

TIME OF REFLECTION

“The belly is an ungrateful wretch, it never remembers past favors, it always wants more tomorrow.”

~Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn (1918-2008) in *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*

“...sin is treason against a Holy God... Sin lurks in our hearts and grabs us by the throat to do its bidding.”

~Rosaria Champagne Butterfield, English professor and author

“As if we could think of anything more difficult than to love God with all our heart, all our soul, and all our strength! Compared with this law, everything could be considered easy...[For] the law cannot do anything else than to accuse and blame all..., to convict, and, as it were, apprehend them; in fine, to condemn them in God’s judgment: that God alone may justify, that all flesh may keep silence before him.”

~John Calvin (1509-1564), French-born theologian and reformer

“...reason is not king in human beings, the heart is. Therefore, to change your actions, you must change your desires. But your desires will change, only if the Holy Spirit who wrote the Bible also writes his laws on your heart... Now, in effect, justification gives us a heart transplant. For at the same time that we receive the gift of justifying faith by which we are credited with Christ’s extrinsic righteousness, God also sheds abroad in our hearts a new love for him and one another. This new heart love for him, from him, naturally redirects our wills away from sinful selfishness towards a life lived in thankful obedience to God’s commands. Even though we continue to have to struggle with the pull of concupiscence in our mortal bodies, the supernatural power of God’s abiding love has fundamentally changed us...”

~John Ashley Null, theologian at Humboldt University Berlin and North African Bishop

“...the unique message of the New Testament is this: For those who are in Christ, and therefore in the Spirit, the battle against sin is to be fought in an atmosphere of victory, not defeat... Our way of viewing ourselves should reflect this kind of victorious faith.”

~Anthony Hoekema (1913-1988), Dutch-born theologian

“The pharisee within usurps my true self whenever I prefer appearances to reality, whenever I am afraid of God, whenever I surrender the control of my soul to rules rather than risk living in union with Jesus, when I choose to look good and not be good...”

~Brennan Manning (1934-2013), author and former priest

Worship through the Word

SERMON – “Sin’s Power. Law’s Powerlessness. Christ’s Overwhelming Power.”

– *Pastor Don Willeman*

SERMON PASSAGE – *Romans 7:7-25 (NASB)*

Romans 6

²⁰ For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in relation to righteousness. ²¹ Therefore what benefit were you then deriving from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the outcome of those things is death. ²² But now having been freed from sin and enslaved to God, you derive your benefit, resulting in sanctification, and the outcome, eternal life. ²³ For the wages of sin is death, but the gracious gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans 7

¹ Or do you not know, brothers and sisters (for I am speaking to those who know the Law), that the Law has jurisdiction over a person as long as he lives? ² For the married woman is bound by law to her husband as long as he is alive; but if her husband dies, she is released from the law concerning the husband. ³ So then, if while her husband is alive she gives herself to another man, she will be called an adulteress; but if her husband dies, she is free from the law, so that she is not an adulteress if she gives herself to another man.

⁴ Therefore, my brothers and sisters, you also were put to death in regard to the Law through the body of Christ, so that you might belong to another, to Him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit for God. ⁵ For while we were in the flesh, the sinful passions, which were brought to light by the Law, were at work in the parts of our body to bear fruit for death. ⁶ But now we have been released from the Law, having died to that by which we were bound, so that we serve in newness of the Spirit and not in oldness of the letter.

⁷ What shall we say then? Is the Law sin? Far from it! On the contrary, I would not have come to know sin except through the Law; for I would not have known about coveting if the Law had not said, “You shall not covet.” ⁸ But sin, taking an opportunity through the commandment, produced in me coveting of every kind; for apart from the Law sin is dead. ⁹ I was once alive apart from the Law; but when the commandment came, sin came to life, and I died; ¹⁰ and this commandment,

which was to result in life, proved to result in death for me; ¹¹ for sin, taking an opportunity through the commandment, deceived me, and through it, killed me. ¹² So then, the Law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good.

¹³ Therefore did that which is good become a cause of death for me? Far from it! Rather it was sin, in order that it might be shown to be sin by bringing about my death through that which is good, so that through the commandment sin would become utterly sinful.

¹⁴ For we know that the Law is spiritual, but I am fleshly, sold into bondage to sin. ¹⁵ For I do not understand what I am doing; for I am not practicing what I want to do, but I do the very thing I hate. ¹⁶ However, if I do the very thing I do not want to do, I agree with the Law, that the Law is good. ¹⁷ But now, no longer am I the one doing it, but sin that dwells in me. ¹⁸ For I know that good does not dwell in me, that is, in my flesh; for the willing is present in me, but the doing of the good is not. ¹⁹ For the good that I want, I do not do, but I practice the very evil that I do not want. ²⁰ But if I do the very thing I do not want, I am no longer the one doing it, but sin that dwells in me.

²¹ I find then the principle that evil is present in me, the one who wants to do good. ²² For I joyfully agree with the law of God in the inner person, ²³ but I see a different law in the parts of my body waging war against the law of my mind, and making me a prisoner of the law of sin, the law which is in my body’s parts. ²⁴ Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death? ²⁵ Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, on the one hand I myself with my mind am serving the law of God, but on the other, with my flesh the law of sin.

1 Corinthians 15

⁵⁶ The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the Law; ⁵⁷ but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

