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Sermon Notes

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Consider Yourself Dead and Alive

Romans 6:5-11

I. The Power of Positive Thinking?

A. Norman Vincent Peale, Power of Positive Thinking; translated into 15 languages, 7 million sold

Review on Amazon.com

When I first read the first few pages of this book, my instant reaction was that this was bunk!. All this talk about "God" and "Christianity", really made me uncomfortable because I am Buddhist and not a Christian. However, after giving this book a thorough read, I have come to the conclusion that the principles in this book could be applied to virtually any religion - and not just Christianity. It has even helped improve the understanding of my own religion, by relating the parables and paraphrases found in this book!. And even if you're not a religious man - that's okay too!. The principles and the success tips in this book are guaranteed to help improve your life! No matter what it is you're doing!

The reason why I like this success book so much, is because it helps an average man develop a sense of spiritualness if he wants to. Faith, in my opinion, provides greater motivation than all motivational books combined. As Sir John Templeton said: "If we have not developed a reservoir of spiritual wealth, no amount of money is likely to make us happy."

Religious or non-religious. If you really want a great motivational book that has the potential for a permanent life change for the better than I suggest you give this book an honest try.

Peale himself:

"There is a deep tendency in human nature ultimately to become precisely what you visualize yourself as being. If you see yourself as tense and nervous and frustrated, if that is your image of yourself, that assuredly is what you will be. If you see yourself as inferior in any way, and you hold that image in your conscious mind, it will presently by the process of intellectual osmosis sink into the unconscious, and you will be what you visualize.

"If, on the contrary, you see yourself as organized, controlled, studious, a thinker, a worker, believing in your talent and ability and yourself, over a period of time, that is what you will become.

"Now, you may believe that this is all theoretical. But I believe, and I've tested it out in so many cases that I'm sure of its validity, that if a person has a business and images that business at a certain level and fights off his doubts ... it will come out that way--all because of the power of the positive image"

David Wells: "I find Paul appealing and Peale appalling."

B. Other Modern Versions

- Robert Schuller & the Crystal Cathedral
- Sales tactics
- "WOW" organization
- The power of positive thinking & golf, bowling, etc.
- Positive confession, "health and wealth"

At the root... you must believe in yourself and create your own reality

C. YET there is tremendous power in thinking properly about yourself

In over five chapters of heavy doctrine, Paul has yet to give the Roman Christians **one single command**. We are so quick to say, "What do you want me to do? What top ten things can I change to make things right with God?"

Up till now, it's just been a series of one statement of spiritual fact & reasoning after another:

"The gospel is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes..." (Romans 1:16)

"The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness" (Romans 1:18)

"You are storing up wrath against yourself for the day of God's wrath when His righteous judgment will be revealed. God will give to each person according to what he has done." (Romans 2:5)

"There is no one righteous; no, not one." (Romans 3:9)

"For all have sinned and lack the glory of God, and are justified freely by His grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus." (Romans 3:23-24)

"Abraham believed God and it was credited to him as righteousness." (Romans 4:3)

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

NO COMMANDS AT ALL!!!

He never commands the Romans to repent and believe the gospel... he never tells them to do anything. He just tells them what IS TRUE!!!

Now at last, Paul gives us his first command

Romans 6:11 In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus.

AMAZING!! Paul finally gives us a command... something we can sink our American practicality into, and it ends up being a command to think of ourselves a certain way!!

Understanding this command is the purpose of this morning's sermon!

II. Context in Romans

A. Unfolding the Gospel

- Universal sin
- Atonement through Christ's blood
- Total assurance
- Adam and Christ
- The unbreakable reign of Grace the King!!!

Romans 5:20 "Where sin increased, grace increased all the more."

B. Key Question: Why Not Sin, Then?

Romans 6:1 What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase?

1. We are getting the right message when we think this way!!
2. True gospel leads in some shocking directions
3. Total emphasis on God's grace in the face of incredible human wickedness
4. LET'S JUST SIN & SIN & SIN!!
5. Dietrich Bonhoeffer: "Cheap Grace"

Illus. Bonhoeffer's response: "Cheap grace"

C. Paul's Profound Answer: You Are Dead, You Are Alive

Romans 6:1-4 What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? ² By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? ³ Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? ⁴ We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.

