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Light On Our Path



*Messages by various speakers
on the book of Romans
at the Streetlight Mission Church
in the 6:30 p.m. services of November 2007*

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November 4, 2007
Pastor Paul Aasman

Romans 6:19 “I put this in human terms because you are weak in your natural selves. Just as you used to offer the parts of your body in slavery to impurity and to ever-increasing wickedness, so now offer them in slavery to righteousness leading to holiness.”

Will you stay to Die or leave to Live?

Reading: Romans 6:12-21
Text: Romans 6:19

There was a man whose power and influence was enormous. His decisions determined the destiny of the whole human race. That man's name was Adam. Unfortunately, the most important decision he had to make was done very badly. He was like the sheep that all the other sheep followed, but he did not lead the sheep to pastures. Instead, he ran straight for a cliff and plunged to his death - and all the other sheep followed him, as sheep will, and each one, none excepted, ran to the cliff and plunged to their deaths - down to the last one.

For Adam chose not to obey God. God said, “Don't eat of the tree in the middle of the garden.” Verse 16: the judgement followed one sin and brought condemnation. Because Adam sinned, every person now must die. It is one of the universal experiences of humanity: we are born, and then we die. Nobody

escapes. They say there's nothing more sure than death and taxes. One might still escape paying taxes, but he never escapes death.

No human being has wielded as much influence as Adam did. He said, “Let's live for ourselves and not for God. Let's not listen to what God says. Let's do what we want instead.”

And ever since, that's what we've been doing - to our own destruction.

Now, there is another man whose power and influence was enormous. His decision also would determine the destiny of a huge part of the human race. That man's name is Jesus. Thankfully, the most important decision he had to make was done very good. He was like a shepherd that leads the whole flock to green pastures and quiet waters.

For Jesus chose to obey God. God said to him, “Are you willing to do my will in every respect, at all times, and in the most difficult of circumstances? Are you willing even to go to hell and still love me and your fellow human beings?”

Yes he was. He obeyed God. He loved God and his fellow man and showed it by his righteous living, and gracious death. Verse 19: Through the obedience of one man the many will be made righteous.

Jesus' influence is not as great as Adam's yet. But his influence is enormous. There are not too many who obey God, and

love God above all things and their neighbour as themselves. But if you start to do it, then there is one more. Will you join him?

You need to choose your leader. Who will be the most important influence in your life? There is one who is already exercising great influence on you: Adam. His sin in paradise still lies at the root of every evil deed that happens on earth. You need to separate yourself from him, because that way leads to death. You are heading for a cliff, and you will plunge over it, stupidly like silly sheep following the leader.

Get off the path. March to a different leader: march behind Jesus. Follow him, and you will live. For “the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men.” Jesus obeyed so that you might live. Confess your sins to God and ask him in Jesus name to forgive your sins, and you too will receive the fruit of his suffering: you will live. His act of righteousness brings life for you. Believe and live in obedience to God by the power of Jesus, the Righteous one.

November 11, 2007
Brother Richard Bultje

Romans 6:12-14 “Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness. For sin shall not be your master, because you are not under law, but under grace.”

He Bids Me Fly and Gives Me Wings

Reading: Romans 6:1-14
Text: Romans 6:12-14

Have you ever been misunderstood? I know that people have often misunderstood me. In Romans 6:1-14 the writer is trying to explain a very important point, so that we do not misunderstand God's love.

For the last number of weeks we have been going through the book of Romans. Romans is a letter written by one of the early church leaders, the apostle Paul. The letter was written to the Christians who lived in Rome about 1950 years ago. The amazing thing about this letter is that God worked in Paul in such a way that what is written in this letter is also exactly what God wants us here in Hamilton to hear.

For the last two weeks we could see that Paul wanted the Christians in Rome and us here in Hamilton to know that when a

person believes in Jesus, God will treat him or her as if he or she never sinned and lived a perfect life. Paul uses two terms to describe what happens to a person who believes in Jesus. They are called justified and made righteous by God.

To be justified means that when you believe in Jesus you will be treated just as if you have never sinned because Jesus took the punishment for your sins and so you do not have to worry about being punished for your sins. To be made righteous means that when you believe in Jesus Christ, God will treat you as if you always did the right things.

Why would God send Jesus Christ to do this for sinful people? Why does God wash away people's sins and treat them as if they always did the right thing? It is because God has an amazing love for sinful human beings like you and me. If God did not send His Son to do this, could anyone have a good relationship with God? No! That is why God sent Jesus Christ to this earth. He sent Jesus to do what none of us could do.

You see; God sent His Son to this earth so that sinful people like you and me could have a good relationship with God.

