

Romans Part 32 (12:1-13) - Sanctification

Tuesday Night Bible Study, February 19, 2008

--INTRO:

--last week we finished ch. 11 and the general subject of the sovereignty of God and the state of Israel; this week we start ch. 12 which delves into the subject of sanctification.

--review of profound spiritual conflict that began in us when we became Christians...

--because we inherited a sin nature from Adam (Romans 5:12,19) we were born separated from God (Isaiah 59:2, Colossians 1:21)

--our natural separation from God created a void of spiritual death in us (Romans 5:12,19; 6:23)

--sin reigned in this void of spiritual death – "sin reigned in death" (Romans 5:21)

--when we placed our faith in Christ, His death on the cross became payment for our sins and His righteousness was credited to our account, thus causing our separation from God to be replaced by peace with God.

--Romans 3:22-25: "For there is no difference; 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, 25 whom God set forth as a propitiation [*satisfaction for the payment required for our sin*] by His blood [*that is, His death*]..."

--Romans 5:1: "Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ..."

--our peace with God through Christ makes it possible for the Holy Spirit to enter our lives and live inside us, and when He entered our lives He dethroned sin...

---the void of spiritual death was replaced by the life of the Holy Spirit, and the reign of sin was replaced by the reign of Christ through the Holy Spirit

--the New Testament refers to this supernatural change in many ways...

--becoming "**alive from the dead**" (Romans 6:13)

--becoming "**a new creation**" in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17)

--becoming **dead to sin** (Romans 6:2)

--being "**born of the Spirit**" or "**born again**" (John 3:6-7)

--the "**renewing of the Holy Spirit**" (Titus 3:5)

--12:2: "And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God."

--when we are saved sin is dethroned and Christ is enthroned in our spirit, but sin is still present in our flesh and relentlessly tries to exert it's will...

--Romans 7:21-23: "**evil is present with me**, the one who wills to do good. 22 For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man. 23 But I see **another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind.**"

--even though Christ is enthroned in our spirit, we are still in control of our lives and have to make conscious decisions to follow His rule and deny sin...

--Romans 6:12: "Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts."

--on the surface, looking at the net result of the battle between the flesh and the spirit, it is often difficult to tell Christians apart from non-Christians!

--our mind is the battleground in the war between our spirit and our sin-plagued flesh... lies from Satan give traction to our flesh, and truth from God gives traction to our spirit!

--2 Corinthians 10:5: "...bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ"

--1 Corinthians 9:27: "But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection..."

--Mark 14:38: "Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."

--12:2: "And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God."

--12:1: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service."

--"present your bodies a living sacrifice..."

--Jesus offered His life as a living sacrifice and so He calls us to offer our lives as a living sacrifice...

Jesus was nailed to the cross... God left eternity and died in a moment of time to save us from the "second death" in eternity.

Our sinful ways nailed to the cross... Jesus calls us to follow Him. He calls us to turn from our sinful ways and nail them to the cross. (Luke 9:23 - "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.")

--just like it was agonizing for Jesus to endure the cross so it can be agonizing for us when we drag the sinful ways of our flesh and nail them to the cross.

--often it is a joy to follow Christ rather than bearing a cross, and yet even when it is a joy we can suffer various forms of persecution, and this is another aspect of being a living sacrifice.

--and there are times it is a joy to follow Christ and there is no persecution and no cross to bear...

--Hebrews 12:3-4: "**For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls.** 4 You have not yet resisted to bloodshed, striving against sin."

--2 Corinthians 4:7-10: "But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us. 8 We are hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; 9 persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed — 10 **always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus**, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body."

--12:3-13: For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith. 4 For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, 5 so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another. 6 Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith; 7 or ministry, let us use it in our ministering; he who teaches, in teaching; 8 he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness. 9 Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good. 10 Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another; 11 not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; 12 rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer; 13 distributing to the needs of the saints, given to hospitality."

--"3 God has dealt to each one a measure of faith... 6 Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith..." (12:3b-6)

--the context of "God has dealt to each one a measure of faith" is faith as it relates to spiritual gifts, not faith as it relates to salvation.

--the main point here is that we should not engage in ministry activities out of fear and guilt in the flesh but rather we should serve out of faith and love in the Spirit...

--when the Spirit leads us in ministry He gives us faith to do that ministry.

--one way to sum up ministry led by the Spirit is "faith working through love..." (Galatians 5:6)

--one example of waiting on God for faith and the leading of the Spirit to engage in ministry is the apostles... Right before Jesus ascended to heaven He commanded them to preach the gospel to all nations, but He told them not to start right away but rather to wait... "tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high." (Luke 24:49)

--and while we wait we shouldn't feel guilty or inadequate, but rather we should draw near to God and get in deeper touch with the reality of our salvation and cultivate the joy of our salvation... As we draw near to God we tend to think more in terms of what He can do rather than in terms of what we can't do...

--"let love be without hypocrisy..." (12:9)

--serve God out of love for Him and others, not out of selfish gain.

--"For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly..." (12:3a)

--it's so easy to overemphasize our role and de-emphasize God's role...

--in the kingdom of God there are no superstars... there are no Tiger Woods or Kobe Bryants!

--one might think that Billie Graham or Greg Laurie are super-star Christians, but in reality in God's eyes they are no more talented or important than somebody whose ministry is simply feeding the homeless!

--"Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers through whom you believed, as the Lord gave to each one? 6 I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. 7 **So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase.** 8 Now he who plants and he who waters are one, and each one will receive his own reward according to his own labor." (1 Corinthians 3:5-8)

--"For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, 5 so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another." (12:4-5)

--the interdependent nature of the body of Christ revolutionizes how we should think about ministry...
--we should think not in terms of what we can do on our own but rather what we can do together!

--"continuing steadfastly in prayer..." (12:12)

--through prayer we can transcend our physical limitations and participate in the work of a missionary on the other side of the world!

--Romans 15:30: "Now I beg you, brethren, through the Lord Jesus Christ, and through the love of the Spirit, that you strive together with me in prayers to God for me... [*while in the trials of his missionary journeys*]"