



A Gift

“But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it—the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,” Romans 3:21-24

What is the deal with hating to do chores at your house but enjoying them elsewhere. My wife will attest to this. I hate doing my yard but sitting on a riding mower at the church...It's kind of nice. I actually enjoy it. Maybe it's because I didn't ever ride a mower until here at NCC. So it's new. Still fun. But it isn't as easy as a push mower at the house. Allow me to explain.

When I have to do my lawn at the house, I like the straight lines. You know what I mean. When you look at a yard, you can see the path they take to cut it. That's why I don't like going in the “ever-shrinking” square. When I'm done, it doesn't have that crisp look (I know that a good Oklahoma wind or rain will ruin it but still...). I love those lines. I like that look and if I have to get out early (before it's 140 degrees) or sweat it out (in the 140 degrees), I want to make it look good and straight.

But that's my problem. Have you ever tried to make straight lines in a riding John Deere mower? I thought it would be so easy. I can drive a car in the lines so surely mowing in a line would be a simple redundant practice. But it's not. I will line up where I need to go. I will find a reference point. Push the yellow button engaging the blades. Then gently push the accelerator ready for my crisp, clean line.

But within five feet, I know I can't do it perfect. Bumps and holes. Loose steering. Trees. Roots. So many obstacles are put in my path so that when I get to the back of the property and review my “perfection”, it is nowhere even close to straight. But what am I to do. So I once again line up the next line and go.

My spiritual life is so much like riding that mower. Every morning I try to line up my life to do it perfectly. I set my soul. I get my reference (Christ) and push the figurative pedal into the day. At the end of the day I look back and see I was nowhere near perfect. AND I HATE IT! I want to be perfect, and not just because God calls us to that. I want God to know I love Him completely. I want Him to know my desire to obey Him is my focus. But life puts obstacles in the way. Anger. Impatience. Selfishness. How am I to ever enter Heaven when my life is not a straight line?

I can because I got a GIFT from God. It's not an excuse. It's not an open ended license to sin. It is a GIFT. Jesus paid the ticket for it. God received payment on my behalf. It came during a six-hour sacrifice one Friday. What is this gift?

GRACE

From My Heart,

Billy