

Irony – God's Salvation

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MAIN VERSES

[Genesis 1](#) • [Genesis 2](#) • [Genesis 3](#) • [Genesis 4](#) • [Genesis 27](#) • [1 Samuel 17](#) • [Daniel 7](#) • [Matthew 26](#) • [Psalm 110](#) • [Revelation 5](#) • [Revelation 13](#) • [Revelation 14](#) • [1 Corinthians 1](#) • [Luke 9](#)

We're going to talk about living out an alternative type of life or reality compared to what the world tries to teach us. So I'm excited about today's message on irony and how God's salvation is ironic and how it's delivered and how it's manifested. So Shabbat Shalom everyone. Welcome to Founder in Truth Fellowship. If this is your first time visiting today or watching online, thank you for joining us. We are a community of believers with a diverse background for sure. But we love the Sabbath. We love the entirety of the Bible. But most importantly, we all seek to orbit the person of Yeshua in our daily life and to teach our children the same. So welcome to Fit.

Irony in the Bible

As we've been discussing, has this been an okay kind of series so far? New perspective on some things. We've spoken on the irony of how God uses people's sin in the Bible as their judgment. We spoke about the irony of idolatry and how many times in the Bible we become what we worship. Israel worshiped the golden calf and they started to take on the attributes. How you're supposed to live your life out and how you're supposed to respond to things in this world and how you're supposed to respond to things like conflict or hurt or offense—there is a better way that seems like it is the opposite of what it should be. The things that Yeshua taught about turning the other cheek, the things that Yeshua taught about forgiving one another, these are things that the world does not accept.

Even though the world will say, oh yeah, that's a good thing to do, but when you really need to not turn the other cheek, it's important that you don't. Let's be honest. If it's a really bad situation, you act like them more, and that is how you respond to conflict. Yeah, you're supposed to forgive, unless it was something really bad. And then it's okay to not forgive. The way of the cross is hard. And this is to the young people here today and everybody today. The

way of the cross is hard, and it's radical, and it's world-changing. And the story of the Bible and the way of Yeshua is meant to topple empires, and it has successfully done just that.

God's Ironic Salvation

And so we're going to explore that, but we're also going to explore how God reveals the ultimate salvation, not by coming in with machine guns, not by coming in with armies of angels, with swords that are flinging everywhere on fire and chopping up the enemies. God's salvation comes in the form of meekness. Some could even say weakness, in a sense. Humility in a way that seems totally opposite of what victory looks like. And that is in the way of the cross. That is how God chose to implement salvation today and defeat evil and death and sin. Not by overpowering it in the same sense, but by allowing it to do everything it can, pour out all of it, flex its muscle—death on the cross—just to show that it comes up wanting. Irony.

Lots of stories of irony. Specifically, have you ever seen a story or heard about a story? There's real life stories. There's lots of film, comics, so on and so forth. Marvel superheroes, villains. People who were good protagonists in the story wanted to seek justice. They wanted to fight the enemies, wanted to fight the wicked, wanted to fight the bad guys. And so they begin engaging in this battle, fighting the bad guys as hard as they could. And by the end of the story, they fought so hard and tried to beat the bad guy so much that they finally won. But by the end of the story, they're indistinguishable now from the person that they defeated. Sometimes we see stories about the good guys almost having to become the bad guy in order to defeat the bad guy.

The Vigilante's Irony

There's one story. It's a movie from 20, 30 years ago about a man who had an injustice take place to his family. And the justice system in his country, he followed the rules, went to court, had all the evidence, but somehow the people involved in this injustice, they slipped through the cracks. They were let free. And he said, no, I need to take matters into my own hands. It's very American, right? I'm going to do it. And so he goes out, this little vigilante mission, and he finds the people responsible for this injustice to his family. And so he takes care of it. He takes justice into his own hands. But now he's kind of crossed into a different threshold. He took justice into his own hands by mimicking the injustice that was done to his family. And the further that he followed this stream of injustice, it actually led to judges, attorneys, government officials that were involved in allowing the injustice to occur in the first place.