1. Were united with Adam
 - a. united in sin
 - b. united in death
2. Now united with Christ
 - a. united in His death
 - b. united in His new life

Union with Christ means we are dead to sin and alive to God!!! The foundation of sanctification

III. One Verse: Power for Sanctification

vs. 5 "If we have been united with him like this in His death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection."

A. Full doctrine of Sanctification in one verse

1. First half expounded in verses 6-7... "united with Christ in his death"
2. Second half expounded in verses 8-10... "united also in his resurrection"

B. Absolute Certainty... "No 'If's' About It!!"

1. "If we have been united with him..." = "SINCE we have been united with him"
2. If we have not been united with Christ in His death , we are still in Adam
3. NOTE: verb tense = completed action in past

4. Verb = “we have become united”... MASSIVE CHANGE!! Not born united with Christ... we BECAME united the moment we believed the gospel

C. United = “Grown together”

1. Powerful image... planted and growing up together with Christ
2. A principle of life, of living growth
3. Same word used other places

Matthew 15:13 "Every plant that my heavenly Father has not planted will be pulled up by the roots."

Luke 8:8 Still other seed fell on good soil. It came up and yielded a crop, a hundred times more than was sown."

1 Corinthians 3:6 I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow.

4. Image is of burial in death

John 12:24 I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds.

Christ died on the cross, and we died with Him spiritually; He was buried in death, and we were buried with Him

This is NOT referring to water baptism, but to true Spirit baptism by which we are united with Christ eternally and spiritually

D. “Likeness of His Death”

1. NASB has it better

vs. 5 “For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death...”

2. Why “likeness”? Our death in Christ is not exactly like Christ’s
3. Christ the spotless lamb of God... only begotten, propitiation sacrifice
4. We merely united with Him by faith

E. Certainty of Resurrection

1. Future tense may be misleading

- a. not just future bodily resurrection
- b. that would vitiate Paul's whole argument here
- c. Paul's answering charge that says we can sin as much as we want IN THIS LIFE because someday we're going to be perfect in heaven
- d. if all Paul is speaking of is future resurrection, that plays right into adversaries' hands

2. It DOES include future bodily resurrection

Philippians 3:20-21 But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, ²¹ who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.

3. Real focus is present spiritual resurrection to walk in newness of life

vs. 4 "as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may walk in newness of life."

Living in sin is impossible for the Christian because death in Christ makes resurrection in Christ a certainty... and death and resurrection in Christ makes living in sin an impossibility

IV. United With Christ in His Death (vs. 6-7)

vs. 6 For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin

A. "Knowing this": the power of faith and the mind

- 1. Charles Hodge: "experiential knowledge"
- 2. NO, NO, NO... this cannot be experienced!!

Illus. Henry Blackaby, *Experiencing God*

Did Abraham experience anything when he heard God's promise, "So shall your offspring be?" Abraham considered that his body was a 99-year-old body, and it still felt like a 99 year-old body!! All his senses were against what God was telling him, but he believed it anyway!!

This is exactly like this! We KNOW something that cannot be proved by science, or five senses, or anything but mere faith

I AM DEAD WITH CHRIST!! My old identity in Adam is gone forever!!

B. The “Old Man” is Dead

1. Absolute statement... no question about it
2. Our old self in Adam died the moment we trusted Christ
3. We don't feel that death, we don't “experience” it... but it is true!!
4. Union with Christ crucified our “old man”

C. Meaning: Our Status as Identified in Adam

1. Romans 5: unite with Adam or United with Christ
2. Moment of faith... old man in Adam is DEAD FOREVER... crucified with Christ
3. New identity... new creation... new person in Christ

Illus. “Witness protection program”; An old identity destroyed forever, a new one created out of nowhere... old job, old history (education, family, relationships, address, telephone, Social Security number, etc.) all GONE FOREVER

2 Corinthians 5:17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!

Transferred to a whole new realm... a realm where sin has no mastery whatsoever over you!

You don't feel it, but it is true and to be taken by faith in God's word!!

