

Greetings:

The study that Pastor Pat brings on Sunday mornings is a reflection of the study for that week. It represents a lot of research. Not all of what he has prepared is communicated. In an attempt to continue the learning process, he is making available his study notes to the congregation.

These notes are edited, but not “book” ready. To the critical eye, mistakes can possibly be found. Therefore, he asks that you take the material with humility, teach-ability, and charity.

Enjoy and if you should have any questions or corrections, please do not hesitate to email him at pastorpat@waukeshabible.org.

Date: June 28, 2015

Sermon Title: JESUS Provides HOPE in our Struggle

Series Title: The Church: A Place of Hope

Text: Romans 7:24-8:4

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Waukesha Bible Church is a family of families seeking to live in **the Storyline of the Bible**. She is determined by design to have a **God-centered, Christ-exalting worship; a Word-centered teaching** focused on personal **discipleship** through intentional and systematic instruction; a **Global-impacting mission** that resolves to be a **church planting church**; and a **Grace-based fellowship** where disciples are invited to live under a **reigning grace** characterized by a **Gospel-driven sanctification** that celebrates a divine **monergism** to the Christian life.

Date: June 28, 2015
Title: Jesus provides HOPE in our STRUGGLE
Text: Romans 7:24-8:4
Theme: Even in our struggle, we are more than conquerors in Christ Jesus.

Introduction:

Last week a congregant handed me a note they found on the floor. I found the note insightful and humorous. It simply read, "MOM, when does this end? SOON OR NOT EVEN CLOSE." Well, unfortunately, we were not even close!

For a moment, let me invite you to consider what sin or issue is currently on your emotional plate. I only want you to put the item on your plate if you believe that item is keeping you from God. For the moment, I am only speaking to the individual who already knows their sin is gone. Thus, it is not our justification, but our sanctification we are addressing. Yet, you struggle with the feeling of not being loved, accepted, forgiven, favored, and served before or by God. What is it that appears to block you in your feelings of intimacy with God?

What I want us to do today is to stab that "thing" and realize it is already dead and offers no threat in our relationship with God. Our desire is to help us stop assessing our relationship with God from the dynamic of the horizontal. Our desire is to look at the horizontal from the vantage point of the vertical.

This does not mean we do not speak into the horizontal, but what it does mean is that the horizontal does not control our relationship with God.

Let us begin.

Our intent in our study is to show how JESUS provides HOPE and His CHURCH is a PLACE of HOPE. Initially, we considered how we have Hope in Jesus because He is our identity. From Romans 6 we learn how sin has no authority over us.

As we spend time in our Bibles, we want to see the complete sufficiency of JESUS in our relationship to the Father and with sin. One of the tensions we run into as Christians is our continued propensity toward/to sin (Rom. 7:18-23).

¹⁸ For I know that nothing good dwells 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 am doing the very thing I do not want, I am no longer the one doing it, but sin which 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 concur with the law of God in the inner man, ²³ but I see a different law in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin which is in my members. 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. (Rom. 7:18-25)

¹ Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. ² For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death. ³ For what the Law could not do, weak as

it was through the flesh, God did: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh, ⁴ so that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. (Rom. 8:1-4)

What our text assures us of is that even in our victory AND failure, there is therefore now no condemnation. Friend, this is a powerful truth. Let us explore it.

Romans 6 tells us sin no longer has authority over us (Rom. 6:2, 7). We also learn there is no formula that guarantees sinless perfection. In this life, sin will always mark our lives (1 John 2:1, 2). This is not to throw in the towel in our struggle against sin (Rom. 13:14) as if sinning is inevitable, but our existence has sin in it (1 John 1:9). How then are we to wage war against our sin?

There are three elements making up the foundation from which we address our sin.

- **First**, in order to win against sin we must consider the difference between judicial and experiential.
- **Second**, in order to win against sin we must consider the difference between position and performance/practice.
- **Finally**, in order to win against sin we must consider the difference between monergism and synergism.

