't delight in God's law. In case you didn't know it, unbelievers delight in their own law.

It's only a Christian who could say, I love God's law. And so this passage is meant to remind us of something significant that still is going on inside of us. Listen, praise God that the power of sin has been broken.

Praise God, if we're his children, we don't have to be mastered by it any longer. But you need to be alerted to the fact that the presence of sin still remains. And you'll never understand your struggle in family.

You'll never understand your struggle of parenting and marriage and friendship and work unless you understand that fact. Now, what I want to do this morning is just alert you to four wonderfully descriptive words that that unpack the nature of this, this struggle that's still inside of all of us. Verse 21.

So I find this law at work when I want to do good, evil is right there with me. Here you go. Sin is a law.

Sin is a law. When Paul uses the word law here, he doesn't mean regulation. What he actually means is a universal life principle.

Sin is this inescapable universal life principle. You say, Paul, I'm not sure what you're talking about. Well, think gravity.

Gravity is for all of us an inescapable. Life principle, you can't say one day to yourself, I'm just bored with gravity. Gravity is such a hassle.

Feet held to the ground, feet held to the ground. As for me, I've decided I'm going to be gravity free. You're excited about your newfound buoyancy.

You actually feel lighter and you tell yourself as as a the fruit of your newfound buoyancy because you've determined you're going to be gravity free that tomorrow instead of leaving your bedroom and walking down your steps and out your front door and into your car to go to work, you're going to launch yourself from your bedroom window. Because you want to experience the full glories of your freedom from gravity. And so you wake up in the morning as you get dressed, you do feel buoyant.

It's time for you to get ready to go. You throw open the window and you launch yourself out towards your car. The people that live with you hear a sickening thud and see your body splayed across the roof of your automobile.

Because you have no capacity independently to spin yourself free of gravity. Neither do you have independent capacity to spin yourself free of the law of sin. Listen, what makes family difficult? Sin, what makes parenting difficult? Sin, what corrupts government? Sin, what distorts entertainment? Sin, what makes finances and human sexuality and all those things difficult? Sin, you see this law operating everywhere around us, and you'll never understand the difficulties of life in this fallen world unless you recognize there's this law that's operating everywhere.

You look, I mean, think about this. This is this is an amazing thing. Do you realize that you've never had a relationship that hasn't disappointed you in some way? Not amazing.

And what's a biblical view of marriage? A flawed person. Married to a flawed person living in a fallen world, are you encouraged yet? But with a faithful God. I mean, that's.

That's all of our experience. And. And as as you're you're living in that experience, it's very easy for you to focus on on the flaws and failures of the other person and forget that that law is operating in you every day.

In every situation and every location of your life, you do not have the independent power to spin yourself free from the law of sin. But. Paul isn't done.

So I find this law at work when I want to do good, evil is right there with me. Verse 22, for my inner being, I delight in God's law, but I see another law at work. And the members of my body waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work with my within my members, sin is not only a law, sin is a war.

It's a war being fought on the turf of your heart. It's a war between your way and God's way, your desire and God's desire, your purpose and God's purpose, your will and God's will, your kingdom and God's kingdom. It's actually what the Bible is talking about when it talks about spiritual warfare.

It's a war that rages again and all the situations and locations and circumstances and relationships of human life. We have such a distorted view of spiritual warfare. We hear spiritual warfare, we think demons and deliverance, you know, if it was a movie, it would have to be written by Stephen King and filled by Steven Spielberg.

And that war actually takes place all the time. Sometimes you actually do live for the kingdom of God. Sometimes you live for something bigger than you.

Sometimes you find delight in God's purpose, but not always. Sometimes you shrink your life down to the claustrophobic confines of your own little self-defined world and you're driven by what you want and what you feel and what you need. And in those moments, you don't care about the purposes of God, what you want, what you want, and that's what you're going to get.

Boy, I wish I could say that I have no regrets about the things I've said to my wife. But I can't, there are times that I've been shockingly self-focused, even in moments when I'm being served, you know, you've probably had these circumstances where. You know, you're going to have a difficult conversation with somebody and you want to be an agent of love and peace and reconciliation.

And so you play the conversation in the DVD in your brain ahead of times, have you done this and you play both sides and you imagine what that person is going to say to you and you imagine what you'll say in return and you play several renditions, try to cover all the contingencies. Are you with me? Sort of choose your own adventure. And you feel ready for the conversation, you're ready to be one of those agents of love and understanding and grace.

And you get into the conversation, you're quiet of spirit, you're soft of tone, you're going to be an agent of peace. Some of you are smiling because you know where I'm going. And all of a sudden, in that in the middle of that conversation, that person says something hurtful and dismissive to you.

You can feel the emotional temperature change. All of a sudden, you don't want love and unity and peace anymore. You want to win.

You want that person to say, you're right. You're always right. You're the rightest person I've ever met.

I bow beneath your rightness. Oh, right one. You see what happened? I started out serving God's kingdom.

I ended up serving my kingdom, though I lost the war. You're a parent. You walk down the hallway.

