



The Smiling Maven

Grace for Grace (John 1:16)

חסד על חסד (יוחנן א'טו)

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The Supreme Revelation

“Man is always looking for a better method. God is looking for a better man. For God’s method is man.” (E.M. Bounds)

I like this quote. It expresses something about God’s plan and desire to work with and through human beings. We may often ponder why on earth God has chosen to use man – to even work with man – to put up with mankind – yet He does. According to man’s own reasoning, it may seem impossible that God and man are connected – that God is really involved in the affairs of men – so man must therefore work things out himself and solve mankind’s problems himself. That is secularism – humanism.

But there is more. There is a human that walked this earth two thousand years ago who did something that no other could, no other will, ever do. Y’shua the Son of man, Son of God went to the cross – He went to the cross on behalf of the entire human race. This was God’s perfect method – through this perfect man. The method/man of the cross is something that we will have all of life and eternity to ponder and continue to discover.

The cross is the supreme revelation given to man of what God is really like. There we find God Himself suffering. Suffering – we do not like it, yet it often produces something in our character that is kinder, more compassionate and more understanding. These positive traits are

God-like traits. God has these traits in the purest form.

God Himself is the ultimate sufferer. He suffered in a way like no one else as Y’shua went to the cross. A willingness to suffer and the very nature of grace are closely tied. In a very simple sense, to be gracious means to put up with or tolerate the imperfectness of others. Y’shua did that in the fullest and deepest way at the cross as He bore and suffered the horrible imperfections (sin and ungodliness) of the entire human race. He did this willingly, tolerantly, and graciously. “No man taketh it (my life) from me, but I lay it down of myself,” “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.”¹ The Apostle John wrote that Y’shua was full of grace and truth.² His truth and His grace are expressed in a supreme way at the cross.

I also like Galatians 2:21: “I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Messiah is dead in vain.”³ If there was some other way for us to be made righteous then the cross was completely unnecessary. We have no way to experience God’s righteousness without the cross. Through the cross we come to understand and experience God’s righteousness and God’s character [Himself]. If there was some smaller, lesser way for God to reveal Himself to us – to make Himself known to us – He would have done it.

Often we experience a greater understanding of friends and acquaintances when we witness and interact with them as they go through difficult circumstances. Some of my closest and deepest friendships have been borne out of an experience of suffering, either on their part, my part, or both. There has never been a greater suffering than Y’shua going to the cross. There has never been a harsher separation between a father and a son. When we begin to find the Father and the Son at the cross – in the eye of the storm of suffering – we come to a greater understanding (revelation) of their character than any other way. This is where we first come to know Him, love Him, and begin to be transformed by Him. It is where God begins to greatly mold us into the new man, the real man, the redeemed man that He then uses to help transform others. There is no greater revelation given to us (at least on this side of eternity) than the cross of Messiah Y’shua.

Notes:

1. John 10:18, Luke 23:34 KJ Version
2. John 1:14 KJ Version.
3. Also KJ Version with word Christ replaced with Messiah, both words meaning “The Anointed One.”

Smiling Maven Ministries

The *Smiling Maven* newsletter began in November of 2005. A year later, November 2006, Smiling Maven Ministries became a not-for-profit ministry corporation in the State of Illinois. In the summer of 2008, Smiling Maven Ministries received its tax exempt status from the U.S. government. The process was long and costly. Throughout 2009 we were still carrying an outstanding debt with our attorney. In response to an e-mail sent out in November of 2009, we received some end-of-the-year gifts that enabled us to pay

off the attorney and start 2010 debt-free. Praise to Y’shua.

Editor (and hopefully smile-in-chief) Art Weiner took a year off from writing and producing the *Smiling Maven* during 2009. This March issue of the *Smiling Maven* is the first issue since November 2008. We should now be back on track for five issues a year: January, March, May, September and November. Questions/comments, please write us at: 2816 Eshcol Ave, Zion IL 60099, or e-mail smilingmaven@yahoo.com

He has made everything beautiful in its time. He also has planted eternity in men’s hearts and minds [a divinely implanted sense of a purpose working through the ages which nothing under the sun but God alone can satisfy], yet so that men cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end.”

(Ecclesiastes 3:11 *The Amplified Bible*)

The Homefront

2009 was a year of ground being laid fallow, ground being turned over, and of new experiences.

As mentioned in the last *Smiling Maven*, November 2008, my last trip to Israel had drained our finances. A month after returning from Israel, Ruthe, Caleb and I had some family prayer time about our financial situation. We prayed for a solution outside of our thinking. Later that day my good friend Jerry Brogden called me on the telephone. Jerry was retiring from his job as an independent sales rep for SMT Health Systems. I have known Jerry since before he started with SMT, and I knew that the job had been a positive one and a great blessing to Jerry and his family. Jerry asked me if I was interested in taking over his job. I was surprised and stunned. Even now, I am still amazed at the timing of his call. Though I had some time to think and pray before responding, it really was not a struggle to say, "Yes." Later when I mentioned this to Ruthe, she said, "Dad, that's neat because you always liked what Jerry was doing."