I feel like we will have a million disclaimers and qualifiers and for this I am sorry, but there is no other way. What our victory over sin looks like might be very different from what we expect. It might look like defeat; nonetheless, the defeat is the victory.

Let us use our three points to guide us in today's study.

I. The Difference between JUDICIAL and EXPERIENTIAL

Romans 6 assures us that we are dead to sin and alive in JESUS (Rom. 6:1-4). Romans 6 tells us sin has no authority over us (v. 7). Because of the gospel, we should **KNOW** our new relationship to sin and Jesus (vv. 6, 9). We should **CONSIDER** this new relationship as true (v. 11). Finally, we should **ACT** on the substance and not allow the shadow to dictate/determine identity or the terms of engagement (vv. 12, 13).

- ¹⁵ What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? May it never be! ¹⁶ Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone as slaves for obedience, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness? ¹⁷ But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed, ¹⁸ and having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness. (Rom. 6:15-18)

What does this mean judicially and what does this mean practically?

A. Understanding JUDICIAL [What is known/true]

In our attempt to understand judicial, we will begin with the following definition, “**Pertaining to judgment in courts of justice** or to the administration of justice.”¹

Romans 6 speaks of a legal action made possible by the person and work of JESUS. In our legal system, the court of law, an individual can be declared innocent and/or guilty even though they might be guilty and/or innocent. Regardless of their actions, the court will treat them according to the sentence.

Consider the following example of one who is innocent though treated as guilty.

“William Lopez was arrested for the murder of a drug dealer in 1989. [The dealer] had been shot with a shotgun that was never located, leaving only two eyewitnesses to testify. The first described the shooter as a black man over 6 feet tall, while Lopez is a shorter, white man. The second woman, on the other hand, positively identified Lopez as the culprit. Lopez, whose daughter was 14 months old at the time, spent the next 23 years in prison, until [a legal foundation] stepped in to help. It was soon discovered that the woman who identified Lopez as the killer had struck a deal with the district attorney to identify him in order to reduce the drug charges against her. A new witness was found, now living in the Dominican Republic, and appeared in court to clear Lopez’s name. The [legal] foundation is currently helping Lopez make the move back into normal society.”²

Friend, the opposite is also true. You and I are guilty, but because of the work of Jesus, God declares us innocent and treats us as such. The cross of Jesus destroyed sin and death judicially. The fullest measure of this work will not take place until the dead in Christ arise and He transforms the living so that death is abolished (1 Cor. 15:26), but legally in the courtroom of Heaven, sin has been destroyed and no longer has authority over the believer.

B. Understanding EXPERIENTIAL [What is felt/I feel]

Although Jesus changes my relationship to sin whereby it no longer has authority over me, sin is still a part of my regular experience. How am I to view it?

First, sin only has place in our fallen, old nature. When we sin, it is coming out of our old, unregenerate self. That old self that was in Adam is no longer our identity. **What we once were, we no longer are, but still have.** Our old nature still exists and cries out for survival, but it has a terminal existence. Its end is in sight. The work of Jesus changes our identity.

Thus, we still sin but that sin . . .

1. No longer has authority over us (Rom. 6:7).
2. God no longer imputes sin to our account (Rom. 4:7, 8).
3. That sin no longer defines us (Rom. 8:14-17).
4. We are no longer under condemnation (Rom. 8:1).

These four tenants are judicially true regardless of what life might look like experientially.

This leads us to our second point.

II. The Difference between POSITION and PERFORMANCE BASED ACCEPTANCE

Almost without exception, the church of Jesus understands these two points, but they draw a sharp distinction between the two to the point that the positional is invalidated.