And by the end of the movie, this guy went from being the victim to a greater villain than the man that had done the injustice to his family. Do you hear me? He's the bad guy. And it's so funny because in the way the story's told, you hurt for him in the beginning, but by the end of the movie, it's like, yes, someone needs to teach this man a lesson in justice. And that's the problem: we have kind of a twisted view of what justice looks like because the type of justice that he was trying to carry out was really the same thing that was done to him with a different label on it. And when the label was ripped off, now he is the one that needs to be taken care of. He is the villain.

Irony in Genesis

Irony in the Bible. We also have stories in the Bible where at the very beginning of the story, we get a glimpse of how the story is going to end in hope. And the Bible is no different. Very beginning, we're introduced to [Genesis 1](#), the beautiful creation where mankind as a whole is created as the crowning piece of [Genesis 1](#). For the purpose of reigning and ruling in partnership with God in creation. That's what the mandate is. Mankind was, in my opinion, not created in God's image. They were created as God's image in creation. And they were given sovereignty, rule over the plants and the animals, given rule over creation to tend to it, to take care of it. And it's fascinating because when you look at [Genesis 1](#), there's only one thing, one thing that it doesn't say that mankind rules over—mankind was not supposed to rule over other people. You're taking care of this as the kings and priests, but you're not ruling over each other. Man is not ruling over women, vice versa. You're not ruling over other people. Beautiful story.

Adam and Eve

[Genesis 2](#), a little bit different lens, down to earth, which is a pun if you read it. And we have a more detailed description of Adam being created from the dirt. Pile of mud and the Ruach comes and fills his lungs. I mean, he becomes a living soul. And in the Hebrew, or in the concept of the Bible, soul is not like this piece of your spiritual—it's your living. You are a soul that I'm looking at here. You're a living being. So Adam becomes this living being. And then God creates the animals. A little bit different than [Genesis 1](#), but different perspective, different message.

So all the animals are coming to him. So man has been created. The animals have been created. You got all the stuff, all the creation, everything's there, but it's still not good. It's not good. Adam cannot find a good partner to complete his mandate as this co-creator of creation, this participant in creation. So God has an idea. He sees what's missing. Ah, I will now enact the

crowning achievement of creation according to [Genesis 2](#), the woman. It's not a joke. That's [Genesis 2](#). That's the crowning. Sorry, guys. We had [Genesis 1](#). [Genesis 2](#) is the woman. The crowning achievement. That was the completion. And mankind co-ruled in the garden.

The Serpent's Deception

[Genesis 3](#), we have an unexpected visitor. All right? I think I have it on the screen here. We have [Genesis 3](#), verse 1. Now the serpent was the most shrewd or crafty or cunning of all the wild animals that the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, did God really say you cannot eat of the tree in the garden? We know this story. We know this story. The serpent. The serpent. The word there for cunning or crafty or shrewd is arum in Hebrew. Arum. He's crafty. He wants to be crafty and he's enticing the woman.

You know you can eat this tree of the knowledge of good and evil. And then you can determine good and evil for yourself like God does. Which is part of the irony because mankind eats the fruit and then you read the rest of the story expecting them to be able to determine good and evil for themselves, and it's not clean. It's not black and white. It's messy. Tamar, sexual sin, deception, bearing false witness, righteous because she did good, right? Crazy story. But the snake comes in, the serpent comes in. And we know what happens, Eve, or Hava, or in the Greek Septuagint, Zoe, the life giver. She takes hold of the fruit of the tree and she partakes and she gives it to her husband, Adam. And they look and they realize what? They're naked. They're naked.

The Irony of Shame

In Hebrew, the word for naked is arum, arum. There's a word play hidden here that's just one of my favorites. So the serpent is trying to be shrewd. He's shrewd and he's arum and naked is arum. So kind of the hidden message here is in the pursuit, in the pursuit of mankind to be shrewd, they just ended up being nude. Yes, that is how incredible the Bible is. Because the biblical authors are so intentional about the little itty-bitty things that we just never see behind the text, right? You're supposed to catch that and be like, oh. Then we reach a point where God comes to the garden and Adam and Eve are hiding. And he calls out to them and they confess what they've done. They disobeyed—it was the one job they had.

