

Romans 3

Sunday 6/8/2008

SEC: The Need for God's Righteousness

I told you in Romans 3 that what we begin to see here is the great study on the importance of getting God's righteousness and how you go about getting it. I think now, when you get into Romans 3 and you start putting these chapters together, you begin to see that the real issue behind the Gentiles' unrighteousness—and remember we talked about that in Romans 1—and then in Romans 2 we got into the Jews' self-righteousness. I think you can better have an understanding of why we really need God's righteousness, once you understand how they are so unrighteous and ungodly.

Today we are going to start in Romans 3:10, and I want to read down through here. In this section, we begin to see another great doctrine come to light. Romans is just filled with them. We begin to see, I think, probably one of the key things that we need to understand as God's people today, and it is certainly one, as so many others, that God's people have lost by the wayside in the process of time.

But it says this in verse 10:

Romans 3:10-18

Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips:

Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness:

Their feet are swift to shed blood:

Destruction and misery are in their ways:

And the way of peace have they not known:

There is no fear of God before their eyes.

Now we know that whatsoever things the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law:

That every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.

Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

Now, Father, we thank you and praise you for the Lord Jesus. We love you. Thank you for the Word of God, for its power, for its truth, and for, Lord, the time that we have set aside today to learn from your word. We ask you, Lord, in a very special way to be with us today, help us to grasp the great concepts and the great truths of your word. And, Lord, we will thank you and praise you in Jesus' name, for His sake, we ask it. Amen.

SEC: The Doctrine of Man's Depravity

In this section, we begin to see another great doctrine, and it is the doctrine on the depravity of man. If we have learned anything from Romans 1 and Romans 2, it is that, whether it is the Jew or the Gentile, we have learned that man is an absolute mess in his relationship with God.

There are a couple of things I want you to remember as we get into this. Man in an unsaved state—and I think sometimes we lose sight of this—a man in an unsaved state is totally alienated from God. Another great doctrine in the Bible is the doctrine of the holiness of God. When you contrast the doctrine of the holiness of God from the doctrine of the depravity of man, I do not understand how anybody could ever think that you could have a relationship with God aside from through His blood on Calvary's cross.

A man in an unsaved state, the Bible says, the very best you can do—and I know that we like to put a lot of emphasis on the things that we do, even after we are saved, and I am not saying that after you get saved, you should not do some things for God—but I think we lose the perspective of who we are in relationship to who God is. I think losing that perspective many times causes us some issues in our life that we have to struggle through and we have to deal with.

Do you realize that an unsaved man is totally alienated from God in every way, shape, or form? Do you realize that John 9:31 talks about the fact that God does not hear an unsaved man's prayer? If a man prays and he is not in a saved state, and he has never trusted Christ as his own personal Savior, his prayers have no avail. God does not hear his prayers.

I have had people tell me, "Well, I was unsaved and I prayed this and God answered it." No, you may have prayed it, but God did not answer it. It was just the happenstance of the circumstances. It could have just as easily gone some other way. Do you know why? Because John 9:31 says:

John 9:31

Now we know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth.

The Bible makes it very clear that as an unsaved man, you have no prayer life. God will hear the prayer of a man wanting to be saved, but as an unsaved man, we have no power with God. We have no relationship with God.

As an unsaved man or an unsaved woman, I do not know what issues we have in your life. But many times people will come in and they will have a problem with alcohol or tobacco or drugs or something in life, whatever the case may be. Without Christ in their life, they will never, never, never be able to overcome and get out from under what they have got.

We deal with alcoholics a lot over the years. The world's idea of helping an alcoholic is to put him in Alcoholics Anonymous. I am not saying that Alcoholics Anonymous is not a good thing. I have had people that I have worked with that I have put them into it because of the accountability factor. But I am not under any idea that joining some club with a bunch of people who have the same problem that you have is going to be the key to fixing your problem.

One of the problems that Alcoholics Anonymous makes is they teach their people that you are going to be an alcoholic for the rest of your life. So when you go into their little groups, they will

turn around and say, "Hi, my name is so and so, I am a recovering alcoholic." In other words, they still take the position that they are still an alcoholic. I understand why they do it; they want to keep in front of you the fact that you are an alcoholic so you do not fall off the truck. They have one for Narcotics Anonymous for people that are on drugs. I am not bashing it, please do not think that.

But what I am saying is this: this is the difference between God's plan and man's plan. Man's plan is to keep you an alcoholic and keep that before you. God's plan is to tell you that once you get saved, you are free from alcohol. You are not an alcoholic anymore. You are now a new creature in Christ Jesus. Old things are passed away; all things become new. That is the difference between the two.

I have used Alcoholics Anonymous, I have used Narcotics Anonymous, and there is an even bigger, more successful one called Christians Anonymous. That is where people that do not ever witness go. They have little club meetings, and I think they are good. But the bottom line is, apart from you getting saved—and I hope today that wherever you are at, you understand your perspective a little bit better today—that is all I really want to accomplish. This is like an introduction to this doctrine of the depravity of man.

Man in an unsaved state is totally God's enemy. I heard a guy say one time years ago, "The Bible is a record of man's search for God." I thought to myself, "Boy, that is a very platonic concept," platonic, coming from the Greek philosopher Plato. Man's search for God. Let me tell you something, you could not find God as an unsaved man or a saved man if your life depended on it. When Adam sinned in the garden, he was not looking for God. God went looking for him. When God came to Abraham, Abraham did not come to God. God came to Abraham.

Apart from God coming down and allowing you and I, and touching you, as the Bible says, He is the true light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world. There is absolutely no way. The Bible is not a record of man's search for God. The Bible is a record of God's search for man. The Bible says He is the true light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world. Somebody said, "Well, I am going to go find God." You will never find God because God is already there. The real issue is God has already found you. He just does not like what He found. So you want to pretend this game that you are on this search.

The Bible straightens all that out. You do not have to search for God. The moment you were born, the Holy Spirit of God noted your name down on the big clipboard up in heaven. The moment you came to the age of accountability, the Holy Spirit of God began to knock on your door. When you got saved and you trusted Christ as your own personal Savior, from that point on, God gave you a book that shows you exactly how to have a relationship with Him and how you can build it. None of it has to do with you seeking God. The Bible says the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost. He will find you. The question is, you do not want Him to find you because you have your own agenda. Or you get into this philosophical idea that, "Oh, I am on my search for God." No, God found you the day you got saved. There is no other search involved. It is the fact that many times we do not want to approach God.

Man's approach to God has always been to bring God down to man's level. God's approach is He wants to bring man up to His level. But there is a process by which He does that. To be saved, even to get saved, and then afterwards, the idea of having fellowship with God, God has to do something. He has to get over some things. One of the things that He has to get around is your and my depravity. Because God is holy. God absolutely has a standard of holiness that He will not set aside so He can have a relationship with you.