- But in all these things **we overwhelmingly conquer** through Him who loved us. (Rom. 8:37)
- but thanks be to God, **who gives us the victory** through our Lord Jesus Christ. (1 Cor. 15:57)
- You are from God, little children, and **have overcome them**; because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world. (1 John 4:4)

We speak of being more than conquerors or of living the victorious Christian life, but then go about trying to define what it looks like. Friend, what you see and what I am looking at is the victorious Christian life. Jesus by His victory literally beat the hell out of you. He has destroyed the power of sin and death in your life. It no longer has authority over you.

Because of this, I believe the gospel changes everything (2 Cor. 5:17).

- ²⁷For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. ²⁸There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's descendants, heirs according to promise. (Gal. 3:27-29)

The gospel changes our standing or position before the Father and our standing changes our practice. **The flow of benefits is one way.** Our position, what Jesus did, always changes our performance, what we do. The opposite is equally true. What we do can never change what Jesus did. Let us quickly consider our position or standing, as it exists right now in Christ.

A. Understanding POSITION [What we know/is true]

1. [Redemption] Jesus redeems us from sin's debt.

⁴But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, ⁵so that He might **redeem** those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. (Gal. 4:4, 5)

2. [Forgiveness] Jesus forgives us of all sin's transgression.

When you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, **having forgiven us all our transgressions**, (Col. 2:13)

3. [Propitiation] Jesus satisfies the Father's wrath against a broken Law.

In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the **propitiation** for our sins. (1 John 4:10)

4. [Justification] Jesus declares us innocent in the courtroom of God's Law.

Therefore, having been **justified** by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, (Rom. 5:1)

5. [Imputation] Jesus imputes to us His righteousness and receives from us our condemnation.

²⁰Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be **reconciled** to God. ²¹**He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.** (2 Cor. 5:20, 21)

6. [Reconciliation] Jesus spans the gap between the Father and His people resulting in their reconciliation and fellowship with Him and with one another.

For if while we were enemies we were **reconciled** to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been **reconciled**, we shall be saved by His life. (Rom. 5:10)

7. [Identification] Jesus changes our identity from one of condemnation in ADAM to one of justification in CHRIST.

Therefore there is now **no condemnation** for those who are **in Christ Jesus**. (Rom. 8:1)

8. [Adoption] Jesus adopts us into the Family of God thus becoming joint heirs with Him and children of God.

⁴But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, ⁵so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the **adoption** as sons. (Gal. 4:4, 5)

Initially, we asked ourselves the question, "What is that sin; thing or issue on our plate that we believe is keeping us from God?" Well, **IT IS GONE**. Why? Because **IT IS FINISHED!**

Because of how glorious and complete Jesus' Work is:

1. Nothing anyone does can earn God's blessing or merit God's favor in any way. This includes Christians. Because of our position in Christ and because of how thorough His work was and how powerful and gracious He is, no "performance" can earn us additional blessings, nor "failures" lose us the blessings purchased by His blood.
2. The Father never deals with a believer's sin in a "punishing" way; God never "chastens" us in His wrath, because Jesus took that for us. God is never angry with a Christian; God

is always, only, pleased with them. Though sin affects our human relationships, it no longer, ever, forever, will affect our relationship with God.

3. Therefore, nothing Christians do earns additional favor(s) from God or absolves them of fresh sins. Believers do not need to continue to ask for forgiveness. They never need to “get right” or “get back into fellowship with God.” They cannot “pray” or “obey” their way into extra blessings, since they can never reverse what Christ has already done.
4. Therefore, traditional Christian “disciplines” are given to us as grace, for our joy, not as a vehicle to “higher living” or “greater success.” They must never be used as “paddles”-against our own selves or against others.

If I had to reduce it down to the specific, unique, peculiarities of our theology, it would be:

1. God never punishes Christians, ever.
2. Christians never lose fellowship with God (or need to confess sins in order to restore it).
3. Christians never earn blessings; obedience is the enjoyment of blessings purchased by Jesus.