And God lets them know, okay, well, things have changed now. Mankind, you have these curses. Woman, this curse. Rulership is now a curse, a product of sin. And then he turns to the snake and he says, you're going to crawl on your belly and eat dust. Was he not doing that before?

Legs, I don't know. But we get to the little bit of hope that we get a glimpse of in verse 15 in chapter 3. And before Adam and Eve are forced into exile from the garden... God says this, he says, I'm going to put enmity between you and the woman, speaking to the serpent, and between your offspring and hers. He will crush your head and you will strike his heel.

The Promise to the Woman

The woman, Zoe, the life giver, is going to have an heir that is going to crush the skull of the serpent, the death bringer. But there's a paradox here because what's the serpent going to do? It's going to strike his heel. And we think, oh, okay, maybe it was just a black snake, right? It's no big deal. No, I don't think so. This is a deadly snake if you haven't noticed—one that affects all of mankind. This is a paradox that is stating prophetically that the heir of the woman is going to be struck down by the serpent. But somehow through that, that serpent is going to have its head crushed. It's called the Proto-Evangelium, the first gospel. This is the shadow, the echo of the coming Messiah.

So mankind again has curses, and they are exiled from the Garden of Eden, and they are going eastward. It's a whisper, it's a primer for the future story of the Babylonian exile, where Israel were in the land of God, with God, and they were exiled out to the east toward Babylon. It's just another connection.

Reading the Bible Fresh

But if it's your first time reading the story of the Bible, don't you just wish you could go back and read it for the first time sometimes without any preconceived notions? I'm thankful that I've had the Bible in my life for most of my life, but we take it for granted sometimes. The snake started talking, and it doesn't faze us. For me, I'm like, what is going on? But we have a prophecy where Zoe is going to have an heir that's going to be the skull crusher of the antagonist of the story. And that's where we're launching from. And that's what we're looking for as the readers.

Looking for the Skull Crusher

So we turn to chapter four of Genesis, the very next chapter. And oh, look, Eve gets pregnant. Why is that significant? Because her seed, is this it? Is this the heir that's going to crush the skull of the serpent, of the dragon? Yes, Cain. Cain is going to be the hero. Nope, Cain was not the hero. Cain was not. And we have this theme throughout the Bible where we're constantly

looking for the skull crusher. Where's he going to come from? And there's examples and examples and examples that come and go, maybe almost. We come to Jacob. Man, Jacob, that's pretty, yeah, let's do Jacob. But Jacob, as he is plotting to deceive his father, is described in [Genesis 27](#) as being the embodiment of the serpent. Oh, I have smooth skin. It's the deceiver. I have smooth skin. I can't do that. Smooth and slippery, like the snake.

Esau, on the other hand, his brother is described as having a coat of fur. Beasts. Mankind is beginning to devolve into the beasts that they were supposed to reign over. Jacob is trying to be shrewd like the serpent when he deceives his father Isaac. Not the skull crusher.

David and Goliath

We continue moving through the story of the Bible and we come to the best candidate that we can find. We know this is going to be it. It's a king named David. A young shepherd boy. And he's about to face a giant. Maybe this is the skull crusher that is once and for all going to end this story of the curse on mankind of sin and death being manipulated by this shrewd snake. Maybe he's the king and heir to Zoe, to Hava, or Eve.

Israel's fighting the Philistines during this time. And how is the hero of the Philistines described? Giant, right? Big guy? Well, in [1 Samuel 17](#), he's described as wearing... Why bronze? What does that have to do with anything? Well, the word for bronze is nakashet, and it's one consonant off of the word for snake in [Genesis 3](#), which is nakash. Is it a wordplay? Are they trying to get our attention? Oh, and they made sure to let you know that he was covered in scales because of his armor. Nakash, nakash, scaly. Is this a snake? There's a battle. There's a battle with this King David little shepherd boy. Looking pretty good. And here we have this big snake, if you will. Oh, and it specifically says the Philistines are at enmity with Israel. Okay. Getting excited. We're about to have a battle. It's good. It's good. Is this going to be the one that crushes the skull?