We think that God—how many times have I told you this—that we think that God loves the sinner but hates the sin. That is not true. God hates the sinner and the sin because God is holy. God cannot stay in the presence nor be around anything that is not holy. Now, here comes another great doctrine in the Bible. This is called the doctrine of propitiation. This is called the doctrine of the advocacy of Jesus Christ.

Somebody says, "Well," and I know people get up and they say, "Well, God loves the sinner but He hates the sin." Do you know who said that? It is not in the Bible, by the way. Gandhi said that. That was Gandhi's philosophical approach. Of course, the God he was talking about did not even remotely line up with the God that I am talking about this morning. But God does not love the sinner and hate sin. God hates the sinner and He hates the sin.

You say, "Well, if that is the case," the Bible says if you are unsaved here this morning, that you are as good as in hell already with a door shut, gate locked, and a key thrown away someplace. The Bible says there is absolutely no way God can even look at you and love you. For God to allow you to be part of Him and to get His righteousness, He had to do something. Do you know what He did? Maybe this will help you understand it better. He sent down His Son and died on the cross.

Do you know what God had to do before He could even love you and look at you and even contemplate having any kind of salvation plan for you? He had to look at you through something innocent dying. So when God looks at an unsaved man, He cannot stand to look at him. He cannot have anything to do with him. But then the factor comes in that God made a way. The way that He did was that when His Son, God Himself, came down and died on that cross. The Bible says:

John 3:16

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

Sounds like a contradiction, does it? God loves the world but He hates the sinner. The Bible says an unsaved man, the wrath of God abideth on him already. The only way God could love the world was to have His Son go down dying on the cross, and when He hung on the cross, He took the place and shed the blood for every godless sinner on this planet. So when God looks at you and me before we were saved, He sees us through the blood of His Son. That is the only way He can do it.

We have a lot of religion today that once stood for the blood washing of Christ and the redemption of Christ's blood who no longer believe the blood. They look at the blood as a very

gory thing. Yet at the same time, there is no more precious doctrine in the Bible than the blood of Christ washing away your sin and my sin. When we start to talk about Romans 3 and we start to look at the depravity of man, you need to understand that the only way God could look at you and me, the only way God could ever make a way that a holy God could ever have any kind of fellowship with an unrighteous person—someone with whom the Bible says that all of our righteousness is as filthy rags in the sight of God—the only way a holy God could have anything to do with a filthy, vile sinner like you and I was to look at them through the blood of His Son, and that is the way He made it through.

SEC: God's Solution: The Romans Road to Salvation

Have you ever wondered and ever looked at the book of Romans? The book of Romans shows us exactly how this process works. I think this is the major theme that comes through the book of Romans, at least in the first part anyhow. Romans 1 and 2 tell us that the Jew and the Gentiles are totally messed up. Romans 3 and 4 begin to show us that the only way that we can ever have a relationship with God is through the fact that we have somehow to get God's righteousness. We as sinners have to somehow find a way to get the righteousness of God in my sinful life, and God found a way to do that. That, my friend, is the great process of how you and I, through the blood of Christ, get the righteousness of God.

Have you ever wondered why when a person gets saved, you basically always deal with them through the book of Romans? Do you ever stop and think about that? Romans is the bedrock of the doctrine of salvation. In fact, it is such a thing that is used so many times for hundreds of years, that it even goes to the fact that even when we talk about it and when you get those little tracts, it talks about the Romans Road to Salvation. The book of Romans is the book that if anybody is a true soul winner and understands the easiest way—and I realize that you always have to accept the rule if somebody wants to make it as complicated—but when God wanted to take the simple plan of salvation, when God wanted to take a simple formula about getting His righteousness, He did it in the bedrock book of Romans that deals with the foundation and the truth that has to do with salvation in a very simple, basic form.

That is why when you win somebody to Christ, you do not do it out of Matthew. Matthew Turnpike will not cut it. You do not do it out of the book of Acts. The Acts Avenue will not get you there. You will not go down Luke Street. Luke Street will not get you anywhere. No, no, you have got to go down the Romans Road. Romans is a very basic book that shows you, and what we are in right now, Romans 3:10-20, is where I start with a person when they get saved. It is where you should start when you got saved. It starts with Romans 3:10-20, which simply says this: "There is none that doeth good, no, not one."

Romans 3:10-20 is the place you want to start because the first thing you have got to do in bringing somebody to Christ and them getting God's righteousness is to get them to see how much of a sinner they are. Romans 3:10-20 is the universal indictment of all mankind. It shows you that there is not any good thing in any of us. There is nothing you can say, nothing you can think, no good work that you can accomplish that will ever merit God's righteousness. Romans 3 is where you start because it shows that you and I as a sinner are hopeless. There is no way; we

are without hope, without Christ. There is nothing we can do. It paints the gloomiest, darkest picture of any place I know in the Bible. It simply says that there is none that doeth good, no, not one.

It says that there is none that understandeth. There is none that seeketh after God. They all have gone out of their way. Their throat is an open sepulchre. Their tongues have used deceit. The poison of asps is under their lips. Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness. Their feet are swift to shed blood. Destruction and misery are in their ways. And the way of peace they have not known. And there is no fear of God before their eyes.

I know we live in a time where everybody wants a positive message from the pastor in the Bible. Tell me what is positive about that. Before you can ever get positive, you have got to get negative. You have got to understand when you try to bring somebody to Christ, the first thing you have got to do is you have got to get them to see that without Christ, they have not got a chance. That they are a sinner. That there is nothing in their life. They have no merit. They have no power. They have nothing that God wants.

When I win somebody to Christ, I usually go three places in my Bible. I keep it very simple. Some people like to impress people and show how much they know, and that just confuses the issue. Usually you are dealing with somebody that is very basic anyhow, and someone does not have a lot of knowledge, and they are not coming to be impressed. They are coming to get saved. So when I deal with somebody, I keep it very simple. If you are in this room this morning and I have ever won you to Christ, you know what I am saying is how I dealt with you.

1. The first place I go is Romans 3. Romans 3:10-20 makes the eternal statement that man has got a problem, and that problem is sin.
2. The next place I go is Romans 6, staying on the Romans Road. Romans 6:23. I call this my great pivotal verse. Romans 6:23

For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. That is in relationship to what we just saw in Romans 3:10-20. The bottom line is this: based on Romans 3:10-20, and you and me being a sinner, the wages of that sin is death. Ah, but the little conjunction in the middle of that verse: "But." This is your pivotal verse. "But the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." There it is. Do you see how simple that makes it? Romans 3 shows you your sin. You show somebody that without God there is no chance, that they are alienated from God. They have nothing that God wants. They have nothing they can do for God. Then you show them the wages of that sin is death. But, the gift of God. Ah, now we have all the things in the right verse. The gift of God. It is a gift. It has to be a gift because based on Romans 3:10-20, you cannot earn it. You cannot buy it. You do not merit it. You cannot work for it. It has to be a gift. Yes, the wages of sin is death. But, the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ. That is my pivotal verse. That just brought me dealing with somebody from where they are a sinner, showing them that the wages of that sin and where it is going to get them, and then shows me the next step that I can get something, that there is eternal life.