B. Understanding PERFORMANCE/PRACTICE [what is felt/I feel]

What is the fruit of the gospel? **What should be my response to my own old nature (Col. 3:5, 8, 10, 15-17)?**

This makes the study personal and intimate. It is not enough to identify our old nature and understand how we are to respond from our new nature. We must also come to grips with how we are to address the needs of our own war within.

First, consider the members of our earthly body as dead (Col. 3:5, 8 [Put it all aside]). Do not allow the mind to think what we were in Adam forms our identity before God.

Listen to the following imagery communicated by the call to “kill the flesh”.

“‘Slay utterly’ may express its force. The form of the verb (aorist imperative) makes clear that the action is to be undertaken decisively, with a sense of urgency. Both the meaning of the verb and the force of the tense suggest a vigorous, painful act of personal determination. Maclaren likens it to a man who while working at a machine gets his fingers drawn between rollers or caught in the belting. ‘Another minute and he will be flattened to a shapeless bloody mass. He catches up an axe lying by and with his own arm hacks off his own hand at the wrist It is not easy nor pleasant, but it is the only alternative to a horrible death’ (p. 275).”³

Second, put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him (Col. 3:10).

Third, let the Word of Christ richly dwell within us (Col. 3:16). Get into the Word of God and have it percolate inside of us. Attend church, regularly read your Bible, discuss it in fellowship with others. Make the Word of God a vital part of our everyday life.

Living the Christian life is so different from anything else we can think of. When a child is born there comes a point when we start to train them for independence. All things being equal, a day will come when we, in a sense, cut them loose. They are now on their own. However, just the opposite is true for the Christian. We start from a position of self-rule, self-willing and declared rebellion and we work toward dependency. Christian maturity is when we see ourselves as helpless infants cradled in the arms of Almighty God.

III. The Difference between MONERGISM and SYNERGISM

There is a side to this entire instruction where we really want to get to where the “rubber meets the road.” We simply desire for someone to tell us what we are to do.

My initial response is two-fold. First, nothing is necessary. Secondly, do all you desire. Now, let us work toward clarity.

A. Understanding MONERGISM

Monergism simply means “one works.” The question we ask ourselves is “who is the one?”

Our justification, our standing before the Father, our acceptance by Him as it relates to our sin issue is by grace alone, through faith alone, in JESUS alone. **The fruit of His work is our faith.** Jesus works and we respond in faith. There is nothing we do. It all rests in what Jesus does.

- But I will sacrifice to You With the voice of thanksgiving. That which I have vowed I will pay. **Salvation is from the LORD.** (Jonah 2:9)
- **Salvation belongs to the LORD;** Your blessing be upon Your people! Selah. (Ps. 3:8)

All world religions and some within professing Christendom, approach justification from what they do, not on what God does.

The fruit of justification is sanctification. Sanctification is simply the word theologians use to describe the Christian life. How we now live as Christians is a fruit of Christ’s work in our behalf.

Because Jesus is the root, here is His fruit (John 15). Let us be clear here. We do not produce fruit. Fruit is the consequence of the root/vine. The Scripture speaks to fruit’s inevitability. Because of who He is, this is what we are. Thus, we look at the commands of Scripture to be descriptive and not prescriptive. They describe what Jesus looks like in and through His Church. They do not prescribe a fix to our problems.

This leads us to our final point concerning the Christian life. What we do is what JESUS does.

- ¹⁹ For through the Law I died to the Law, so that I might live to God. ²⁰ I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me. (Gal. 2:19, 20)
- ¹ Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. ² Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. ³ For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. ⁴ When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory. ⁵ Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry. (Col. 3:1-5)
- ¹⁰ But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me did not prove vain; but I labored even more than all of them, yet not I, but the grace of God with me. (1 Cor. 15:10)

Notice how verse five begins. Because of what is true, this is how we live. How we live does not determine who we are. Who we are transforms how we live.