I can tell you confidently that when you here today believe in Jesus Christ, all your sins are washed away and God will always love you. Isn't that amazing. Amazing grace. A few weeks ago it was explained to us here at Streetlight that those who believe in

Jesus Christ, can be confident that God will never love them less and cannot love them more.

Now here is the place where many have misunderstood what Paul, the write of Romans, is saying about God's love. Some think and say; if what Paul writes is true people can keep on sinning. If God loves me no matter what I do why should I try to stop my sinning. I can live anyway I feel like. I hope you see how bad this thinking is. Many people in history have fallen to this bad way of thinking and living. I hope none of you do. In the passage we read together, we are told how we should live with a clear understanding of God's love. We are told that if a person really believes in Jesus he or she is a new person. That is if you really believe that Jesus Christ is God and He died for you, you can be sure God will never forsake you but it also means you are a new person. As a new person you will not want to sin. That does not mean that sin will be gone from your life but the desire to live in sin will be gone. Sinning will bother you. If you believe that the great and mighty Jesus, who is God, tasted death for you because He loved you, you will feel a connection to his death. It will be as if you died with Him and rose with Him to be a new person. You will look the same on the outside and still struggle with sin but you will have a new life. You will live for Jesus and you will stand up for your God, Jesus. What Jesus did will affect you so much you will be like a new person.

Paul tells us that part of being a new person means we should count ourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Jesus Christ. What does that mean to count yourself dead to sin? It means that sin does not have control in your life anymore. God is telling you and me that if we keep our focus on what Jesus Christ did for us, we will hate the very sins we used to love. In hating these sins we will not want to do them. God is telling you and me that when we believe that Jesus Christ has washed away our sins, we are new people so we should live as new people.

Do you believe in Jesus Christ? Then live for Jesus Christ by always remembering what He did for you. What Jesus did on the cross must be part of you.

There are two great forces in this world. The force of sin that leads to eternal death and the force of God's love that leads to eternal life. Each of us was born with the force of sin in us that leads to eternal death. If you believe in Jesus Christ, that force of sin that leads to eternal death has died in you.

Instead a new force enters your life. That force is God's love to us in Jesus Christ. The love of God in Jesus Christ not only saves you but it also works in you to live for God. Therefore when you truly believe in Jesus Christ, you are saying there is a new force in your life, God's Love. If that new life force, God love, is in your life you should consider the old sinful you to be dead. In this way you are a new person because of Jesus Christ.

If believing in Jesus Christ makes you a new person, then letting sin again take over in your life would be like letting your body mutiny against the one you say you now serve, Jesus.

I will try to give a short story to explain what I mean. Let's say I grew up in a country that was at war with God and his angels. The leaders of that country made me believe that God was not good and I should consider God to be my enemy. The leader of that country also promoted hatred and jealousy and said that I should never trust anyone. The leader of this country kept me away from knowing God. But one day I traveled to a new area and found out about God in a new way. I found out that God was both good and loving. I also found out that God is a much better leader to serve than the leader I grew up with. I left that old way of life and put myself under the leadership of God. Do you think that was a good decision? Would it make much sense now for me to go back to that old way of life and put myself under the control of that old leader? Of course not! Do you know who that old leader is? It is Sin. That is what Paul is telling us in verses 12 and 13 of Romans 6.

Once you believe God that is good and that He showed He loves you by sending His Son to die for you, would you want your mouth and arms and legs and mind to now serve your old master, sin? No! Therefore as a child of God, who believes Jesus Christ died for you, sin cannot be your master any longer.

But how is that possible; are we not still sinners? The last part of verse 14 tells us how this is possible: “*You are not under law but under grace.*” If we really believe in Jesus Christ we are told that we are not under the control of the law but under the control of Grace.

The law of God tells us how we are to live in relationship with God. The law of God is good but it cannot work in us so that we begin to want to serve God. The law only tells us how we are to obey God. In fact all it can do in our lives is condemn us. The Grace of God is something very different. The Grace of God is God's unconditional love to sinners. That unconditional love tells us that God loves us so much that He gave His life for us. When we concentrate on how much God loves us, we will not want to serve sinful desires because that would be like siding with the enemy of Jesus. Sin is Jesus' enemy. Sin put Jesus on the cross.

If you believe in Jesus, know that you are under His unconditional love. You are covered with His love. I was once told that a loving hug can do wonders in a bad day. God wants you to believe that you are always in God's loving hug, His Grace. I hope each of you believes that God loves you so much that He gave His life up for you. When you truly believe this you have what you need to fight sins control in your life. God love.

When you are struggling with sin do not look to what you need to do, look what Jesus did for you. If you continue to remember what Jesus did for you, you will be able to stand up for him and sin will not control you, it will affect you but it will not control you.