Well... David did do just that. He got the rock and he sent that rock through his skull. He crushed the skull of the Goliath, Goguliat of Goth or Goliath of Goth. And what's the Hebrew word for skull? Goguliat. All right. We've got the skull crusher. Finally, guys, finally, the prophecy at the beginning of the Bible, the coming Messiah, the one who's going to reverse all of this has finally come and sent a rock through the head of this serpent. It's good. It's good. Awesome. What happens next? David defeats him, defeats the seed of the serpent, victorious. And David celebrates, and a huge party is thrown. We won. The next chapter, everyone's

cheering, and they're chanting, Saul has struck down his thousands. But David, his ten thousands.

The Jealousy of Saul

And what's the result of this party? Well, King Saul, the king that didn't go out and fight, when it was the time for kings to go fight, King Saul stayed in his tent and sent David instead. It says Saul became very angry. It says that he became jealous. Jealous. This is our first time reading the whole story, right? When did someone become jealous of someone else in the Bible? In the beginning. Cain and Abel. So Saul seeks to do to David what Cain wanted to do to Abel, to kill him. The story of the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent is a repeating one in the Hebrew Bible. It doesn't stop because it's not about a lineage that takes place. It's not about simply a physical death of one person, an enemy in a battlefield.

Because it's an attitude. See, David destroyed the seed of the serpent in Goliath. But that same seed of the serpent, or that same voice, shrewdness, jumped from Goliath into Saul now. Saul, of Israel, is now at enmity with the seed of Israel, with David. Funny how that tends to happen, huh?

The Vision of Daniel

When will the beast be destroyed? When will this stop? During the time of the Babylonian exile, when Babylon came in, destroyed Jerusalem, took the Judeans, the Jews out of Judah into Babylon, there was a prophet known as Daniel who was there. And Daniel has a prophecy in Daniel chapter 7. And I encourage everybody to read Daniel chapter 7. It's an awesome vision. But it's a vision, and it's split into two parts, verses 1 through 15. And then the second part is the interpretation, 15 and on forward. But Daniel sees all of these wicked-looking beasts, Godzilla, dinosaur, whatever, beasts trampling all over the world with claws and teeth and fire, whatever you want to imagine. And they're ravaging the earth and destroying everybody in their way, specifically the holy people of God. And it says that these beasts are not real beasts. They're kings of empires. These are empires, and everything that they do is for their own self-gain. And so they use violence and exploitation and greed to secure more wealth and more power for them. And anyone that stands in their way, they crush, kill, and destroy. That's the way of the beast.

So you have these beasts, and you have one big beast. And what's ironic about the vision is in the beginning it was mankind that were supposed to rule over the beasts. But here we see the

destiny for mankind and their pursuit for sin and selfishness is to devolve into the very beast they were supposed to reign over. And they do everything. Everything. And they're killing and they're slaying everybody and the holy people of God. And then this singular figure comes out of nowhere and appears, known as the Son of Man. Pops out in the vision. And the Son of Man seems to stand before the beast and endures the wrath of the beast, and it destroys him.

The Ancient of Days and Victory

And this climactic scene occurs before the throne room of God. The Ancient of Days comes in after this takes place, and the beasts are ravaging and killing everyone. And the Ancient of Days comes in, sits on his throne, and he slays the beast. Something about the beast destroying the Son of Man has some [Genesis 3](#) vibes to it, right? The Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven? This is a prophecy. Like the Son of Man sits down on a throne of heaven and then launches a kingdom that lasts forever and ever. You with me? This is [Daniel 7](#). It's pretty gnarly. Pretty gnarly.

In [Daniel 7](#), 13, it says, Hmm. Now again, in the vision, if you read it all the way through, the Son of Man is made synonymous with the people of God, and that's where all of these connections kind of merge together. But the Son of Man destroys the beast by allowing the beast to destroy him. And it's through his defeat that he is victorious. This is the core message of the Bible, that there is a distinction between the earthly, man-made empires that rise up throughout history, and the one and only kingdom of God that has no physical borders, only spiritual ones. And these two will be at odds at each other always, always. And there will be kings of empires that will try to convince you that their empire is the kingdom of God.