3. Then I go to Romans 10. This is called the Romans Road. I know there are different little pieces people go other than this. I am not saying this is the only way you can do it, but you

better do it out of Romans. Romans 10:9-10

That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the scripture saith, whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek. See, we covered Romans 1 and Romans 2 there. For the same Lord is rich unto all that call upon him. Now here it comes: Romans 10:13

For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

That is all you need. There are two elements you have got to have that are laid out. I do not know if you caught it coming through or not, but for a man to be saved, he has to have two elements nailed down. One is his head knowledge, the other one is his heart knowledge. Today I am ashamed to say that most people that get saved do not have half of it; therefore, they probably do not get saved. Most people that get saved, they just have a head knowledge. They do not make it in their heart.

When I deal with somebody about their eternal destiny, I take very, very, very great pains that one, they understand that they are a sinner. They understand that there is nothing that they can do and there is no good thing in them, and it is only by the grace of God that God wants to have a relationship with them. But God had to do something for that to happen that I have taken to my pivotal verse and I show them. If you stay where you are at in your sins, you are going to split hell wide open. Why? Because the wages of sin is death. But the gift of God is eternal life in Jesus Christ. How do I get there? "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." That is how you get there. You have got to believe it in your heart and you have got to understand it in your head.

Now you do not have to understand all the eternal degrees of salvation. I am not saying that. Most people when they get saved, they do not understand about the tribulation, they do not understand about the millennium. They are not exposed to it. But I will tell you what God does give you grace to understand. He will give you grace to understand that one, you are a sinner and you need to be saved. He will give you enough spiritual insight, even as an unsaved man, through the blood of Christ, to see that Christ's sacrifice was the way.

So when I deal with somebody on that basis, I basically say, "Hey, look, it takes two aspects. You have got to believe it in your heart and you have got to have it in your head. You have got to confess it with your mouth." I will take somebody down to that point and I will say, "Let me ask you a question. Do you believe that you are a sinner? Do you believe there is nothing good in you?" "Yes, I do." "Do you believe that the wages of your sinful life is going to be death, and that death there is not dying and not being put in the ground? That death there is spiritual separation from God for all of eternity. I am going to hell." "Yes, I believe that." "Do you also believe that God made a way that even though the wages of sin is death, God has a gift for you if you will take it, and that gift of salvation, eternal life, getting God's righteousness?" "Yes, I do." "All right, let me show you how to get it. You believe in your heart. You believe you are a sinner?"

Yes. You believe you deserve to go to hell? Yes. You believe that God is going to send you to hell? Yes. You believe that Jesus Christ died on the cross and on that cross He paid your price in hell, and you believe that He will offer you the gift today if you ask Him?" "Yes." "Okay, kid, you have got it in your heart. Now we are going to exercise what you have got in your head. If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, ask Him to save you."

When you get to this point, you can do it a couple of different ways. Some people are afraid they will pray the wrong prayer. I do not know how you can pray the wrong prayer. One of the best prayers I ever had of a man that I know—I have won a lot of people to Christ and I think most of them probably got saved, but I know one absolutely sure did—and yet, if the average pastor would have been dealing with this guy, he would have had a heart attack. One time I dealt with the roughest old guy you ever saw in your life. I mean, this guy, I do not know where he had come from or what he was doing in his life, but boy, I will tell you what, he was the vilest, most unbelievable person I ever met in my life. God began to do some things in his life and I got the opportunity at one point to win him to Christ. I just confessed, it even shocked me.

When I get to this point, I always say to the guy, "Now we can do this one or two ways." Because most people maybe do not know what to pray. So, you do not want to feel bad about stumbling around. Some people do not have a problem with it. I tell them this, "If you feel good enough to ask God and you know how to do it, then audibly, openly, so I can be a witness to it, just ask God to come in your heart and save you right now the best way you know how. Now, if you cannot do that, then I will lead you in a prayer. But when I lead you in this prayer, all I am doing is helping you. You are not praying it to me. You are not asking me." And I make it very clear.

Well, this old boy, I got to that point and I said, "Now, I will help you with this." He said, "No, I know how to, I need to ask God." That was my first mistake. I said, "Go ahead." So, we bowed our head, I put my arm around him and he says, "Dear God," he said, "I am a goddamn sinner." Now, I had that reaction for just a split second. Most pastors at that point, you know what they do? "Hold, time out. Whoa, whoa. You cannot cuss like that when you are asking God to save you." That was my first reaction. But the minute I thought about it, I thought to myself, "That is probably the truest confession I have ever heard a man make in my life, because he is a goddamn sinner." We use it as a cuss word so much, we become so associated with it in the wrong way, we lose sensitivity when a guy uses it in the right way. There you go. When I said, I thought to myself, "Pray on. You got it."

Do you see how desensitized we become to things? We hear God's name used in vain by people out there all the way around, and we just, we get so—and I do not like it either—but there was a case where the guy was right on the money. No sham, no phoniness, no little folding of his fingers. He just laid it on the table. "This is what I am. I need to be saved. You said you would save me. Please save me." Honesty always works when it comes with God.

That is the Romans Road. That is God's simple plan of salvation that is made possible that we as unsaved men and women who are vile, who are filthy, who are absolutely ungodly, could be

reconciled to the Holy God through the blood of Christ. There is no other way to get there. John 14:6 says:

John 14:6

Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

You have to go through Him.

SEC: The Ongoing Struggle: Flesh vs. Spirit

Once you get saved, I try to get you to understand, and this is what we try to do. When somebody comes in and we have some issues we have got to deal with in our life, 99% of the time what they have got to do is get to see themselves as God sees them. Many times people come in and the world beat them up. Many times they beat themselves up. Many times they are beat up emotionally, physically sometimes. They are beat up spiritually. They have been in bad relationships and been abused, maybe not physically, sometimes, yes, but certainly emotionally. They come to the place of their life when they come in. I mean, they may be walking 5'5" or 7'6" or 6'5", but in reality they are only about an inch off the ground.

Now how do you deal with that? How do you get somebody that comes in, saved or lost? If they are lost, you have got to show them that the way that they can get out of the problems they are in is to get saved. If they are already saved, you have got to come to the point where you get them to see themselves as they really are. That, my friend, is a critical balance in all of our lives as Christians. The reality of who I am, but the reality of who I am in Christ.

