

Sunday, Nov.8th, 2009

Living Hope EFC

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We will be either a slave to sin, or to righteousness: Rom.6:15-23.

Joke: Two Despicable Brothers. (From Rocky Mountain.)

- Two brothers were known in their community as troublemakers.
- They had the worse reputation in the area. They stole, fought, drank, ran around, grew marijuana. They were the baddest, meanest, law-brakenness men around. .
- One died: To everyone's surprise his brother went to the pastor of the local church & asked the pastor to do funeral for him in church.
- **Pastor**: "But you guys never stepped a foot in this church. And you are bad. I don't know how I could say even 1 good thing about your brother. Or if I could even chance having his funeral here."
- Brother: "And one more thing. I know my brother & I have been bad, but just one time I want someone to say something nice about him...I want you to call him a "saint."
- **Pastor**: "You've got to be kidding!" Bro: "And I'll pay \$1000 to do it."
- Pastor: "Well, maybe I could do his funeral. After all everyone deserves a proper funeral."
- The whole community showed up at the church for the funeral to see how the pastor was going to call this mean brother a saint, and not tarnish his name of the reputation of the church.
- **Pastor**: "Today we are gathered to lay Ben to rest. We all know Ben was no good. He stole, drank, brawled, was a trouble maker... But compared to his brother, he was a saint."

Problem: No matter what the preacher says when we're laid to rest, the sad reality is that if we've served sin all our lives, the consequences of our life do not change by someone's words.

- There's a sad irony that during our years on earth we can laugh at sin, joke about it, and live under its power –

JOKE: Like one pastor who told his congregation there were 739 different sins, and had 73 requests for the list after the service...

- ...Only to find at our death that it has eternal consequences.
- **Death does not terminate all earthly life, it brings into complete revelation all the details, actions, & attitudes...of our earthly life.**
- For the person who does not have a relationship with Jesus Christ... "**the books are opened** & the dead are judged according to what they have done, as recorded in the books." - *The lake of fire!*
- For the Christian – **2 Cor.5:10** – "each might receive what is due him."

Rom.5:8 "God demonstrated His love for us...He died for us."

In Romans 5 Paul's emphasis is deliverance from death's reign: -**5:20-21**

- We can have complete forgiveness of sins, & Christ's righteousness.

In Romans 6 Paul gives an extended explanation on how God makes every provision for the Christian to no longer live in sin.

- **DEATH – no longer needs to be a time dreaded, but – John 14:1-3.**

Paul asks two questions that divide chapter six:

Q:1 – (6:1) Should we go on sinning that grace might abound?

Answer:

6:2-4 Death has effectively ended our relationship with sin!

From God's viewpoint our time for living under sin is over!

- **Without consulting us, God ended our history, our old life & identity.** To continue in the old is an abnormality for a Christian.

6:5-7 Our old man was crucified with Christ. We are freed from sin

Old Man? = Our state of existence in Adam, as a result of the fall.

- Our sin nature is permeated with self-love & self-interest, not love for
- **NEW life (v.4) comes out only as OLD man is rendered inoperative.**
- It is very possible for us to serve God, do "good things," from wrong motives, to substitute "service" for inner conformity. (**Mark 7:20-23**)
- **God makes us NEW CREATIONS, starting with our hearts!**

"WE KNOW:" Q: At what level do we know this? Is this daily reality?

- How much of the sag & drag of the old life are we yet carrying?
- We are so used to living according to our old life – God uses failures & suffering to dislodge our addiction to it.

6:11-14. NOW we must individually apply what is your new life.

- **6:11 "Count it yours!"** – Present imperative. **6:12-13 "Present."**
- **The Christian must come to a place of full surrender to God!**

Newell: "Perhaps no more difficult task, no task requiring such constant vigilant attention, is assigned by God to the believer...this matter of taking note of & keeping in mind what goes so completely against consciousness, that our old man was crucified.

These words are addressed to faith, to faith only. Emotions, feelings, deny them. To reason, they are foolishness. But ah, what stormy seas has faith walked over!...Let us never forget, that this crucifixion was a thing definitely done by God at the cross, just as really as our sins were there laid upon Christ," 212.

- It goes back to the principle explained in **5:18-19**. The actions of one representing many, involve the many in his merit or demerit.

Q:2 –(6:15) Should we go on sinning since we're not under Law?

His answer is quick: "**Absolutely not!**" **Grace is not license to sin.**

- Not because we will lose our salvation, BUT because of consequence

V.16: As Christians we choose whether to be God's servants or sin's.

- The Christian makes a choice daily, hourly – who he will serve.
- **IF we choose to sin = we come under sin's influence (mastery!).**
- There is a **moral law in the universe**, God allows us to serve sin if sin is who/what we choose as to serve. (**6:12-13**)
- **WHY not serve sin? Continue in sin?** = Sin is what Christ died for.
- **The results of serving sin are disastrous, in this life & in the next.**
- *Our daily choices affect history & eternity, for life or death!*

Mark Twain: "Its not the things I don't understand in Scripture that bother me. It's the things I do understand!"