You really want to have a good conversation with your child and you end up screaming. You walk down the hallway and you're feeling defeated. It's not what you wanted to do, but you did it again.

You'll go out with your husband or your wife. You're planning a nice evening together. You're not even at that expensive restaurant yet, and you're not speaking because you had an argument.

The car feels hotter. You're turning on the air conditioning more. Temperature hasn't changed.

You have. You don't want to be irritable at work, but that guy next to you drives you crazy. You want to love him, but you don't.

You'll go the next day. You say, I'm going to do better. He says, good morning to an eagle.

It's a war. It's a war that's being fought on the turf of my turf of our heart. We need eyes to see the war.

But Paul is even going to say more. So verse 21, I find this law at work. When I wanted to good evil is right there with me for my inner being.

I delight in God's law, but I see another law at work in the members of my body. Waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members. Sin is a law.

Sin is a war. Hear this third word. Sin is a prison.

Sin holds us prisoner. When Paul uses that word captive or that word prisoner, what he's pointing to is the enslaving, the indicative quality of sin. Sin is enslaving.

Sin is addicting. In some way, somehow, it turns all of us into addicts. Some way, somehow, it hooks us all.

And things that were perfectly okay to desire become things that control me. Things that I once controlled now absolutely hold control over me. I get addicted to the love of a certain person.

I get addicted to power. I get addicted to possessions. And I tell myself I'm going to do better and I find myself held again.

If you examine your life, you'll you'll see. That addictive quality of sin operating in in you. Perhaps.

You've realized that you don't really eat in a way that gives glory to God. You actually find too much pleasure in the edible glories of creation. And and perhaps you.

You even realize that you're carrying around empirical evidence of. Sorry. No, I'm not.

Of your struggle with food. And you stand in front of the mirror one day and you say to yourself, this is wrong. I. I really need to get control of this area.

And. And you feel even a bit of victory just making that confession. And you commit yourself to doing better.

In the area of. Food consumption. And so you tell yourself you're going to start with small steps, but you're going to stay focused.

You're going to stay determined. And and you tell yourself that this evening dinner meal instead of your normal two or three pieces of chocolate cake, you're only going to eat one piece of chocolate cake. You're going to start there.

You're going to start by making good choices. And. And again, you you you feel you feel victorious that you're you've made that commitment and and that evening meal you you actually do have the meal.

And you eat only one piece of chocolate cake. You push yourself away from the table. You think you can hear the angels.

Rejoicing. And. And you're you're say tell yourself, I'm done eating for the evening.

Well, about eight o'clock, you decide you're going to go down and watch Bill O'Reilly. And you you walk downstairs and as you pass through the kitchen, you see a piece of chocolate cake there on the counter. You look at it for a moment and you say, you know.

A quarter of a piece would still be a victory. And you cut the you cut the piece in quarters and you. You jab that jam that piece in your mouth, walk down and watch television as.

As you're watching television, someone in your family calls you and you run upstairs to see what they want. And on your way through, you say, well, another quarter. I mean, it's a quarter of a piece of cake.

What? That's not such a big deal. And you put another quarter in your mouth, say a piece and a half. That's still a victory.

The phone rings and happens to be in the kitchen and you you run into the kitchen and when you pick up the receiver, you notice that there's chocolate on your hands. You don't even know how it got there until you realize your mouth is full. And in some subconscious moment of addiction, you've stuck the third piece in your mouth.

And that night. As you get ready to go to bed and you're turning the lights off in the house. In a statement of defeat.

You jam the last quarter. In your mouth. You go upstairs and you sit on the side of your bed.

Dejected, defeated. And you tell yourself. For the 75th time.

I'll do better tomorrow. Not so funny, is it? Sin has this powerful enslaving quality to it. If sin is an inescapable law.

If sin is a constant war that rages in the situations and relationships of everyday life. If sin is a prison that has an amazing capacity to hold us. Then this fourth word.

Is needed. Verse 21, five, find this law at work when I want to do good. Evil is right there with me for my inner being.

I delight in God's law, but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members. What a wretched man I am. Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

If sin is a law. And if sin is a war. And if sin is a prison.

Hear this. Then you and I are people in daily need of rescue. Hear this.

You and I need the grace of Jesus Christ today. Just as much as we needed it. The first day we believed.

Because although the power of sin is broken. The presence of sin still remains and has been being progressively eradicated. That means sin is an issue in every location, every situation, every circumstance

in which you live.

And we are in daily need of the rescue of the Lord Jesus Christ. It's not enough for you to understand salvation past. It's not enough for you to understand salvation future.

You need to understand the present benefits of the work of Christ in the here and now. It's not enough to believe in life after death. We better start believing in life before death.

An understanding of what we've been given by the Lord Jesus Christ. For this law and this war and this prison that is evident in all of our lives. And you see it.

You see it's evidence. You see it in the smallest of circumstances. There's a story that I tell a lot.