That is why many times you will find that some of you have probably been through this. A couple of years ago I did a series that I did not know was going to develop into what it did, but I taught you a thing called the Seven Things That Changed About You The Day You Got Saved. I went through and showed you that the seven things, the moment you got saved, seven things are now different about you than were before the moment you got saved. For you to have the confidence that you need to have as a Christian and to be what God wants you to be, you have to understand those seven things that changed about you the day that you got saved. If you do not grasp it, if you do not get it, your emotions, or the devil, or somebody will manipulate you and push your buttons and drive you nuts. It will be everybody except the one that needs to push your buttons, and that is God. We all let things, people, influences drive us emotionally, drive us and push us. A sad character that is the fact that the only one that should do that after we are saved is the Holy Spirit of God.

We just finished the book of Ruth. Four little chapters, was not it? But I will tell you something, I have never seen the impact of a book. For those of you that do not know, we are coming through about every two months one book of the Bible, completely ripping it apart, detailing it out, laying it all out. I guess I could honestly say for those of you that were part of this one, you realize now what Ruth is. A little book that just laid everybody bare. A little book that shows you that you have to have four aspects of understanding in your relationship with God. A book, and most of you, I do not think, anytime we taught it, there was a dry eye in the place. You only had

to go through it once. I had to teach it three times. It kicked me six ways from Sunday because it showed me this balance. It showed me that if I am going to have the proper relationship with God that I want to have, if I am going to have that intimacy with Him in understanding and have that balance in my life, then I have to see, and I showed you how each chapter—Ruth 1, Ruth 2, Ruth 3, Ruth 4—each chapter focused on another aspect of me and God. It was not like a book that brings you through like the life of Abraham and shows you thing by thing by thing and how it unfolds. No, no, it was four complete different concepts that showed about me and my relationship with God.

I showed you in Ruth 1 how God saw you before you were saved. What a powerful concept. I showed you in Ruth 2 that even though God saw you and you still were unsaved, how God came and found you. Then I showed you how God called you. Then I showed you in Ruth 4 how God redeemed you. Do you know what that book does? I told you many, many times. In fact, I told you in that lesson study that what you do in the Bible and understanding the Bible is you realize that all the Old Testament is all made up as stories. You have story after story after story after story in the Old Testament. When you get to the New Testament, from Acts, maybe Acts 19 on, there are no more stories. It is all principles. What you need to learn to do as a child of God is line the stories up with the New Testament principles to get the full weight of what is being done.

If you want to understand your relationship with Christ and you want to have a balance in your life that you understand how you got God's righteousness, then you take the New Testament principles in the New Testament and go back to take the story of Ruth 1 and find out how God saw you when you were unlovable. Then you find out how God, even when you were unlovable, how He found you. What He saw inside. The reason what He saw in you that He did not see in somebody else, why you got saved and somebody else did not. Call on Ruth. How God called you. Finally, He takes the concept and shows you the inside of how God redeemed me. Me getting God's righteousness. Someone who never deserved it, never could deserve it, never would deserve it.

I showed you about five areas of our relationship with Christ as you come through there. You talk about proper washing. You talk about proper anointing. You talk about proper arraignment. These are all things Ruth did when she went to go be with Boaz. Proper position. But I think the most important one was proper perspective. Because in that great book there, around Ruth 3 and Ruth 4, Ruth 3, he says to her the same thing that God said to Jacob. He asks, "Who are you?" She says, "I am Ruth." Do you know who Ruth was, do not you? She was a Moabitess. A Moabitess was the enemy of God. A Moabitess was a race of people that came out of the ancestral relationship with Lot and his daughters in a cave back there in Genesis 19.

"Who are you?" You have got to know first of all who you are. Who am I? I am a sinner. I am rotten. I am vile. The depravity of God did not stop in my life the day I got saved. I still struggle with things in my life. I still go through the thing. Before I was saved, we talked about this a couple of weeks ago when I talked about spiritual circumcision, the process by which God separates your flesh from your soul, how God can then after you get saved by looking through the blood of Christ, He seals part of you, then He fellowships because He seals your soul away from the ungodliness of your flesh. But your flesh never changes.

I want to say to you this morning, when you gave yourself to God, when you got saved, your soul got saved, your flesh did not. You are still the same old, vile person in your flesh as you were before you got saved. When you go to heaven, your soul is going. Your flesh is not going. Your flesh reaped corruption. It was born in corruption and it is going to reap corruption. When you die right now, if you would, your soul would go gloriously to be with the Lord. They would put your body down in a morgue over here. They would shoot you full of formaldehyde. They try to keep this thing from rotting so people can look at you one more time and they are going to put you down in the ground. Ten years from now, you are worm food. Pick you up, open you up and, what a mess. Do you know why? Because that is where we are. Just a gobbledygoop of worm food.

Most people cannot grasp that. They certainly do not like that. Who likes to be told they are worm food? I mean, you look, go through the TV, and Miss America pageant, and all the things out there, and everybody likes to have the half-nude pictures of all the girls up. I mean, I can just see as Bert used to sing, Bert used to sing, "When she walks around, here she comes, Miss America." I always wish as she straddled across that stage, he would just sing, "Here she comes, Miss Maggot food." See, that is the difference between God's perspective on things and our perspective on things. What you love about this world, the worms are going to eat. What I love about this world is where it is eternal.

I told you, when you got spiritually circumcised, it separated you out. It put you apart. It made you a new creature in Christ Jesus. All things are passed away. All things become new. Now you have the ability to have a relationship with God. But oh, my friend, you still have the old flesh to deal with. Romans 7:18 says:

Romans 7:18

For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.

Do you want the simple aspect of it? When you got saved, I told you before, before you got saved, you were stuck to your flesh. This flesh is dead. It is like being in a dead person. It stinks. It smells. It is absolutely worthless. It complains. It whimpers. It gets its feelings hurt. When you got saved, God separated you from that flesh. Where before you were saved, you were stuck to a dead corpse. After you are saved, you might be set free from being to it, but you are still stuck with it. Now I have got to walk him around. I do not like you. Hey, fall down. I do not care. You are not stuck to it anymore. But bless God, we are still stuck with it. It is going to be the number one, and nothing changed about your flesh. That is why I am talking about perspective. You have got to see yourself in two lights to understand this concept. You have got to see yourself as the flesh, as vile and filthy and against everything that God is. And then you have got to understand who you are in Christ. But the perspective, my friend, is the core value that you have to have of yourself. Not forgetting who I really am and where I came from.

I do not know about you. One of my favorite passages in the Bible is found in Psalms 40. It simply says this. It is only three verses. It is a great passage to memorize about your perspective.

Psalms 40:1-3

I waited patiently for the LORD; and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry.

He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings.

And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God: many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the LORD.

Do you know what? I thank God for what He did in my life. I thank God for the fact that He saved me. I thank God He turned me around. But you know what I do not want to ever forget? I do not dwell on it. I do not go back and enjoy it. But I always thank God and keep my perspective of the pit where God dug me from. You never forget. It keeps you from being so judgmental with other people. It keeps you from looking at other people and getting so high and mighty because you keep your perspective. Yeah, we are saved, we are going to heaven. But my, where the place God found me. In a miry pit. In a horrible pit. Stuck down where I could not move out of a miry clay. God pulled me up and set my feet upon a rock.