In November/December 2008 I began working with SMT Health Systems – based out of Detroit Lakes, MN. The company manufactures safe patient handling equipment – primarily Full Body Lifts and Sit-to-Stand Lifts used in nursing homes. The equipment also sells to hospitals and private individuals, though most of our business is in nursing homes. I cover southern Wisconsin and northern Illinois. Most of this territory is within two hours of

my home. I cover the major cities of Chicago, Milwaukee, Madison, and Green Bay. It has been a fantastic opportunity. Though 2009 was an economic struggle for most businesses including SMT, my employment was a great help to us financially. 2010 looks like it will be a better year both for SMT and my sales, as well as for my family. I thoroughly enjoy my job. As an independent sales rep, my hours are flexible and can adjust my time around family and ministry. I am very thankful for this job.

Taking the year off from producing the *Smiling Maven* has been healthy. It seems that new soil has been turned over in my

heart this past year. There is some new excitement about the Holy Spirit's presence and ministry in my life. I am thankful that *Smiling Maven's* outstanding debts were paid off in 2009 and that we are again producing *The Smiling Maven* newsletter.

Ruthe graduated from Zion-Benton Township High School in June with high honors. Throughout most of her high school years, Ruthe rarely expressed interest in any specific career. She took both calculus and physics during her senior year; as Ruthe discovered an interest in these subjects, she also realized that these were the key background subjects for engineers. Ruthe applied and was accepted to Bradley



Ruthe's Zion-Benton High School Graduation.

University in Peoria IL, which has an excellent engineering department. Ruthe started her freshman year at Bradley in August. She enjoys her engineering classes and is off to a very good start. At present she is leaning toward electrical engineering.

Caleb, now six-foot, five-inches, is a sophomore at Zion-Benton High School. His grades have picked up this year; A's and B's are the norm. He and Dad have adjusted to being just two men around the apartment, or three males if you include Comedor our cat.

Anyone who knows Caleb realizes that he has one major consuming love – fishing. Regardless of the time of year – Caleb finds a fishing partner and someplace to fish. Throughout the year, he is usually fishing at least twice a week, ice fishing in winter included.

Caleb has four regular fishing buddies; Dad is number three or four on the list.

As I reflect on the changes and new experiences of 2009, I also reflect on the eleven years that I have single-parented. Ruthe now in college, Caleb in his second



Caleb and 10-lb Brown Trout

year of high school - it truly amazes me, stuns me, leaves me sort of breathless, that somehow, someway, we have journeyed and matured through these years. Though I do not understand very well, do not always believe very well, I am convinced that the "somehow, someway," of these past eleven years has been grace, grace, grace. When other people make positive comments about Ruthe and Caleb and express a compliment about my parenting – I know absolutely and unequivocally that grace has been the key. It is one of many reasons that I so strongly gravitate toward the paramount subject of God's wonderful grace. 😊

Speaking Opportunities

Passover Presentation: Christian Assembly, Zion IL, March 31, 2010, 7:00 P.M.

Passover Presentation: Community Church, Allenville WI, April 1, 2010, 7:00 P.M.

The Smiling Maven is a bi-monthly Jewish - flavored newsletter sharing God's incredible grace. There is coming a spiritual atomic bomb of that incredible grace. It is an imminent spiritual explosion soon to happen in Israel that will have an awesome effect in Israel and all the world.

Life is often hard. Suffering is a real part of life. Sometimes suffering enables us to see more clearly the reality that God loves us. He loves us unconditionally; it is not based on how we are doing. We may begin to understand the wonder of God's salvation through Messiah Y'shua. Grace might actually be breaking through into our lives. It is the experience of grace that can generate the most genuine smiles. "Maven" is a Yiddish word that means "a person with special knowledge or experience." Evidence of God's grace should be characterized by an ability to smile. *The Smiling Maven* newsletter is an encouragement for all of us to be smiling mavens, smiling people with special knowledge of God's amazing grace.

EditorArthur Weiner
Someone needing to Smile More

Copy Editor.....Peter Toeg
Making sure that our articles can produce smiles

Text Editor.....Valarie Dillenbeck
No frowns because of grammar or punctuation

Production Assistant.....Ruthe Weiner
Often producing more smiles than her dad

Quality Control.....Caleb Weiner
Smiling, especially while playing on the computer

Contact us at smilingmaven@yahoo.com, The Smiling Maven 2816 Eshcol Avenue, Zion IL 60099, or call us at 847-731-6838.