I would like to end with another short story. The story of identical twins who grew up in California about 120 years ago. The older brother lived a straight and narrow life. The younger brother lived a fact, reckless and exciting life. When the younger brother was in his early 20s, he killed a man in front of many witnesses. Everyone heard of the murder including the older brother. The two brothers lived in the same town and word got out fast. The younger brother went into hiding. The older brother did something very strange as soon as he heard the news. He went to the younger brother's home and put on his brother's clothes and stayed there. The police soon came to the younger brother's home and found the older brother. Remember these brothers were identical twins. The police picked up the older brother, thinking he was the younger brother. The older brother went with the police and did not say a word. There was a quick trial. Back then things were done a lot quicker. The older brother was found guilty and was hanged for the murder.

When the younger brother heard what happened he was happy at first. He did not really like his brother anyway. But as time went on the younger brother could not live with himself. He

could not think of anything except the murder and what his brother did for him. He went to the judge to who had taken the case and told the judge that they had executed the wrong man. The judge said to the younger brother, “that might be true but the case is closed, you are free to go.” Do you think that younger brother would stand up for His brother’s reputation and words? I think so.

Jesus was like that older brother to me. I now want to stand up for Jesus and do what pleases Him. I do not want sin to control me anymore but Jesus. I hope you also see Jesus as your older brother who died for you. If you do you also will want to stand up for Jesus and please Him. And so you will not be controlled by sin, Jesus enemy, but Jesus your Saviour.

November 25, 2007
Pastor Paul Aasman

Romans 7:6 “But now, by dying to what once bound us, we have been released from the law so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit, and not in the old way of the written code.”

Freed by the Spirit of Jesus

Reading: Romans 7:1-6
Text: Romans 7:6

Marriage can be a very unhappy affair. A man and woman may have taken marriage vows, but as the years passed by those vows, once taken in a spirit of love, became bonds of suffering.

Love changed to coldness, and coldness turned to hatred. The most intense forms of love and hatred are reserved for those who are closest to us. But they are married. The law of marriage compels them to stay together. But the more that the law forces them to remain together, the more they hate their marriage and each other - because they are forced by the letter of the law to remain.

Do you think that it helps to say: “You may not get a divorce. It may be legal in Canada, but it is illegal in the eyes of God. So live in harmony, and love each other. You have promised to do it, now you must obey God and live up to your promises.”

No, that will not help at all.

Paul warns in our passage that you cannot live with God that way either. You cannot have a relationship with God by obeying the law. If you try to keep God as your friend by obeying the law, you will not only end up hating God, but you will hate everything that the law demands of you, and you will be powerfully compelled to do everything the law forbids, and nothing that it demands.

Martin Luther discovered this very thing when he tried to obey God through sheer will-power. He just could not obey the law. His heart was polluted by sin, so he kept dreaming and imagining sinful things. Nothing he did could drive the sin away. So, says Luther, he came to hate God’s law, and he even came to

hate God - because he demanded of him things he just could not do.

Yes, some marriages are very unhappy, and your relationship with God can also be a very unhappy affair. Perhaps you are here tonight because you want that relationship to be better. If that's what you want, God has made it very easy to have a good relationship with him. But let me go back to the image with which we began.

Marriage can be a very happy affair, too. It is a relationship that begins in love, and must continue in love if it is to carry on. That is so obvious, isn't it? To be happily married, you need to stay in love. Every relationship needs love, otherwise it will become burdensome and eventually hateful.

That is even true of our relationship with God. If you want to live with him, you need to love him. But you cannot have a relationship by obeying the law, because we just cannot do it. The old written code, as Paul calls it, cannot help sinful people like us. We need a new way to live with God. And that is the way of Jesus Christ. We need to die to the law with all that it demands and forbids, and we need to live through Jesus Christ. That means we need to admit that we are sinful people - you know in your heart that you are. You need to say to God, "O God, I am a very sinful person. Help me to overcome my sins because I hate them. Forgive my sins for Jesus' sake. Accept his suffering and death in

my place - grant me to die to sin through him and rise to new life with him."

Believe in Jesus Christ and you will be free. You will no longer love sin, or be a prisoner of its deeds. You will be released from the law so that you might obey, not because you are told to, but because Christ lives in you, making you want to obey. It is called the new way of the Spirit.

Yes, living with God can be a happy affair. It is the way of faith in Jesus Christ. If you came here tonight because you want a closer walk with God, you've come to the right place. Ask God now for the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Freedom, so that you might put away the old way of relating with God - the way of obedience to the law. Jesus Christ has already done it. Ask for the Spirit, so that when God gives it to you in richer measure, you might live by the Spirit in an everlasting relationship of love.