Two perspectives we have got to have. My Bible is in John 8:44, a great passage. You all know it. It simply says:

John 8:44

Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.

And because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not.

Hey, you and I before we were saved, your family name was Devil. Instead of Mr. and Mrs. Alexander, it was Mr. and Mrs. Devil. You were born into this world as a filthy sinner. The Bible says, "You are of your father the devil and the lusts of your father you shall do." We did what we did.

I do not know if you ever notice this. Look at Romans 3 again. "You are of your father the devil and the lusts of your father you will do." Do you know what Romans 3 is? It is an indictment on every unsaved man and woman on planet earth. But look at it closely. This is what I am talking about when you get a little spirituality under your belt. You start to learn how to use your Bible. You start to see something. You start to follow through with it. Look at Romans 3:10, 11 and 12. Remember I just told you in John 8:44, "You are of your father the devil and the lusts of your father you will do." Watch this. Romans 3:10, 11 and 12. You know what that is? You say it. Yeah, it is Romans 3:10, 11 and 12. You know it is a quotation from Psalms 14:1-3 and Psalms 53:1-3. Look at Romans 3:13. That is a quotation from Psalms 5:9. Look at Romans 3:14. That is Psalms 10:7. Look at Romans 3:15, 16 and 17. That is Isaiah 59:7-8. Look at Romans 3:18. That is Psalms 36:1.

All those passages in Romans 3 are quotes from the Old Testament. Every one of them, when you go back to the Old Testament passage, is talking about the man of sin, the devil. When he wants to describe you and me before we were saved, he goes, he says, "You are of your father the devil," and in Romans 3 when he wants to talk about the depravity of man, he goes back to the Old Testament and hand-picks the verses that tell you about the man of sin, the devil, and then puts them in Romans 3 to say that is what we are. We are of our father the devil.

Now I want to tell you something, after salvation, you have the power to change that flesh where before you got saved you did not. An unsaved man, unsaved woman does not have the power to change one thing in their life. They may think they do. But at the end of the day, I have known alcoholics that were in Alcoholics Anonymous for 35, 40 years. Had not drank in 35 years because the program helped them and they would say to their people when they go to those meetings, "I am a recovering alcoholic but I have been free from alcohol for 35 years," and everybody would applaud. When he died, he went straight to hell. What was the point? Did he change anything? He did not change anything. Taking changes in your life that do not affect your eternal destiny is absolutely worthless as an unsaved person. Cleaning yourself up so you look good so when you go to hell you go in a three-piece suit rather than a pair of underwear. It does not really accomplish much. The flames burn the clothes off so fast that those clothes, if it is a \$500 suit or a \$10,000 suit, are filthy rags in the eyes of God.

But after salvation, it is all different, you see. You have the power now. You have the ability to change that flesh. You have the ability to do what you could not do before. I have been in the ministry almost 40 years and I have only found one thing a saved person cannot do that an unsaved person can do. As a saved person, you can do everything a lost person can do except one thing, and that is go to hell. But I am telling you, in 40 years of my ministry, I have seen saved people and unsaved people do the exact same things. This idea that once I get saved, unless you understand the concept between your flesh and your new man, and you understand the depravity and your balance you have got to have and your perspective, that is why so many of God's people fall right, even though they are saved and on their way to heaven, fall right into the filth of Romans 3 even after they are saved. What a disgrace that is.

You come down through Romans 3 and it talks about the filthy tongue or the filthy lips and the filthy sepulchre being like a sepulchre. Have you ever heard an unsaved man talk? You are lying on an unsaved man who uses "God damn" and "Jesus Christ" and "hell" and all those places. Do you know why? Now let me show you the philosophy behind that. Do you know why he does that? Because he is of his father the devil and the lusts of his father he will do. All through the whole history of the Bible, the devil has one thing, and that is to try to stop and damn the program of God. So his children, "You are of your father the devil," do the same thing their father does.

Do you know why I do not speak that way anymore? Do you know why I do not talk that way anymore? Do you know why the first thing that happened to me when I got saved was I washed my mouth and cleaned it up? I am not saying I walked out the next day and it was all done. But brother, I made it a process that I did not fall back into it. Do you know why? Because I did not want to talk like an unsaved man anymore. That is why. Do you know why an unsaved man talks

that way? Because that is where he is going. Do you know what an unsaved man says in hell? "God damn, God damn, God damn, God damn. Why hast thou forsaken me? I thirst. Jesus Christ, get me out of here." That is what an unsaved man says in hell. Do you know what I say? "Praise the Lord. Praise God. Oh, blessings flow."

Somebody came out last night when I got whacked on the leg and he said, "I heard your cuss," and I thought to myself, "Not me, you didn't." I did not say anything, but if I would have thought about it, I would have said, "Bless God, glory to God, I am going to hop up there and preach tomorrow." Do you know why? Because that is what a saved person talks like. When you get off as a saved person talking like an unsaved person, what is wrong with you? What is the matter with you? You go out there to the unsaved world, they are supposed to see a difference. Do you know how they do not see the difference? By what you say, by how you talk. Too many of God's people walk out there and say, "Well, I go to Old Path Baptist Church," or "I go here where I am saved," and then they cuss and talk like a godless pervert. Then they walk around saying, "Wow, I wonder why I do not have the power of God in my life." Because you are an idiot. You are a saved person talking like an unsaved person. What can I tell you? You ought to be ashamed of yourself.

He will come down in there and he talks about fornication, adultery, murder. Oh, I know. No, we would never think about that. No, no, no, no, no. We will just go in our own privacy of our own room, put it on TV. We will just watch *Sex and the City* and we will just vicariously experience it without ever doing it. Do not tell me where it is at. We went out to the movie theater the other night and we never got into the thing. I saw her. I did not tell anybody. I saw her and I thought to myself, "This is the last person I want to talk to." So I just got in and she saw Barb and she saw the kids and she ran over there and she says, "Oh," she says, "Are you here to the movies?" "No, we are in a theater because we were going to buy a car. And we thought maybe if we did not have to buy one, we could just steal one when everybody goes." "Yes, we are going to the movies." This woman is a Christian, saved woman, nice gal. She says, "Oh, I am going to see *Sex and the City*. I cannot wait. Are you going to see *Sex and the City*?" I said, "No, no." At that point, I wanted to say, "No, we just were going home." I did not want anybody to think. We walked around the corner and the line was all the way out the door. She says, "Oh, it is our latest night out. All my daughters are coming." I am thinking to myself, "That is what is wrong with Christianity."