And that's what Revelation chapter 13 is all about: the mixing between earthly imperial reign and politics and devotion to the true King in the kingdom of heaven. And when that allegiance is mixed in Revelation chapter 13, you no longer have the mark of God on your forehead in [Revelation 14](#). You have the mark of the beast, right? And so we wait. We see the prophecy, but how is this going to be fulfilled? What does this even look like? A grand, mighty empire is going to come up, and it's just going to be so wicked and so bad, and it's killing everybody. And we know the end of the story. Jesus is involved in here somewhere. He's going to stand up to the beast, and he's going to die, and through his death, the beast will be destroyed. Okay, what's that going to look like? When will this beast be destroyed? When will the serpent's head be crushed? Hundreds of years pass since Daniel saw this vision. And one day, in a Roman province known as Judea, a poor, homeless, brown-skinned construction worker stands before the Supreme Court. And he's being accused of crimes he did not commit. And he's being

thrown in there because the court wants to kill him. And they have witnesses, false witnesses coming in and saying all kinds of things because they can't really find anything that they can throw at him.

The Prophecy Fulfilled

But in [Matthew 26](#), starting at verse 57, it says: Those who had arrested Jesus took him to Caiaphas, the high priest. Which priest? High priest. Where the teachers of the law and the elders had assembled, and to the Sanhedrin, the supreme court of Judea. And the high priest said to him, I charge you under oath by the living God. Tell us if you are the Messiah, the Son of God. Yeshua responds, you have said so. But I say to all of you, from now on, you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and... And we know what takes place next. Coming on the clouds of heaven. Yeshua referred to himself as the Son of Man in Daniel chapter 7. And he told the high priest of Israel and the Supreme Court of Israel that they would see him coming on the clouds of heaven. Which means that he is about to defeat the beast. Even though the beast is about to kill him, God is going to vindicate him and it's going to launch forth his authority as king over all of creation. That's what he said to the high priest's face. Whoa! Whoa!

And he also quoted [Psalm 110](#). You guys want to see what he quoted from [Psalm 110](#)? Here's what he quoted from [Psalm 110](#): Yeshua packaged the entire story of Daniel chapter 7 up, the entire story of the culmination of the beast that is going to take on the Son of Man, the entire story of God vindicating him and allowing him to rule Zion forever and ever. And Yeshua looked at the high priest of Israel and the religious authorities of Israel and said, you're the big beast in [Daniel 7](#). It's not Babylon. It's not Assyria. It's not Afghanistan, Iraq. It's not America. It's not China. It's not Russia. It's you. You're the beast that Daniel spoke about. That whole scene just goes to another level when you have that backstory.

The Beast Revealed

And what did the high priest do? He ripped his garments in anger. Ripped them. Kill him. Kill him. The irony is that these people and not the Romans would be accused of being the beast. The beast is going to be killed. He's going to be vindicated by God. His kingship will be inaugurated over the entire cosmos forever, and he will be reigning and ruling from the throne room of God. Yeshua was then led outside. He was stripped naked. He was beaten. He was scourged, forced to carry his own execution stake. Iron nails were hammered through his arms and legs, and the forces of gravity fought against his fastened appendages as he was displayed as

a trophy of the beast's victory. He was given a royal robe. They understood the prophecy. He wants to be king? No. Now it's amazing because the beast didn't know what he was doing. The beast thought he was making a mockery of this king. They inaugurated the king in the way the king was meant to be inaugurated, through meekness, through meekness.

And what was the place called where he was crucified? Golgotha, the place of the skull. We see the battle taking place, spoken to the serpent, spoken to Eve, Life, the dragon, the beast. The serpent has struck the heir of the life-giver, but that heir has crushed the head of the serpent.

Victory Through Weakness

It is by the very means that the beast seeks to wield its power with strength and violence that causes its own defeat. It is through weakness and meekness and humility that the serpent loses. This is the culmination of the battle that began at the very beginning of the story. And it doesn't end the way the world says it should end, but it ends the way that God had always planned it. And I find it so potent, so potent, that this is what Yeshua taught throughout his entire ministry. This is how you defeat evil. By just letting it kill you? No. By not becoming like it.

