080725

1. My Notes … WWC message 8/9
2. Series: When Justice Meets Love
   * Title: From Condemnation to Commissioning
   * Text: Romans 8 part 1
   * Quote: Compassion will cure more sins than condemnation. Henry Ward Beecher (Social reformer, Speaker)
3. Introduction
   * In times of difficulty and distress, what comes to mind? I know that most people’s knee jerk reaction who be to say, “God,” but that is not what I’m looking for. I have those “go to” chapters in the Bible that I turn to when I need to deal with something, need a time of rest and refocus, or when I am just looking for inspiration and answers. Psalm 46, Isaiah 40, and Ephesians 4 are places where I find comfort and connection. There is another few that can be included this group, One of them we will talk about today. It fits with the idea of Justice and Love coming face to face.
   * As believers, we are called to emulate Jesus. That sounds more difficult than it is. It begins with simple steps. Learning to pray, reading (or listening) to Scripture, spending time in community. This is how it begins. Then it grows into other actions and attitudes – kindness and compassion (sounds good but can be a challenge), generosity (choosing to spend wisely so that you can give feely), serving (making a difference with the abilities that God has given you). It’s the beginning of a lifestyle that comes from understanding the message of love and grace that God sent us. Before you throw up that roadblock that Jesus was God, so He could easily do that … understand this – *“Now that we know what we have—Jesus, this great High Priest with ready access to God—let’s not let it slip through our fingers. We don’t have a priest who is out of touch with our reality. He’s been through weakness and testing, experienced it all—all but the sin. So let’s walk right up to him and get what he is so ready to give. Take the mercy, accept the help.”* **(Hebrews 4:15 MSG).** Understand that full scope of what this is telling us. Jesus came, He was born of a woman, making Him human. God could have chose to do it a different way, it was His choice – He is Creator, He is Giver. Jesus grew up and lived the same way that you and I did. He was hungry, He needed naps, He was misunderstood, He loved, the list could go on. The point is this – Jesus knew what it was to be human. Experience is a great teacher and gave us a way to relate to God, who knew what it meant to deal with everyday life. Let me reinforce this point by using the words of Apostle Paul. *“5 Adopt the same attitude as that of Christ Jesus, 6 who, existing in the form of God, did not consider equality with God as something to be exploited.*

*7 Instead he emptied himself by assuming the form of a servant, taking on the likeness of humanity. And when he had come as a man, 8 he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death—even to death on a cross.”* **(Philippians 2:5-8 CSB).**

* + I know many that walk into places (church, relationships, and more) carrying invisible weights… guilt we can’t shake, shame that has become part of everyday life, or fear … the fear of embarrassment and lack of acceptance or even greater the fear that we have gone too far to be able to receive God’s love and grace.

Today, we are going to look at one of the most liberating chapters in all of Scripture—Romans 8. It begins with “no condemnation” and ends with “no separation.” In between is a Spirit-led journey that redefines what it means to live under the justice of God and in the love of Christ.

Justice, in God’s economy, isn’t a hammer—it’s a foundation. And love isn’t a soft escape—it’s a fierce, unbreakable bond. Romans 8 doesn’t ask us to choose between justice and love—it shows us how they meet in Jesus and lift us into a life of freedom, purpose, and hope.

If you’ve ever felt stuck in your failures, unsure of your standing, or weary from trying to earn what’s already been given—allow the Lord to minister to you through these words. Because when justice is carried by Christ, love is unleashed in us.