Would that woman step out on her husband and commit adultery? Probably not. Would she? No, she probably would. But you know what we all like to do? We all take our mind places. No, we sit down there and we watch it and we just vicariously experience somebody else doing it. I am telling you, folks, you wonder why Christianity has got no power in it? It talks about, I looked at the, I looked at the, this, I love, I love every time it comes out to election year. Watching this stuff between Hillary and Obama, I just love it. There is more lying. I never, people are so stupid. They have, he has said he is terrible. He is rotten. He does not do this. He says she is ugly. She is married to Bill. She does this and like that. It is backbiting and hatred. I mean, you can see she still has not said, "I am out." She said, "I am suspended." We had a suspender, some plate, never mind. I do not even get into that. She says, and they, and they backbite and they, they, they lie

and they pick up every piece of dirt, whether it is true or not. They just keep putting it out because, "I want to win." "No, you want to win." "No, I want to win." Then when she does not win, she gets up there and says, "I think Barack Obama is one of the finest men I have ever met in my life." The whole American public is out there saying, "Oh yeah, yeah." She lied one place or the other. She is not a good person. She is a good person. She lied one place or the other, either he is or he is not, but he is not both.

Then I look at that and I think to myself, "Wait till this fall when the Democrats and the Republicans, if they are killing each other in the same party, wait till they get into the fall with the public and the version of Democrats." But then I think to myself, "What is the point?" Churches are the same way. Do you think there is any real difference between most Baptist churches than the Democrats and Republicans? Well, they cut each other's legs out from under them all the time. They lie about people. They spread rumors about people. They talk about people. They hurt people. They tell people you cannot do this or you cannot do that or watch this woman or watch that guy. It goes on and on. It is no different. That is what the world does. Yet that is what we do.

The total depravity of man does not end when you get saved. You may not be stuck to the flesh anymore, but you are stuck with it. I have never understood this. I do not understand this. Do you know the only people in the Bible who breathe in and breathe out smoke are people in hell? The only people in all the history of the world who breathe in smoke and breathe out smoke are people who are in hell where it is burning and they breathe in the smoke and they breathe it out. What in the world is wrong with God's people who are saved and on the way to heaven that want to walk around imitating somebody in hell by how they talk, why they dress, what they do, where they go, and then to top it off by what they breathe in and exhale that only a man in hell does? Amen, Brother Bob. Amen. You will not do it. I will do it myself. I do not care. The minute I am getting worried, I am going to start smelling fingers here. That is what my mom used to do. But I learned how to wear gloves.

What is wrong with us? Do you know what is wrong with us? I will tell you what is wrong with us. We are saved and we are on our way to heaven and we have been separated and we have separated from our flesh, but we want to let it control us. We still talk like an unsaved person. We still do the things an unsaved person does. We still, in everything on the outward extremities, it is all like, "Hey, there is no difference for me than the world." That is why you do not win anybody to Christ. That is why you do not have any impact in anybody's life. That is why your kids look at you and laugh. That is why people that you work with do not have any credibility in it. You say you are a Christian, but you talk, you act, you look like the world.

Can I tell you? I know this is hard for God's people today. If you ever get into ministry, do you know what your number one issue is going to be? It is the number one thing I deal with every time I teach, preach, or get anywhere with a group of people with a Bible. Do you know what it is? It is a constant thing. It is nothing you do. It is what you are up against. Your job as a pastor is to preach a negative message to a world that will not stand negativism, that only wants to be positive. As a preacher of the Word of God, there is not too much positive about this world outside of God, the Word of God. That is your problem.

Somebody said, "Well, I am going to go to another church because he is not very positive." Let me tell you what I am positive about. I am positive that we are godless, rotten, and without hope, without God. That is pretty positive, is not it? I am positive of that. We like to pretend. Do not ever forget, the land that we live in cares more about the rights of people than it does the rights of God. I heard a guy on the radio a couple weeks ago, I was driving in, and he was one of these liberal, mishmash guys, Twinkie Pie, fruitcake guys preaching the Bible. He is up there and he is saying, "I just do not understand. I just do not understand how anybody could think a loving God could ever stand the concept of putting a man into a place like some of these people say, burning in hell." Wrong perspective.

Do you know what my perspective is? I do not understand how God could ever take anybody to heaven. I do not have a problem with the hell concept. We all deserve that. The doctrine of the depravity of man, and the man's at. My problem is, how in the world could a holy God want anything to do with a person like me? Through the blood of Christ. But you cannot ever forget the depravity of man. You cannot ever forget that even though you and I are now saved, you and I have to struggle every day with the flesh that we have. Oh, I am not stuck to it anymore. Bless God, I am still stuck with it. The only way you can overcome it is to begin to take the principles of the Word of God, learn the Bible, get everything you can, get everything in there and change and see who you really are. Yes, you still are a sinner. Never lose that perspective. But you are a new creature in Christ Jesus.

I heard a great preacher tell a story one time, and it is so true. He preached on the street and he had a rough day. People throwing eggs at him, tomatoes, bricks, people driving by and cussing him out, threatening. One guy pulled a knife on him. So he goes home that afternoon after preaching out there about getting himself killed. He is thanking the Lord for protecting him. He said, "You know what, in that split second, I looked up in the mirror and I saw myself and I said to myself, 'You know what? There are not many men that would do what I did today for you, God.'" He said, "At that moment, everything that I did do for God just went out the window." Let me tell you something. Even when we do manage to do something right for God, this old flesh steps in and robs God of the glory we take and put on ourselves. "Oh, look at me. Look at me. Look what I did." Yes. We are more concerned about what the person sitting next to you thinks about what you are than what God does. That is our biggest problem. That is our biggest problem. The "look at me" Christians. "Oh, yeah. Look at me. Look at what I can do."

Then you have the other side. You do not win either way. You do not win. Your flesh is going to give you problems one way or the other. You get the people out there that walk around and you do things to be seen like Martha. She is over there working busily and she keeps looking around the corner. "Anybody see? Hey, see what I am doing over here?" "Oh, Martha. Oh, yeah. Oh, yes. Look at this. Oh, look at this. Yeah. Look at me. I got all this done." "Oh, Martha. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah." Mary, she got down. She got the proper position. She is just down at His feet. A lot of Christians are like Martha. They do things to be seen. Then you have the other side of Christians that they see that and they say, "Oh, yeah. Yes. Yeah. Well," and they become, they look at that and they see it and they become, you know, they become self-righteous. They say, "Well, I would not do that. Oh, not me. Well, I got a real relationship with God. Oh, I would not

do that." You know what? You are both wrong and you both robbed God of the glory. You just did it by two different avenues.

Being a Christian is a tough thing, folks. It is a balance. It is a balance. That old flesh, after salvation, will rob God, cheat God, lie to God, deny God in a New York second, man. It will take, you know, God will use you and me to do something. And boy, you will just throw it all away because you stand up there and say or think to yourself, "Wow, look what I did." It is tough. It is tough. We take God's glory in things all the time.