B. Understanding SYNERGISM

What is synergism? Synergism means “two work.” The question we ask ourselves is “who are the two?” As a whole, those within Evangelical Christianity believe our justification is monergistic or the work of one, God. Yet within Evangelicalism, the Church divides as to how the Christian lives or grows in the Christian life. Is this growth the work of two, the Christian and God? Alternatively, is the growth the work of one?

I believe the Scripture teaches a single work done by God in and through His people. Thus, from start to finish and everything in-between it is by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone.

Yet we ask ourselves, does this mean I can simply sit back and do nothing or live anyway I wish or desire? The short answer is yes, you can sit back and do nothing or live anyway you wish or desire. However, the question is wrong. It would appear foolish for an apple tree to ask if it can bare peaches or a plum tree to birth puppies. The JESUS SEED always looks a certain way, as does the DEVIL’S SEED (1 John 3:4-10).

Earlier we made the statement, “Nothing is necessary; do all you desire.” As believers, we can do or not do all we desire, BUT there is always a horizontal consequence to all of our choices. Moreover, we cannot control the consequences. We cannot stop the apple tree from producing apples. No matter how much you think you will be the exception, you are not the exception.

- ²⁷ Can a man take fire in his bosom And his clothes not be burned? ²⁸ Or can a man walk on hot coals And his feet not be scorched? ²⁹ So is the one who goes in to his neighbor's wife; Whoever touches her will not go unpunished. (Prov. 6:27-29)

When you and I play with sin, we are putting rounds in the cylinder. We might start with one round of ammo and think because we pulled the trigger and it did not go off, that we are safe. Therefore, we keep adding rounds until all six chambers fill up. At some point, we will run out of “luck.” In addition, the entire “game” is stupid from the beginning.

What does this mean as it relates to the Christian life? Because of our old nature, all of us have ammo in our pockets and all of us put in and take out this ammo as we play with sin.

The challenge is living with our own depravity and not killing others or us in our journey. Let us conclude with five thoughts helping us rest in our struggle against sin.

Shepherding the Sheep: (What is the NEXT STEP?)

First, your struggle is normal and to be expected. No one gets out of this without battle (1 Cor. 10:13). Do not become preoccupied with sinning either guarding against or participating in. We you look at sin; you are not looking at Jesus. Only look at your sin through Jesus. This is our second point.

Second, always look at your situation from the cross. Always consider what Jesus did and not what you are doing. His victory over sin and death is your victory over sin and death. Your failure has intrinsic demerit, but Jesus answered the charge for the last time at Calvary.

Third, always define your identity by your position and not your practice. Remember the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM)* with its more than 300 maladies? Once labeled a certain way, that label has the tendency and power to create your identity as to how you see yourself and how others see you. Friend, never see yourself as anything other than a child of God clothed in the righteousness of Christ. Never allow your failure to define you.

Fourth, face your problems head on. Look them squarely in the face and see them for what they are. What you once were, you no longer are, but still have. Your relationship and/or circumstance might never change, but such things have no power over you and your standing before the Father. Put aside your old nature and fix your eyes on Jesus. Deal with it, but do not allow it to control you. It does not have that kind of power. The only power your sin has over you is the power you give it.

Finally, do not isolate yourself in your struggle. See how God's provision flow from the cross and through His Church. Come and participate with others and find strength in the believing community.

The Church is a place where we . . .

- Love without condition
- Accept without requirement
- Forgive without limit
- Look upon favorably without merit and
- Serve without reward.

Why, because the Church is where we remind ourselves of and celebrate the gospel.

Perhaps you say, "I do not see it or experience it." I would suggest become what you desire and shun what you loath.

Grace reigns because the cross s

¹ <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/judicial>

² <http://www.toptenz.net/top-10-innocent-people-convicted-murder-imprisoned-years.php>

³ Curtis Vaughan, "Colossians," in *Expositor's Bible Commentary*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelein (Grand Rapids: Zondervan 1978), 11:211.