

Hating Grace

READING
Matthew 20

It seems pretty universal, that we hate it when we sacrifice to do the right thing, and then somebody else who selfishly does the wrong thing, gets away with it and gets the reward that we sacrificed for and maybe didn't even get.

Don't you hate it when you've lined up for half an hour, and then someone ignores the line and just pushes in near the front -- and gets away with it!
Or when you're in the 8 items or less aisle and the person in front of you has a whole trolley full of items and the check-out person just processes them anyway while you stand waiting.

Or when you patiently wait in your car at the red light even though there is clearly nothing coming for a hundred miles, and some jerk on a pushbike wearing a sticker "The road is for sharing" just rides right through the red light.

And what about, after you work hard all year to do a good job and finally get that raise you deserve, you find out a week later that the laziest guy in the office got the same raise you did.

It seems pretty universal, that we hate it when we sacrifice to do the right thing, and then somebody else who selfishly does the wrong thing, gets away with it and gets the reward that we sacrificed for and maybe didn't even get.

This was even a problem in Yeshua's day (well, every day is Yeshua's day, but you know what I mean).

Yeshua told a story about how a farmer hired some workers for the day for a denarius, (at the time, that was a normal day's pay). Fair enough.

Later in the day he hired some more, then even later he hired some more who had been unable to find work so far that day. (or who hadn't bothered to line up early?).

In those days you paid labourers on the day they worked for you. So at the end of the day they all lined up to get their pay. Much to the disgust and shock of those hired early in the day, the farmer gave them all the same pay. One day's wages. They had worked hard all day, but some of these guys had just arrived at work an hour before the end.

Hardly fair eh.

But, Yeshua pointed out... didn't the first guys hired agree to work for a denarius? They did. And that's what they were paid. That's fair right? One denarius for one day's pay. As agreed.

The other guys didn't deserve a denarius because they didn't do a full day's pay. But the farmer was in a generous mood. It's his money after all. If I was one of the guys who worked the whole day, why is it my business if he says to some other guy who only worked half a day, "look, I know you only worked half a day, but I'm feeling generous today, so here is a whole day's wage anyway."

Instead of complaining about his generosity, shouldn't I be rejoicing that I work for such a generous boss? What if next week I'm late for some reason. I'm sure I won't complain then if he gives me a full day's pay.

We always seem to be jealous of God's grace to others, but we never feel bad about God's grace to us. Weird huh.

We hate it when other people get things that we think they don't deserve.

We think its not fair when we do the right thing, but we end up suffering for it, or even just not getting what we think we deserved for doing it. Thank God, (literally), that we don't get what we deserve. I know where I would end up if we did.

We struggle against a particular sin, and then we meet some other Christians that just don't seem to bother. They sin blatantly and everyone knows it. We think we're better Christians than them and it's not fair that they "get away" with it. But of course, we want God to forgive all **our** deliberate sins. And honestly, regardless of what we think we know, in reality we have no idea what those other people are fighting against.

I once saw some Christians complaining about a visiting youth speaker because he was out the back smoking. Now, firstly, the Bible doesn't specifically forbid smoking, that's just man's rule. But more importantly, when I talked with him about how he was feeling, (they were being pretty blunt about what they thought of his smoking), he said, if they only knew. A year before he had been a heroin addict but Yeshua had saved him from all of that, and he was actually feeling pretty good that these days he was only smoking tobacco.

God sends rain on the righteous and the wicked. We wouldn't, but he does. But where would we draw the line? For sure it would be below where we think we are. How shallow are we!

God's love and grace flow to everyone regardless. That's who he is.

Whew!

Somehow we expect a reward for doing what is right.

But that is like expecting a reward for breathing. We are supposed to do what is right. That is our duty. That is our obligation. We don't deserve a reward for that.

What we do deserve is eternity alone in hell for the way we behave. But thankfully God is merciful enough that we will not get what we deserve.

Remember that next time you find yourself hating grace.