An old Methodist preacher, I know a Methodist bishop one time named Bradley, said, I have never forgotten this quote. He says, "When I pray, I sin. When I preach, I sin. My very repentance needs repented of. And my tears of repentance need to be washed in the blood of Christ." Now, that is it, brother. That is where we are at. There is nothing good that we do. You have got to keep that perspective. You have always got to see yourself who it is. Now, if you do not get the right perspective, do you see how it gets out of balance? You will walk out of here saying, "Well, Bob said, I am no good. So I guess I am no good. I guess there is no me." That is not what I am saying. You need to understand who you are in Christ Jesus and never forget the pit from where He dug you.

Do you know what helps you to forgive people? Do you know what helps you to deal with people and love people who sometimes are very unlovable? Do you know what helps you get that? It is just remembering where you looked like the day God found you. I know preachers that they will not let a certain group of people come into their church. They do not dress right. Do not give enough. Do not do this. Do not do that. Do you know what they have forgotten? Oh, they are big time now. They would not spend 15 minutes talking with somebody. But they will talk to Joe and Joe over here who is going to bring you down on his yacht, down the Lake of the Ozarks next week, going to go down there. Oh, yeah, so and so is going to drop a big bunch of money on a new building project. That is who I will spend time with. But are the little guy out there that just struggles every day? No, no, no. Do you know what the problem is? They forgot where they were and what they looked like when God, hey, the first time God saw you, you were not driving a Cadillac. You were not driving with a three-piece suit. You were not up there and had all the things you wanted. The first time God saw you, you were as wretched and vile as you could ever be. The truth of the matter is you still are. You just think because you have got more money now. You have got bigger cars. You have got a big house. Everybody cuts your grass, changes your light bulb, fixes your sewer, fixes your busted toilet. That you are somebody. We are nobody. None of us are. You get to that point in your life that you think you have arrived and you think you do not have to do this or you do not have to do that. Just look back and remember. That is what I am talking about perspective. Just look back and remember the first time God laid eyes on you. What me and you are supposed to look like.

It is hard for me, if not impossible for me, to hate anybody. There are people maybe I do not care for. People I do not like. People I do not want to be around. But there is nobody in the world that I can think of at this point in my life or any maybe in the last since I have been saved that I actually say I hate that person. Do you know why? How can I as a Christian hate somebody when I was the vilest thing when God saw me and in spite of that God stooped to love me

enough to send His Son so He could look through His blood to get me in. Now how do I, how do I hate somebody, deny somebody, not talk to somebody, not be nice to somebody even if I do not like him. God was nice to me even when He did not like me. "When I was yet without strength, when I was yet in my sins, Christ died for the ungodly." That is our flesh after salvation.

SEC: Crucifying the Flesh and Living by Faith

Do you know the answer to it? It is real simple. Galatians 2:20 is probably one of those great verses in the book of Galatians that you all had to memorize. It is a great verse and it really tells you the answer to our predicament this morning because this is an introduction to the depravity of man. There is no use going into the doctrine of depravity of man and have you thinking I am talking about anybody else than us. When we get into Romans 1, I can make it the Gentiles and we all feel good. When we get into Romans 2, I can make it the Jews and we still feel good. When we get into Romans 3, it is us folks. This depravity of man, it is not some funny out here we are going to make a figment of our imagination, "Oh yeah, them." It is everybody in this room. Everybody.

Now how did you get God's righteousness? You got God's righteousness because God sent His Son down and put Him on a cross. On that cross He was crucified. Most people think that the crucifixion is something that took place one time in history. For your sin and for my sin it did. Two thousand some years ago on Golgotha's hill, the Lord Jesus Christ laid down His life on the cross that God might have the wherewithal to look through His blood and to allow you and me into His fellowship and in time into His presence when we accepted that sacrifice that eradicated our sin. Then God fixed it that He separated us out. He sealed us. He sealed the part of me that is spiritually eternal. He left the old part of me down here that is going to go back to the worms. My life is now my battle, my struggle, your battle, your struggle is the back and forth with that.

You know what? You take two people, put them on a chair, make one the old nature, one the new nature, give them name tags. For the next year, we feed this one over here and take care of them, give them everything you need to take care of him, feeding, give him the best food and everything. Over here, this one here, we do nothing, give him nothing. You know what happens? It will not even take a year. In three months this guy will be fine, this guy will be dead. You know what? It all depends on which one you are going to feed, ladies and gentlemen. You are either going to feed the old nature or the new nature. You feed the new nature and in time the old nature will die out, or it will be there and it will always raise its ugly head, but you will control it, it will not control you. That is the problem we have right now, our flesh is controlling us. Yeah, you are saved, you are on your way to heaven, but the depravity of man has understanding the fact that there are two concepts, that issues a perspective. You have got, if your flesh is controlling you, you have got to deal with whatever it is that is controlling you and get it out of your life.

How do you do that? Well, one of the ways you do it is by feeding the new man, not the old man. That is why every time I have somebody come in, I say, "You know what, be at church tonight, Bible study. I will put some people working with you. Be on Sunday morning. Come out and for softball." I do not play softball. I do not care whether you play softball or not. You know what? It

is better that you are with God's people who love God where the Holy Spirit is, than you are out running around someplace where you are going to get into trouble. You know what? That is the thing, you have got to change your lifestyle. You have got to change the way you look at it. You have got to change the places you go. You have got to change the way you think. You cannot do that on your own. Your flesh has still got control, but you can break it if you feed the new man and starve out the old man.

Now how you got God's righteousness was He got crucified for you. Now how do you keep that? You crucify yourself. Look at Galatians 2:20-21. It will explain it.

Galatians 2:20-21

I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.

Do you see that thing? Look at verse 21. That is what you and I do all the time. I guarantee you the biggest part of my day is found in the last part of that verse, and I know it is true of you because it is true of me, and you are no better than I am and I am no better than you. Do you know what we do most of our day? We just go around frustrating the grace of God. Do you know what that means? I mean, God saved you to do something through you, and you keep screwing it up because you just will not get out of the flesh and get in the spirit, and the grace of God is frustrated because He wants to do something and you keep frustrating God's plan. No wonder you have got emotional issues, no wonder you have got physical issues, no wonder you have got all the problems you have got. You have grieved the Holy Spirit for so long.

Most of you people, I liken to you like this: you are in jail. You are in jail for something that you did not necessarily do, but the circumstances put you in jail. Do you know what I want to do? I want to come bust you out. I cannot use a key because your flesh has got the key locked up. All I can do is break out the back window, hook up to my car, pull out the back bars and get you out. Then you know what happens when I bust you out of jail? We are on the run for the rest of our lives. It is a tough job. We cannot ever go back, cannot ever do the old friends. They will all squeal on us. The only thing we can do after we bust you out of jail is to stay on the run. Just keep running. Hey, cannot go back to your own home, they will get you there. You cannot go do this, cannot go do that, cannot go back to your old friends, they will tell you, they will come pick you up again. No, no, I busted you out. We have got to stay on the run. We keep going, keep running. In that, you will never frustrate the grace of God again in your life. You keep running from it.

