

**Worship Sunday**  
Joe/Chris - May 20, 2018

**Message Big Idea:** Much of the lyrics we sing are full of metaphors, similes and paradoxes; yet paradoxes can be found throughout the Bible. Often times we read or sing of these paradoxes yet think very little of the deep meaning behind them or how our story connects in worship to them. In understanding our relationship to Christ and what he has done for us, we must understand the paradox of Already/Not Yet. Christ has already died for our sins, but we are still not yet perfect.

**Main Idea:**

**Main Text:** 2 Corinthians 5:17-19, Romans 7:14-15; 21-24

**Supporting Text:** Matthew 23:1, Mark 9:35, Luke 17:33, 2 Corinthians 12:10

**Reflection/Discussion Questions:**

1. Choose one of the supporting text above. After reading it, discuss how you have heard this paradox before in the past and what it means to you now.
2. What things trap you in the "Not Yet"? What do you do when you are feeling overwhelmed by sin and shame?
3. What worship songs help you through your "Not Yet" moments? How does your story connect with this particular worship song?
4. Read 2 Corinthians 5 in its entirety. What other things are being discussed throughout this chapter and how does it connect to the concept of Already/Not Yet?
5. Look up each of the scripture above using a different translation of the Bible. How does reading the scripture in a different translation change the way you view each scripture?

## **Message:**

Good morning everyone! My name is Joe and I am one of the teaching pastors here at Pantano. I love Worship Sundays, if you are new to Pantano, what a Worship Sunday is, when we flip what we normally do in service. Usually we do about 20 minutes of singing and a longer message, but on a worship Sunday we do a little bit shorter of a message and spends a little more time singing and praising.

Now it was just last week that my team and I were at a worship conference and it was a great experience to be around music and artists that you don't always hear on a Sunday morning, but it was in one particular workshop I attended where we discussed the future of worship. And we talked about how many of the ways we communicate is through images and metaphor and paradox.

And oftentimes we don't even realize how often these things are used. We use our words to describe the landscape or give objects characteristics to help describe it and give us a fuller view of what we are trying to understand.

Think about the lyrics we sing in many of our songs, they are not just straight forward they are often wrapped in metaphors and paradoxes that take the songs we listen to, to another level. Have you ever noticed?

Here are some of the lyrics from songs that we do right here at Pantano

- "Every knee will bow before the lion and the lamb?"

That is an example itself of a metaphor that is also a paradox because it is comparing God as two different things at the same time, and that paradox of it is that they are complete opposites of one another.

But you know if you begin to look at the bible, the concept of a paradox goes well beyond just the songs we sing. Look at some of the examples of paradoxes that exist in the Bible.

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- “The greatest among you will be your servant” - Matthew 23:11
- “Anyone who wants to be first must be the very last, and the servant of all.” - Mark 9:35
- “Whoever tries to keep their life will lose it, and whoever loses their life will preserve it.” - Luke 17:33
- For when I am weak, then I am strong.” 2 Corinthians 12:10

So just from these couple of examples that we see, we know that paradoxes are used throughout the Bible. But I think there is one concept of a paradox that exists that we probably tend to struggle with the most. And even though you won't find the exact quote in scripture like some of the examples we have read, it is the concept and a theme that we see throughout and it is known as **Already/Not Yet.**

And what we are really trying to describe when we say Already/Not Yet is that our salvation is itself a paradox.

And to help us understand this concept, I want us to take a look at scripture, so please take your Bible or your device and turn to to **2 Corinthians 5:17-19a (page 790)**

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: [a] The old has gone, the new is here! 18 All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: 19 that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them.”

What an amazing scripture! I love the way the New Living Translation reads verse 17: “This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!” That is in and of itself the gospel message. Christ has come, he has taken on sin and died for us so that we can be made righteous before God and we are now a new creation! A new person!

But where is the paradox? The paradox is that even though we are a new creation in Christ, even though the old is gone and the new has come, we don't always live that way because we are not yet perfect.