1. No Condemnation
   * Most come to a recognition that they need when they are dealing feelings of hopelessness or brokenness. Understanding that we cannot get it right without help is the first step toward restoration. The mistakes, flaws, sins that we face can take one to a place of crying out for help. And when we begin to trust in the love of God, we come to a place where the grief can turn to hope.
   * **Romans 8:1-4 NLT**

*So now there is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ Jesus. 2 And because you belong to him, the power of the life-giving Spirit has freed you from the power of sin that leads to death. 3 The law of Moses was unable to save us because of the weakness of our sinful nature. So God did what the law could not do. He sent his own Son in a body like the bodies we sinners have. And in that body God declared an end to sin’s control over us by giving his Son as a sacrifice for our sins. 4 He did this so that the just requirement of the law would be fully satisfied for us, who no longer follow our sinful nature but instead follow the Spirit.*

* + Everyone wants the (free) gift of grace. And it is available because of the matchless love of God. We must come to understand what that does for us. Paul wrote this as an explanation for what he had come to understand in his present struggles. In the previous chapter (Romans 7), the Apostle talked about this battle. It’s a battle that he faced, that you and I face, it is a life struggle.
  + “Therefore” (So now there is …) we, as believers, as those who have chosen Jesus as Lord and Savior, are secure … forever. Our guilt, our shame, our embarrassment cannot separate us from the grace that was poured out on us. We are free to live in the confidence of God’s love and acceptance – not under the bondage of failure. We belong to the family of God. We have right standing with the Father.
  + Paul explains this by telling us that while rules and regulations only served to reinforce the truth that we were unable to do it on our own because of our sin nature, God made a way. He did it through Jesus Christ.
  + Sin required payment, it needed a sacrifice. This goes back to the beginning, to the Garden. Adam and Eve sinned; they succumbed to their selfish nature. That choice separated them from the perfection that God created. But even in their disobedience (that is what sin is) God showed mercy and grace. Genesis 3:21 tells us that God made them garment out of animal skins. Sin happened and a sacrifice to atone (pay for) the sin was made. Justice was required and the debt was paid in the form of an animal sacrifice.
  + This was a foreshadow of what was to come. Throughout the OT, we see the need and even the ceremony around sacrifice. Ultimately, it points to the cross. Where the final sacrifice was made. Jesus, the Lamb of God, was the perfect sacrifice for my sins – yours too. Even in the struggles of the moment, in our temporary lapses, we are able to find forgiveness. The law was satisfied because an animal was sacrificed. At least until the next sin. When Jesus shed His blood on the Cross, God accepted it as full payment for all sins that had been committed and would be committed from that point on.
  + There is no reason to think that God is condemning us, that because of our sin we are kicked out of His presence and His family. When Jesus said, “It is finished” (John 19:30) the debt was paid for all sin. Jesus took on the burden of our guilt and shame so that we could find life.

1. Control
   * Many people struggle with control. Often, it is passions and emotions that dictate our behaviors. That’s not always a good way to live. We must not be victims of our feelings; they are fleeting and misleading. But that can be a battle, can’t it?
   * **Romans 8:5-11 NLT**

*5 Those who are dominated by the sinful nature think about sinful things, but those who are controlled by the Holy Spirit think about things that please the Spirit. 6 So letting your sinful nature control your mind leads to death. But letting the Spirit control your mind leads to life and peace. 7 For the sinful nature is always hostile to God. It never did obey God’s laws, and it never will. 8 That’s why those who are still under the control of their sinful nature can never please God.*

*9 But you are not controlled by your sinful nature. You are controlled by the Spirit if you have the Spirit of God living in you. (And remember that those who do not have the Spirit of Christ living in them do not belong to him at all.) 10 And Christ lives within you, so even though your body will die because of sin, the Spirit gives you life because you have been made right with God. 11 The Spirit of God, who raised Jesus from the dead, lives in you. And just as God raised Christ Jesus from the dead, he will give life to your mortal bodies by this same Spirit living within you.*