In God's grace – we are saved from many bad decisions we make, but there are no guarantees that we will not reap what we sow.

- NOTE: Paul makes **no excuses** for background, family, or privilege.
- **Salvation offers the same opportunity for everyone. We are responsible.**

ILLUSTRATIONS: Christians who have fallen – because of sin.

QUOTE: "Sow a thought, reap an action; sow an action, reap a habit; sow a habit, reap a character; sow a character, reap a destiny."

Satan is still the god of this age/ world. And the Christian can get caught in his web of power...IF he chooses to live in his domain – sin!

- **1 Peter 2:11; James 3:14-4:4; Eph.4:26-27; 6:10-12**

QUOTE: Richard Lovelace (*Dynamics of Spiritual Life*, 18

"Much of the church's warfare today is fought by blindfolded soldiers who cannot see the forces ranged against them, who are buffeted by invisible opponents and respond by striking one another," (DTS notes, 2-2)

VS.17-18: "You know the truth, and the truth has set you FREE!"

Satan convinces people that they are free, and Christians are enslaved to Law & rules. Jesus: **"You will know the truth...set you free."**

- **TRUTH:** Until we accept Jesus Christ – **WE ARE slaves to sin!**
- Only those who know Christ, have a true choice against sinning.

Q: What was it that broke our absolute slavery to sin/ Satan?

- It was certain "teaching, doctrine, **truth.**" -vs.17
- We live in a culture that says, "What is truth?" Who can know what is truth? Experience, faith, feelings – are what count. Not biblical.
- **There is factual content in the Gospel that saves one from condemnation, and from sin's enslavement.**
- **Our slavery to sin was broken by the truth of the Gospel.**
- In God's sight, the day we believed in Christ, we were justified.

VS.19: As you once served sin NOW serve God with equal passion

- **Everything we do throughout the day comes from 1 of 2 sources.**
- Others may see us as spiritual...What does God see? (1 Cor.3)
- To go on serving "sin" is insanity, in light of our new citizenship.

Vs.20-21: Life "BC" (Before Christ) – contains much shame.

Even as Christians – we can look back and see things we've done, decisions we made – we may have thought we were serving God, but with hindsight – we see they were more about serving self.

- When you look back upon your life how much shame comes to light?

- Five, ten years from now...do we want to look back on more shame?

Vs.22: BUT NOW...God has given us a new lease on life!

- Aren't you glad that in God's love and grace there is a: **"That was then but this is now!"**
GRACE – opens up a new day for us.
- **Counting ourselves dead to sin, presenting ourselves to God, sin ceases its mastery over us, and we produce fruit to holiness.**
- Our members can be used as "weapons" for His Kingdom!
- We can present ourselves as those **"alive from the dead,"** because that is reality. In doing so, our sole daily delight – is walking with God, enjoying His presence, using our members to help others.
- **Life must be lived one moment at a time.** When combined, moment-to-moment, we can live a lifetime in fellowship with Him.

Vs.23: The two extremes we can experience: death of life.

This is truth for salvation (4:4) and for the Christian walk.

- Choose to live outside grace, by works or in sin, the end is death.
- Choose to accept God's gift of eternal life, and live on the basis of that gift, and the end is life abundant!

In Chapter 6 Paul asks two questions: 6:1 & 6:15.

His answer: **6:11.** *Know the truth, and the truth will set you free.*

The central means of living in God's freedom from sin is expressed in:

6:11-14. NOW we must individually apply what is your new life.

- **Counting it so does not crucify self, it applies what is already done**
- **It does not make the fact, but is commanded in view of the facts.**
- It effectively ends our relationship to sin, and gives us a new relationship with God that is free from sin's control.

THEREFORE: Vs.12-13. Don't let sin reign!

- **Reckoning** = "faith." + **Presenting** = "obedience." = Free from sin.
- **Obedience is always the FRUIT of faith. Both, bring us deliverance.**
- **In the battle of temptation victory / defeat is determined 1st minute!**

CAN THIS REALLY WORK? 2000 years after His death?

Emancipation Proclamation - Swindoll, *Grace Awakening*, 106-07

It was New Year's Day, 1863 when the Emancipation Proclamation was publicly stated, but it was not until Dec.18, 1865, two years later, that the Constitution made those convictions official.

By the time it became law Lincoln was dead, yet never was his influence & voice of greater effect! And black people are free today, 150 years after Lincoln's death – because of his work.

2,000 years ago Jesus died on the cross paying sins' penalty, & destroy- ing sin's power **over every Christian** who would ever believe in Him.

- **Never has His influence and voices been of greater affect.**
- **THOSE who walk in freedom, are those who BELIEVE it is true.**