- In Christ we are more can conquer, but we still have defeats and failures.
- Even though we are made righteous before God we still disobey

- Even though we are a new creation, a new person in Christ we still fall into sin

I think **Romans 7:14-15; 21-24** describes the paradox of our salvation perfectly. Listen to what Paul says.

“**14** We know that the law is spiritual; but I am unspiritual, sold as a slave to sin. **15** I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do.”

“So I find this law at work: Although I want to do good, evil is right there with me. **22** For in my inner being I delight in God’s law; **23** but I see another law at work in me, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within me. **24** What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body that is subject to death?”

### **Explanation of Paul's Writings**

Have any of you ever felt that way? Have any of you ever sat there and ask yourself *Why did I do that? Why am I struggling with this? Why do I still sin when I love God and want to serve him?*

You see this is the essence of what we are talking about when we say Already/Not Yet. God has already come. He has already died, he has already spilled his blood for you. And when we sit here on Sunday morning we believe it and yell amen and sing with the music. But the paradox is that by Monday, we feel beaten down. We feel broken. We fall into tempted and sin because even though we are a new creation in Christ we still fall into sin. And for some, that feeling that you have on Monday can last for years. And we don’t remember the position we are actually in. **We forget that our position with Christ is that we are forgiven and redeemed but our condition is that we right now are still sinners.** And we start to wonder things like *how am I a new creation in Christ when I still sin?* I am still the same person, at times a struggle with the same things. How am I new when I am still me?

And that is where we get caught. It becomes easy to believe and see one side of the paradox but not trust the other. We know we believe that Jesus is the son of God. We believe he has died and risen from the dead and that he offers his grace freely to

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everyone but then when we look at ourselves and we say that we are not good enough for it. But if God's word is truth then you have to take it wholly.

Think of the song lyrics we just mentioned. And this is important because worship is an extension of ourselves and what we believe. When we sing they are not just random words put together to fill a melody line, there is power in what we sing. That is why it moves people to emotion or you feel God's power in it. There is power in what we sing. "The lion and the lamb." Why do we call God that? How is God both a lion and a lamb, two completely separate things at the same time? We call him that because like a lion he is fierce and concurring. But he is also the lamb because he laid himself down and was sacrificed for us. And even though they appear contradictory he is both the lion and the lamb. They are not mutually exclusive but give us a full understanding of who God is.

And the same is true with the concept of Already/Not Yet. God is perfect, he has already come, already died, already saved us from our sins. And yet, we are still sinners. We are not yet perfect. We are not yet fully immersed in his glory. It is an awkward tension we live in where we are suppose to feel redeemed and forgiven but live in a broken world full of sin. And in that tension we start to live in one side of the paradox.

To help you picture this I want you to imagine a scale. On one side of the scale we have all of our sin and mistakes and regret of the past, the present and the future. And on the other side we have Christ's sacrifice for all those sins.

Nine months ago I got caught in the not yet. Last year I felt very attacked by the enemy in not feeling good enough about who I am, which is the exact opposite of the personality that I have. I am usually a pretty confident person. I have grown up in the church, I know God's truths and understand his love. And it has been an internal struggle for me to feel good enough to be where I am and where God has called me to be. Not because of my skill level or my work ethic but because I am a sinful person so why would God want me? Sounds strange doesn't it? To know God has called you to something but not feel good enough because of your past to deserve where God has you.

And in my own mind I had to battle these rules and ideas about my salvation that I didn't even realize were there, not for other people but for myself because my mind was

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getting caught in the not yet. I am not perfect. I am going to sin. And like many people I wanted resolution. I wanted those feelings to go away.

Have any of you felt that way? Have you ever wished that you felt better about yourself and your salvation? Wish you felt good enough for God's grace?

Those moments where you feel broke and weak and not good enough for God's grace are important moments. Because it is in the understanding that we do not deserve God's grace that God begins to do a work. He begins to change the way we think and what we believe as we lean and trust in him more. And in during those times there is nothing better to do than immerse yourself in worship.