After Yeshua's resurrection, he had a perfected body, right? But he kept the holes. Think about that. Remember, he showed his perfected body. His new, heavenly, perfect body required that the hole still be there because that's who he is. And that's the example of his kingship and the example he calls us to follow. The way of the cross is hard. This is the climactic defeat of Satan that we've been waiting for. And it doesn't end with a stake through the skull like Jael did. It doesn't end with a millstone being dropped on Abimelech's head like the woman of Thebez did. It was not by a stone that was forced through bone and brain by a sling of a shepherd boy. It was not by a sword. It was not by a spear. It was not by a stone, a 5.56, a 7.62, not a 45 or a 9 millimeter. Not by a drone, a bomb, or a tank. Because those do not work when you are fighting against the beast. This is the moment when the king assumed his throne and defeated sin and death and the power of Satan. And it's so radical, but also very irritating because that's not how I want to fight. That's not really the army I want to be a part of. But that was the message of Yeshua. There is a kingdom that is victorious and it does not operate like the kingdoms and the empires of the world. And if you try to fight the kingdoms and the empires of the world like the kingdoms and the empires of the world, you will simply become like the kingdoms and the empires of the world. You might just do it with my name then, which is worse.

The Lamb at the Center

In John's apocalyptic vision in the book of Revelation, which is a type of literature that uses intense, violent, metaphoric imagery to nail down concepts and points with grossly impactful messages and meaning. He has a vision of what took place right after the crucifixion. John finds himself in the center of the cosmos, the center of all of creation, orbiting this space between the throne of Yahweh. And there is anxiety in the throne room of God. What's going to happen next? Something's going on that has everyone shook. Just what's going to happen next? How is God going to complete his mission? How is God's mission going to be accomplished? The scroll—who can open it to do these things, to read these things? There's no one that can. So John begins to cry, tears flowing. And then one of the elders speaks up and says, "Hey, don't weep. See, the lion of the tribe of Judah, the root of David, has conquered. He has triumphed. He is able to open the scroll and the seven seals."

Oh man, we got a lion. Big, vicious, big claws, right, big teeth. And the lion conquered. So he went to the battlefield, and he's probably got blood all over him, probably got some pieces of flesh or something in his claws, right? He roared. It's going to be great. Yes. So John hears this and he stops crying. He looked because he heard it was there. And he didn't see a lion. He saw a lamb looking as if it had been slain, standing at the center of the throne, encircled by the four living creatures and the elders. And the lamb had seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out in the earth.

John hears the victory of the Lion of Judah. He turns and looks, and he sees a little lamb with its throat cut open, standing in victory at the center of the throne room of Yahweh. And the entire throne room erupts. The cosmic creatures fall to their faces. The elders do the same. And they all shout and sing, "You are worthy because you were slain." That's [Daniel 7](#). That's [Daniel 7](#). And again, I assert this is the imagery taking place right after the crucifixion. This is the impact, the heavenly impact. They say, "You have made them a kingdom and priesthood, and they will reign on earth," because of what Yeshua has done. Reign on earth, mankind. That's [Genesis 1](#). It's all coming together. We're going back to God's reality in this kingdom ruling and reigning on earth. And then hundreds of thousands of angels shout in unison, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain." A little itty-bitty lamb with its throat cut is standing in the midst of all of this. This is how God saves.

Kingdoms That Don't Fight Like the World

And it's ironic because with an enemy so big and bad and violent, you would think and assume that you would need to be big and bad and violent. And God says, no, that makes you a beast, not a man.

This is the irony of God's salvation. Paul speaks a lot about this. In [1 Corinthians 1](#), starting in verse 18, it says, "Why is it foolishness that Christ saved the way he did?" Because who would do that and think that would work? We want a God that throws lightning bolts because we want to throw lightning bolts. And we've done such a horrible job showing people what a Messiah actually looks like. And we're not even ashamed of it because we feel entitled to match the world tit for tat.

And we cannot win that way. It will not work. We cannot fight the beast without becoming the beast. And when we become the beast in the name of defeating the beast, we have only made it stronger. We have only made it stronger. How's that for an ironic story?