* + There are people that I know with a laser like focus. What I mean by that is that they get so focused on one specific thing and ignore everything else. The battlefield of our mind is a real thing. Our thoughts control our viewpoint. People that are focused on making money will do so to the exclusion of everything else. There are athletes who focus so much on the sport they participate in that when they can no longer compete, they fall apart.
  + Can I tell you that God is so focused on loving you that He sacrificed His Son so that you and I could know that love.
  + Our bond, our connection with the Lord God should be the thing that controls us. Often, it will be the circumstances we face or the stresses we are dealing with or our desire to be right and look good.
  + Paul is reminding us that as we allow our nature (sinful, selfish) to control us, it will keep us from finding the life that God has purposed for us, it will keep us separated from Him – eternally. But if we allow the Spirit to guide our thoughts, to teach us, to help us, He points us to Jesus – the Author and Perfecter of our faith (Hebrews 12:2). And that brings us into a right relationship with the Lord God for eternity.
  + Let’s be clear on something … our effort is what gets us into trouble. It is (and was) our effort that separates us from God. Please hear me, many will do their best and the things that they are doing are not bad things. There are many admirable good works. It is when the works get in the way of either our relationship with the Lord or get others looking any placed but Jesus that there is a problem.
  + **Romans 3:23** - Eve*ryone has sinned and fallen short of God’s glorious standard* **(NCV)**
  + **Romans 3:28 -** *A person is made right with God through faith, not through obeying the law.* **(NCV)**
  + This says that even though our effort has caused us to miss the mark of God’s standard we can find our way back through faith, not rules and effort.

1. Continuing the Thought
   * **Romans 8:12-17 NLT**
   * *12 Therefore, dear brothers and sisters, you have no obligation to do what your sinful nature urges you to do. 13 For if you live by its dictates, you will die. But if through the power of the Spirit you put to death the deeds of your sinful nature, you will live. 14 For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God.*

*15 So you have not received a spirit that makes you fearful slaves. Instead, you received God’s Spirit when he adopted you as his own children. Now we call him, “Abba, Father.” 16 For his Spirit joins with our spirit to affirm that we are God’s children. 17 And since we are his children, we are his heirs. In fact, together with Christ we are heirs of God’s glory. But if we are to share his glory, we must also share his suffering.*

* + Looking for justice can put one is a position that thinks they have to do something to “make it right” and that can be devastating. God’s justice says let the Spirit lead, He will take you to the place you belong.
  + And the place that we belong is at the table with Daddy (Abba). Our actions, doing it our way, could keep us away from the family. But God (how I love that phrase) is reaching out, waiting for us, wanting us to come and sit (abide) with Him.
  + Listen to what Paul wrote to the church in Galatia. *“For now that you have faith in Christ you are all sons of God. All of you who were baptised “into” Christ have put on the family likeness of Christ. Gone is the distinction between Jew and Greek, slave and free man, male and female—you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you belong to Christ, you are true descendants of Abraham, you are true heirs of his promise.”* **(Galatians 3:26-29 Phillips NT).** The promise that God made Abraham is found in Genesis 12:1-3. He will become a great nation and be blessed. Abraham (and his nation) will be a blessing to others. In this promise (covenant) we can find more than just a homeland. We find blessing and redemption from the hands of the One who Created all. And we find fulfillment of the promise in Jesus Christ. The prophets pointed to this (see Jeremiah 31:31-34).
  + While justice required payment, love provided the way. And that way will bring us incredible inheritance. We will pick this up next week.

1. Closing
   * There is therefore now no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus. (vs. 1). That’s not just a statement; it is a verdict … one that is final.
   * You are not defined by your past failures, your present struggles, or your future uncertainties. You are defined by the Spirit who dwells in you, the Father who adopts you, and the Son who carried justice so love could carry you.

Recognize today that you don’t need to live with your head hanging down in shame, but with your heart lifted in freedom. You are no longer a slave to fear—you are a child of God. The Spirit is not just beside you; He is within you. And He’s not just comforting you—He’s commissioning you.

Live like someone who’s been set free. Allow the love of God to help you become someone who’s been fully revived and restored. Let yourself soar like someone who’s no longer flapping in self-effort but lifted by the Spirit’s wind. Because when justice is carried by Christ, love is unleashed in you.

* + Let’s Pray
  + Grace First, Grace Always