Do you know what Paul told Timothy? He said, "Flee youthful lusts." Do you know what Joseph did with Potiphar's wife? He ran. When I bust you out of jail, do not stick around and say, "I am going out with a mighty job, I think I will just wait here and get breakfast and I do not leave." No. When I broke down the back wall, get out, and this, we are on the run and we are going and

everybody is going to put you back in that jail again. Frustrating the grace of God. "I am crucified with Christ. Nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." See, it is not you. It is Christ living in you. "And the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." Every day you have got to crucify yourself. Every day you start out saying, "God, I am set free. I am not part of this. I am going to, I am on the run. I am not going back. I am not going to do it. I am not going to think about it. I am going to take out the thoughts that I want to think and I am going to put the principles of the Word of God in." That is why so many of you when we started work, when you gave you those little three by five cards, those were your hacksaw blades to get you out of jail, keep you out. Every time you struggled with something, you took out that card, you replaced the thought in your mind that was no good with a principle of God that was good. That is how it works. You have got to crucify yourself every day. The flesh is a prison. It wants to hold you in its bars and never let you go. I can bust you out but you have got to stay on the run. Cannot ever come back.

I look at this thing from a pragmatic standpoint. I understand why the Roman Catholic monks back in the Dark Ages and even today, I understand why they did what they did. I mean it was wrong but I understand it. I understand the concept of a monastery. I understand the concept of being a monk, locking yourself up and staying completely isolated from the world so you can get closer to God. I understand that concept. Now it is the wrong concept and it will not work. But I understand why men get that mindset that if I can lock myself away from the world, being in a place where I do not ever see the outside, all I see is four gray walls. They even some of them went so far that they took a vow of silence because they knew Romans 3 said that their speech was contemptible. They never spoke. Someone went into that monastery when they were 20 years old, died when they were 80 and never spoke a word in all those years. Do you know why? Because they were trying to get closer to God. They isolated themselves. They took a silence vow that they would not speak so they would not corrupt God and they just walk around all day long looking at things and going through things and doing things so they can get closer to God, so they can find God, as the term is today.

Now the problem with that is real simple because it is not you locking yourself away or the world that is the problem. It is your flesh that is the problem. We have churches that, you know, and you know how my standard is. I believe the woman should dress modestly. I mean I do. I have seen women that went to church and, you know, it was immodest as far as I am concerned. I do not ever say anything but that is it. I think a woman, I think a woman, if she dresses in the morning to go to church wherever she goes, if she dresses to please the Lord, whatever she has on is going to be right. If she dresses to please somebody else, then you are going to have some issues. But that is my deal. But there are churches out there that want to, they want to take control of that. So they say that the woman cannot wear slacks. And it is a, you know, and they try to get around human nature. You cannot get around human nature.

If I would say to you ladies—and I would rather preach at your heart and the guys too—and I would rather tell you and preach at you with your heart and say, "You know what, when you come to church this morning or wherever we go, you dress to please God," and then I do not have to worry about it. But I cannot legislate to you your spirituality. If I put a big sign up here,

"All right, next week all the women have to wear dresses so we can be godly." You know what? Some of you ladies would go out, you would buy one so tight it would look like a skin diver suit. So then I have got to put an underneath that, and they have got to be dresses and they have got to be loose. So then the next week you have got one and somebody shows up it is so thin a mosquito can fly through without breaking his wings. So then you have got to get up here, "All women have to wear dresses and they have to be loose and now they have to be thick." How stupid it is. Hey, let me tell you something, if I put up here, "All women next week have to wear suits of armor so no man will lust." And all the men are thinking, "Well, I got the greatest can opener in the world right here." It is not about that folks, it is about what is in here. It is about what is real in here. That is what it is about.

I am telling you, it is not the problem, the problem is not the world, the problem is your flesh. Locking yourself up in a cave does not fix that problem. The key is not one of isolation, the key is one of insulation, getting it in your life where it insulates you from the things out there in the world because you love God more than you love anything that is out there. You do not talk like him, you do not, you do not drink like him, you do not smoke like him, you know, you do everything that God does, you put the unsaved man aside and in pretty short order, you know what will happen? Honest to God, this will happen. You know what will happen if you will just start, stop talking like the world, stop acting like the world, stop being like the world? You know what will happen? It will happen just like that, suddenly you will stop thinking like the world, you will start thinking like Him. That is the key. That is the key. That is what I am after. I am not after your wallet. I am not after your, I am after your heart. I am after your heart because that is what it takes to have the right kind of relationship with God.

Perspective, the depravity of man, understanding how God sees us as sinners, but at the same time, I understand it. I understand it. I see me in Christ and my struggle in the flesh between the two, balancing it out, keeping my perspective, the fact that I never forget where I was dug from and how filthy this flesh is. It never lets me. I meet people at a time and they say, "Well, I have been burned by a lot of people," and I have met people say, "Well, I like your church but I just got to take a little time because I have been burned by so many pastors and, you know what, I just do not trust any pastors or anybody." I understand that, I really do, and I do not ever ask you to trust me. Obviously, let me earn my trust. If I do not, I understand that. But let me just put something in there. I understand that and I understand that and I find that, you know, you will find in time that that is basically not true, there are a lot of people out there loving. But let me tell you one person in your life that I guarantee you cannot ever trust, it is yourself. It is you. If there is one person in my life I know I cannot trust, I know I cannot trust Bob Alexander, pastor, as far as I can throw him. That is why I have got to crucify myself every day. You have to crucify yourself every day. You have to come to that point in your life where you realize, I look at things, you know, Romans 13:14 says:

Romans 13:14

But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.

That is why I am saying, whatever you feed, the new man or the old man is going to run you.

1 Corinthians 1:29

That no flesh should glory in his presence.

That is what it is, folks. So you see, when we get into Romans 3, we have now entered into the great doctrine of the depravity of man. Before we got into this chapter, we needed to see in this detail, this is talking about us. If you want to get the victory in your life over the things that we struggle with and you struggle with, I am going to tell you how to do it. First of all, understand who you are and never underestimate your ability to do wrong toward God. I am telling you what, that old flesh is so, it is like water. It will seek whatever level, it will creep in under the tightest door, it will get in through the smallest crack, and if it cannot get you to go out and do something against God that will ruin your testimony, it will get you to think the wrong thing, say the wrong thing, or get the wrong attitude, but it is never, never, never, never at rest, and the only way you can do it is to crucify it, crucify it, every day of your life, and then fill your new nature with the principles of the Word of God that you will never stop it, but you can control it.

Every head bowed and every eye closed. The depravity of man.