The story doesn't end there though, with Yeshua becoming king over creation and defeating the undefeatable beast through meekness, refusing to play by the rules. What do you mean you're refusing to play by the rules? Refuse to play around the rules. Can you imagine if someone did that in Monopoly? Can you imagine?

Let's do a scenario that would never be related to real life. Let's imagine everybody's playing Monopoly. Everybody's doing their thing. You got to pay taxes sometimes. Sometimes you get put in jail. Happens, right? And then the bank decides to be its own player. Not a player operating the bank. No, the bank is going to be a player now, right? That's not part of the rules. You can't play that way. Would that be upsetting? No. Yeah, it'd make you just want to flip the whole board over and burn everything down. Good thing that never happens in real life.

God says we don't have to play by the rules. And that is possibly the most empowering message I think of the Bible for believers. You don't have to play by the rules. No, you got to do tit for tat. You have to respond this way. You have to fight this way. You have to do this. You have to say that. You have to conform to what we say justice is. And you fight for that, but not that over there, because we don't think that's an injustice to fight for. No, the Bible says that's an injustice too. I'm going to fight for that. No, that's not what we say. Yeah, but you're the beast and I'm not playing by your rules.

A Different King

You realize that Roman soldiers on outposts all throughout the Roman empires, when Christianity was spreading in its radical roots the first 100, 150 years, there were active duty soldiers that were guarding posts and reinforcing the Roman rule on provinces that got saved and came to the knowledge of Christ. And they said, "You know what? I'm tired of oppressing people because I serve a king that doesn't do that." And they would literally drop their swords at

their outposts and walk away. "You can't just walk away." "I serve a different king now. I don't play by your rules."

"Yeah, but. But what? What are you going to take from me? Because I'm already promised—life everlasting. And it doesn't just start when I die. It starts right now. But it'll transcend whatever you want to try to do to me. Because I have the peace of God within me. And I'm living in a new creation now. And I'm seeing you through the lens of the cross. Not like everyone else sees you. And I see that you're in need of a Savior too. So do whatever you think you need to do to me. But I'm going to show you the peace and the mercy and the grace and the forgiveness of my God no matter what. Because that's what he taught me on the cross."

"You can't do that. Watch me. No, you need to fight for the empire." "No, but those are your enemies too. They're coming." "No, they're not my enemies. I'm going to go give them some bread and water. They're over there." "You can't do that. That's treason. We'll kill you." "You don't have to play by the rules of empire because you've been freed from that. You have a new set of standards—kingdom standards. And that is how empires are overthrown. And that's what also gets Christians killed."

Christians were never killed because they believed in Jesus. They were killed because they did not declare Caesar as their king. They said, "I serve a different king and he has a higher standard than this empire." And that was unacceptable to empires worldwide and throughout history. That is how radical your faith was meant to be.

"Matt, that seems really radical though." "Yeah, radical enough for them to put him on a cross."

And I want to encourage you today. Look at the world and look at people through the lens of the beast being defeated by what took place at Calvary. The world will try to tell you that there are rules you need to abide by. You need to do this. You need to do that. You can help these people, but not these people. These people are not experiencing injustice, even though they claim they are, but these are. Every time people screamed out in oppression in the Bible, God came down to see what was going on. He at least investigated them. You don't have to play by the rules.

Acting Like Jesus

Jesus gives us a vocation in Luke chapter 9, verse 23, where he said to all, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me." I mean, it sounds good, right? It's hard, because this is where the rubber meets the road.

We're called to fight evil, but not with evil. We don't call evil good so that we can then use it to fight evil. Someone slaps you, you don't return the slap. That's what Jesus says.

"Yeah, but listen, that's what he says. Someone punches you, you're going to punch them back. There we go. There, I fixed it. You didn't fix anything."

Yeshua said, "If someone sues you for your cloak, give them all your clothes." It just gets awkward real quick, but hey. But what that does—that's not the rules. No, you're not allowed to do all that. That's what I'm doing because you obviously need all of them. Now it becomes a shame game because you broke the rules that don't matter.