I have an eye condition and my eyes don't work very much, very well at night. And they have particular trouble in traffic with the dark and the light because of the lights and cars. And so my wife Luella has been glad to drive for us.

She's being a servant. She's willing to do that. And we're going off on a particular direction one evening.

Now I'm being served. And we come to a light where I would have turned and she goes straight. Now, why can't I leave that alone? But I can't.

I say to her, why didn't you turn? She says, because this is the way I go. I say to her, I think it's the wrong way. She says, I don't think it's a matter of right and wrong.

I think it's a preference. I can't leave that alone. I say, what if my preference is right? You know, Luella, that the shortest distance between two points is a straight line.

She says, that's why I didn't turn. I can't leave that alone. And so I say to her, if we were in a helicopter right now and we were flying over the city of Philadelphia and we could swoop down on this moment, you would know and look at this area.

You would know that my way is the right way. My dear wife looks at me and says, Paul Tripp, I don't think a helicopter is what you need right now. There it is.

There's that law. There's that war. There's that prison.

I can't even be served without turning it into a conflict. So Paul says. Were people in need of rescue, who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Let me let me say this to you. That rescue comes in three beautiful forms. Here's the first form.

It's the rescue of forgiveness. I don't have to rationalize. I don't have to excuse.

I don't have to shift the blame. I don't have to make my conscience feel better with self-justifying arguments for my righteousness. I can stand before God and say to him, once again, I've blown it.

Once again, I've lived for my kingdom. Once again, I've served those idols that that are so attractive to me. And I stand before you completely unafraid because you've covered all of my sin past, present and future.

And I say to you once again, oh, father, please help me. Praise him. And I can do that without fear because his blood has covered it all.

Listen, anytime you point the finger at somebody else, anytime you rationalize, anytime you give yourself self-justifying excuses, you are committing an act of gospel irrationality. It makes no sense for you to justify yourself when you have been fully and completely forgiven by Christ. You can run into God's presence, say it's me, it's me, it's me, and I need your help.

Husbands, don't point to your wife as a as a reason for your anger. Say it's me. Wives, don't point to your husband as a reason for your dissatisfaction and bitterness.

Say it's me. Kids, don't point to your parents as an excuse for your rebellion. Say it's me.

Friends, don't look at your friends and say, I'd be a happier person if I had better friends. Say it's me. And receive the forgiveness that can be found in the Lord Jesus Christ.

But not only forgiveness, power. God knew that our struggle is so pervasive and comprehensive and deep. It was not enough to forgive us.

He literally had to unzip us and get inside of us by his spirit. I love what the Apostle Paul says in Galatians 2:20. He says, I have been crucified with Christ and it's no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me.

And the life I live, I live by faith in the son of God who loved me and gave himself for me. Jesus is Emmanuel, not just because he came to earth. Jesus is Emmanuel because he's made you, if you're God's child, the place where he dwells.

Jesus Christ and his power and glory now lives inside of us. So I don't need to deny. I don't need to live in fear.

I don't need to avoid. I can step forward in faith and courage and hope and joy because it's no longer I who lives. It's Christ who lives inside of me.

I have new potential because I have Christ, but not only forgiveness. And power. But there's a third form of this rescue.

It's deliverance. Do you understand that you serve a dissatisfied Messiah? He will not be satisfied. He will not rest.

He will not relent. Until every microbe of sin has been removed from every heart of every one of his children. Isn't that great? He will keep fighting.

He will keep battling. He will keep exercising the power of his grace till every last piece of sin has been removed from every heart of every one of his children. You're not fighting that war by yourself.

There is a great warrior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who fights on your behalf. I don't know if you've thought about this, but you're going to be invited to the one funeral that you'll actually want to attend. You're going to be invited to the funeral of sin because sin will die.

Think about this. You're going to live for not 100 years and not 200 years and not 1000 years, not 10,000 years, not 100,000 years, but millions and millions and millions of years on the other side of the death of

sin. And your Messiah will not sit down until all of us are on the other side, completely free of the law.

Of the war, of the prison of sin. Now, I would ask you this question this morning. Are you holding with both hands onto that gift of grace? Are you looking for every opportunity to see that grace operate in your life? You want intimate Christian friendship.

You want full participation with your small group. You love to read Christian books. You love to study scripture.

You love the preaching of God's word. You love the moments of the Lord's table. You're looking for every opportunity you can to have that grace operate in your life and you're unwilling to let go of that gift of grace.

You're going to hold on to it with both hands till it is totally transformed and delivered you. Or are you playing with bots? Are you content with a Christianity that lives most vibrantly on Sunday morning? Are you content with a lifestyle that's probably driven by a different set of values? Are you content with occasional moments? Of ministry, or do you say to yourself? I have been given the gift of gifts. The most important thing that I could ever been given.

I am so deeply appreciative. And I recognize so much how deep my need is. And I hold on to that gift of grace with gratitude and joy and perseverance.

And I'm not letting go until it's done in me everything it's meant to do. Are you holding on to God's gift of grace that way? Or are you content? To play with the box. Let's pray.

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