D. Result: Gradual Destruction of Body of Sin

“so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin”

1. Must keep categories clear
 - a. “old man” in Adam is dead forever... don't need to keep killing him
 - b. “body of sin” must be destroyed day by day
 - c. muddled on this means muddled on how to be sanctified

2. What is “Body of Sin?”

- a. tied to physical body
- b. BUT NOT physical body itself
- c. Jesus had a real physical body, yet was without sin
- d. rather body as saturated in sin habits, in Adamic sin nature
- e. MAJOR theme in Paul’s writing

Romans 6:12-14 Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. ¹³ Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness.

Romans 7:23-24 but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members. ²⁴ What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?

Romans 8:10-13 But if Christ is in you, your body is dead because of sin, yet your spirit is alive because of righteousness. ¹¹ And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you. ¹² Therefore, brothers, we have an obligation--but it is not to the sinful nature, to live according to it. ¹³ For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live

Romans 8:23 Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.

“Body of sin” is the physical body as the seat of a powerfully influential sin nature... it is physical and spiritual... it involves your mind, and the various parts of your body

Your body has been well-trained in sin

We are all “black belt” experts in how to sin... the body has received its full training in habits and motions of sin; sinful thoughts, sinful yearnings, sinful habits

That is only broken gradually, step by step by applying the truth that you are dead to sin, no longer a slave to sin... now a slave to God

3. How is it “done away with?”

a. Greek = “rendered inert,” “destroyed,” “made impotent”

Illus. Immunization with inert viruses... viruses have been rendered powerless to hurt us

b. gradual destruction of “body of sin” is effect of death of “old man”

4. Ultimate result: FREEDOM FROM SIN

“that we should no longer be slaves to sin”

This CAN be experienced!! The gradual destruction of the body of sin resulting in freedom from the practice of sin

E. Restatement: Dead to Sin

vs. 7 “Because he who has died has been freed from sin.”

1. Dead people can’t sin

2. Statement of status

standard way of teaching sanctification

“This is what you are... now live like it!!!”

Illus.: Said to a 13 year-old who cries when scraping his knee: “Don’t be a baby” He’s clearly not a baby, so why should he act like it?

V. United with Him in His Resurrection (vs. 8-10)

vs. 8-10 Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. ⁹ For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him. ¹⁰ The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God.

A. Christ Not Left in Grave... Neither Are We!!

1. The Father could not leave Christ in the grave

2. Christ submitted to death for us

3. The Father raised Jesus from death... so He will certainly raise us too

4. Old Man in Adam gone forever... God gives us NEW IDENTITY in Christ

- a. new purpose
- b. new plans
- c. new power
- d. new work to do
- e. even a new name (we'll get that later in heaven)

B. New Life... Forever Free from Death

- 1. Death final symbol of the domain of sin
- 2. Death sin's ultimate end

Romans 6:23 "The wages of sin is death..."

James 1:15 Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.

- 3. "Death" stands for all the fearsome power of sin
- 4. Death can never again come to claim anything over Christ... Christ "holds the keys"

Revelation 1:17-18 When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. Then he placed his right hand on me and said: "Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last. ¹⁸ I am the Living One; I was dead, and behold I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades.

It's a matter of supreme authority... Christ submitted Himself to be dominated by death for us, that we might have eternal life. Death came to call, and Christ went meekly like a lamb to slaughter. BUT NEVER NEVER NEVER NEVER AGAIN!!! Death has no authority over Christ

And SIN HAS NO AUTHORITY OVER YOU!!

When sin comes to call on you, you have authority to say "Just as Christ is through with death, so I am through with sin!"

C. "Once for All"

This death and resurrection is NOT gradual, but instantaneous... you are forever dead to sin; forever walking in newness of life before God

D. Living for God

Christ is therefore living a life to God day after day... a new resurrection life; so must you

VI. Application: The Power of Right Thinking

vs. 11 In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus.

A. Think of yourself this way

1. Greek = “reckon” consider it to be so
2. Same concept as God “considering” you in Christ
3. Reckons Christ’s righteousness credited to your account
4. Consider yourself DEAD TO SIN

B. Practical applications

1. Habitual sin
2. Character traits
3. Temptation
4. Relationships
5. Fear of man