Yeah, give them all your clothes. "You want to sue me? Take it all." "If someone demands that you carry your stuff for a mile, I'll show you. Carry it for two." "Why are you still carrying my stuff? Stop it." "No, I'm going to carry another mile." "Stop it. Give my stuff back." "I mean, I will, but I can carry another mile." "Why are you not doing what you're told? Shatter the mold. Trust in God. Stay bold."

And when an offense comes to you, do not reciprocate it. Someone sins against you. Jesus says, "If you follow me, you have to act like me and forgive them." Because the world says you're justified in not forgiving someone. The world says you are justified in calling them a name back. You're justified in treating them like they treated you, tit for tat. You're entitled to it. Jesus says, "I'm not of this world. And if you're truly an ambassador of Christ, an ambassador of the Garden of Eden, an ambassador of new creation, then you live that out. That is how you show the world the power of God."

God calls us to live out an ironic salvation through an ironic means. That's tough.

You Don't Have To

So I don't know who you have not forgiven today, but as long as you carry around an offense, you are fighting for the side of the beast. As long as you see other people as an us versus them, you are fighting for the beast. As long as you justify violence toward others, you are fighting for the beast. That's a hard reality to accept. That's hard. That's hard. It's hard.

Which is why we don't. Or we cherry pick the easier ways to do it. Which is why we ignore it. Which is why we continue claiming the identity of a Christ follower, carrying our cross just with conditions. Just with conditions.

Our king said it's time to be free. And the paradox, the irony, is that picking up that cross and living out a cruciform life, following a cruciform king that never closed up the holes in his

hands, the irony is that's what brings freedom. He never wanted to cover up who he was. And that's the example he left for us.

This is how you escape the matrix. And the world will tell you that it's stupid. The world will tell you that it's stupid to have that amount of mercy and grace and forgiveness for people, to be that radical. [1 Corinthians 1:25](#) says, "For the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than human strength."

There will come a time, if there already hasn't in your life, where you will have the opportunity to break the rules the way that Yeshua did. And that could come in any and all forms of carrying that cross. And I think you'll know it, and you might experience it every single day, but you're called to live out that ironic salvation as an ambassador of Christ.

And so I don't know where you're at today. Maybe you're at a place where I've been carrying the cross conditionally to make it easier. Maybe you've been carrying around resentment, not allowing the grace of God to flow through you towards someone else. Unforgiveness. Maybe you've become accustomed to harboring arrogance or pride or looking down on others, allowing sin into your life in the many forms that it comes. You don't have to. You don't have to. Yeshua says, "Follow me if you want freedom, if you want freedom, because you're allowed to break the rules of the world because they're not the same rules as the kingdom. Don't let them control you."

Please stand as we conclude services. Guys, we always have a time of worship as we conclude services. We always have a time of meditation, so I encourage you, spend time praying or praising, meditating. If you need prayer today, we'll have a prayer team at either side of the stage here, come up if you want someone to pray with you about anything and everything.

If there's something that you've realized today, the Spirit has put on your heart, maybe you have been carrying the cross conditionally, or maybe you have enjoyed the rules of empire. As you can leave that here today too, you can make a stand today as well. You can change the focus today to focus on Yeshua and what He's called you to do and be. And it's radical, and it's hard, and it's scary, and that's the mission of the skull crusher, the beast slayer, and the lamb that stands in victory, slain.

A Prayer for Radical Transformation

Avinu Mokenu, our father, our King, we thank you for this time where we can come together and we can focus on your word. We can focus on your mission. We can focus on your love and mercy and grace and forgiveness, but also focus on the radical transformation that you've called

us to partake, that we would also stand against the beast, that we would also crush the head of the serpent, that we would participate as your images in ruling creation through your character and your Holy Spirit.

And Father, I ask if there is anybody in here today, any heart today, that still has something unforgiveness, something resentment, something hatred, something lack of mercy, something sin, something that they've grabbed hold on to, that is allowing them to carry their cross conditionally. Father, I ask in the name of Yeshua and your Ruach that it would do its job with its power and cause that conviction so that we can become a full new creation in Christ, that we can be something new as we walk out today, and that we would have the ability to die daily and pick up that cross and experience the ironic freedom of doing so.

We thank you in the name of Yeshua, our King. We pray. Amen.

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