And when I say worship, understand that I don't mean just music. Worshiping through music is important but everything we do is an act of worship. Immerse yourself in music and worship of God but also immerse yourself in the truth of his word. Open up, be vulnerable with the people around you, let them speak God's truth with you. That honestly can be one of the hardest things you do is to open up and be vulnerable about how you feel. For me that person was my wife, the first person I opened up to about how I was feeling that helped me process and encouraged me to get even more help. And maybe this morning that will be your first step.

But right now in this moment, let's immerse ourselves in worship of him.

Now understand, we don't sing songs to conjure up the Holy Spirit or to somehow bring God into this place, he is already here. And because of that, even in the midst of the not yet, we can feel and experience God's presence. In Psalms 66:4 it says "All the earth bows down to you; they sing praise to you, they sing the praises of your name."

And if all creation can sing, even in my place of Not Yet, so will I.

SONG: So will I

COMMUNION / Teaching part 2:

-begin standing at the communion table-

“God of salvation, You chased down my heart, Through all of my failure and pride, On a hill You created, The light of the world Abandoned in darkness to die... But as You speak, A hundred billion failures disappear, Where You lost Your life so I could find it here, **If You left the grave behind You, so will I”!**

The writer of this song captures the idea of ‘Already, But Not Yet’ so well. It is our story of redemption. It’s the story of Jesus, the Messiah. You see Jesus was fully God, that is the ‘already’ part. The all-powerful creator of the universe chose to take on human form, to humble Himself as a man. He who was ‘already God’ went to the cross where He was tortured, beaten, mocked and ridiculed...for us. He was hung on a cross made of wood that grew out of the very ground He spoke into existence. He was killed on that cross and laid in a tomb. For three days all of creation was caught in the tension...like holding a deep breath for too long. Already but not yet. Thankfully, we know how that part of history unfolds. Jesus was raised to life again, and in doing so, conquered death and the power that sin held over us. Rom 5:8 says it like this, “But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us”. Because of that great act of love, we who have called on Him and surrendered our lives to Him, are ‘Already’ seen as pure...sinless...spotless. Our failures are erased.

Communion is a practice that Jesus gives us which reminds us that He too felt the tension of ‘Already, but Not yet’. At Pantano we encourage only those who have fully surrendered their lives to Christ and confess Jesus as Lord to participate. That is not to be exclusive or disclude anyone. Jesus’ sole desire was that all people would follow Him, and know the life and hope He gives. The bible says that anyone, that means ANYONE, who calls on the name of the Lord, and believes that Jesus is the Son of God will be saved. That is an open invitation. If you haven’t made that choice, but want to know more, come down front at the end of our service and our prayer partners will be here to talk and pray with you. As our ushers get ready, in a moment they will pass the elements and want you to hold onto the bread and juice until everyone has been served. We will take those together. When we eat the bread, we are reminded that Jesus’ body was broken for us...when we drink the juice, we remember how His blood

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was spilled for us. We remember that He who was perfect, died in our place, to pay for our faults and failures, so that we could be fully redeemed. We have been purchased at the highest price which shows how much God loves us. We are already made whole, however while we are on this earth, until we see Jesus face to face, we live in the not yet. We live in the tension. And wow does our world present a lot of tension for us, right? Sometimes in the tension is where we feel Jesus the strongest. As we hold onto the elements of communion, I am going to have Jessica sing a song that paints the picture of Already/Not yet.

[Song Even when it hurts]

You will see a line on the screen, I want us to do something different as today as we take the bread and the juice. I want us to declare these two statements to each other as we take them. So before we eat the bread, look to someone around you and declare "this is the body of Christ, broken for you". Go ahead. Now let's take the juice, and declare this to someone "this is the blood of Christ, spilled for you". Go ahead and take the juice.

Amen!

Now we get the chance to respond in worship. No matter where in the 'not yet' we find ourselves, to praise God with everything.