

IDLEWILD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Demarius Brinkley
Sunday, July 28, 2024

Romans 8:18-25

And we believers also groan, even though we have the Holy Spirit within us as a foretaste of future glory, for we long for our bodies to be released from sin and suffering. We, too, wait with eager hope for the day when God will give us our full rights as his adopted children, including the new bodies he has promised us. We were given this hope when we were saved. (If we already have something, we don't need to hope for it. But if we look forward to something we don't yet have, we must wait patiently and confidently.)

Reference:

1. The sermon title "hope" was already given to me (as we move forward into the Summer Sermon Series: Theology 101 on Reformed Theology), but I realized as a Baptist, I'm use to my title being longer. Usually, I have a slogan, phrase, or question for illustration. I got a little extra. (if you don't catch on to anything else, hopefully, the title helps keep you afloat).
2. So, I'm expanding the title (for today's message) from "Hope" to "Build Your Hope"
Can I get an amen?
3. Alright, you're helping me feel at home.
4. Turn to your neighbor and say "Neighbor, its time to build your hope!"
 - A. *Build your hope is a line from the hymn Hold to God's Unchanging Hand (by Jennie Wilson). A song I heard in the growing up in the church where my Grandmother raised me.*
5. Hope comes from standing firm in God's promises (As Paul helps make clear to us throughout his writing):
6. In Ephesians (6:13-14) he tells us "Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place."
7. Build your hope on things eternal, Church. Where are you building your hope?
8. It is also Paul who tells us
 - A. "But we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Spirit (Romans 5:3-5).

Introduction:

1. I started with three questions while preparing the sermon: who is Paul? What is Paul saying in this text? And what does it say to us today?
2. (Let's begin with the first question) Who is Paul?

Biography (Who is Paul).

1. Paul was named Saul at birth.

IDLEWILD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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2. He grew up in the city Tarsus.
3. This ancient city was located in the southeastern part of Turkey in a region near the Mediterranean coast.
4. His father was a Pharisee and a Roman citizen. His mother is not mentioned by name in the Bible.
5. In Acts (23:6) the scripture tells us “then Paul, knowing that some of them were Sadducees and other Pharisees, called out in the Sanhedrin, ‘My Brothers, I am a Pharisee, descended from Pharisees.’”
6. Because his father was a Pharisee, Paul was Jewish. He was a Jew by birth and had Roman citizenship. He had a special position in the Roman Empire because of his origin.
 1. In Acts 22:28, after the commander asked Paul if was a Roman while he was arrested, Paul replied saying, “Yes, I certainly am! The commander answered, ‘I am a Roman citizen, and I paid a lot of money for it.’ Paul answered, ‘But I am a citizen by birth!’”
7. In his letters, Paul mentioned a few relatives. Ones who were imprisoned with him in or others he discussed to indicate his Hebrew heritage while ministering in Rome.
8. Here where we meet Paul in Chapter 8, scholars reveal that he is preparing to face trial by Caesar in Rome.
10. Paul was locked up in Jerusalem after a mob accused him of defiling the Temple by allowing a Gentile to enter. He is taken into custody by Roman authorities.
11. When Paul first got to Rome, Paul is placed under house arrest, but continues to preach and teach. Paul was on parole. But Acts 28 (30-31) reveals that he continued to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The Bible says that “he “He proclaimed the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord—with boldness and without hindrance!”
12. Can you preach Good News in bad circumstances?
13. Paul had to build his hope.
14. How did Paul tell others about a Savior who sets free, when he was in bondage?
15. Through each sermon, through each letter, through each conversation, Paul was building his hope.
16. If you go one chapter before chapter 8 to chapter 7, Paul helps all of us at verse 34, He says “What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body that is subject to death? Thanks be to God, who delivers me through Jesus Christ our Lord!”

To build our hope, I believe what Paul is saying can be broken down into three points (promise, persistence, and power):

Promise (God’s Promises).

1. Paul says, For Jesus, the Son of God does not waiver between “yes” and “no.” He always does what He says. For all God’s promises have been fulfilled.
2. God’s promises don’t always make sense .
3. Paul went from persecutor to preacher.
4. Earlier this summer, Pastor Powers preached to us about revelation. We heard about Paul’s conversion on the road to Demarcus with Jesus.

IDLEWILD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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Sunday, July 28, 2024

5. It may not make sense and it may happen when you least expect it, but God can change us. God can redirect us.
6. For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future (Jer 29:11).
7. In their hearts humans plan their course, but the Lord establishes their steps (Prov 16:9).
8. Jesus said, my sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.
9. Paul went from arresting and killing followers of the Way, to being used as a way for others to know the name under heaven given to man by which men can be saved. Jesus. (Acts 4:12).
10. Alright, let's break down the shift Paul is urging the Romans to make.
11. In Romans, chapter 8, verse 12-13, Paul, "So then, brothers and sisters, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh—for if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live."
12. Now, what change is Paul calling for here? Paul is challenging the Romans to reevaluate their responsibilities to their community. He's urging them to take a good look at what—or who—is setting the standards for their lives and how they treat others. Is it the flesh (ruled by selfish desires and worldly influences) Or is it the Spirit, guiding them toward God's plan, God's path, and God's Word.
13. Living by the flesh is living by our own wants, our own pride, and our own understanding. It's placing our own needs and wants above everything else.
14. Living by the Spirit is listening for God's wisdom, Living by the Spirit is living out God's love, justice, and righteousness.
15. It's about letting go of our ways and receiving God's purpose and plan.
16. Paul said, "you were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.
17. So, Paul is challenging the Romans—and us—to move our focus from the flesh to the Spirit. Amen?
18. Now, we need to understand what Paul means by "according to the flesh." When we look at the beginning of Paul's letter to the Romans. Paul explains the difference between living by the flesh and living by the Spirit.
 - A. "Ever since the creation of the world his eternal power and divine nature, invisible though they are, have been understood and seen through the things he has made. So they are without excuse; for though they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their senseless minds were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools; and they exchanged the glory of God for images resembling a mortal human being or birds or four-footed animals or reptiles." (1:20-23). As Paul changed, we too must change when God speaks (and touch our lives).

IDLEWILD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Demarius Brinkley
Sunday, July 28, 2024

(THIS BRINGS ME TO MY SECOND POINT)

PERSISTENCE

1. Talking about flesh might seem odd here in church. After all, we are Christians. We're gathered here in God's house. We live by the Spirit. We stand on the promises of God!"
2. As Paul writes, the Romans have misplaced their worship. They're giving their praise to Rome instead of God.
3. When Paul brings up the honor of a mortal human, he's pointing to the Roman political leaders like Augustus. And the animals he mentions, they are symbols of Rome and its political-religious traditions. The eagle, for example, is a popular symbol for Rome and its military.
4. "Living by the Spirit meant staying clear of devotion to Rome's dominance, political power, and privileges. Paul was reminding them Rome isn't the creator of the world. Rome is not eternal. Just like then, we must watch where we place our worship and loyalty today. We must be vigilant about where, how and with whom we build our hope.
5. Paul tells us that living by the flesh leads to separation from (he refers to it separation as death, but he means more than physical death). For those under Roman rule, separation was familiar. Life was hard, health and wellness was rare. and many faced hunger and poverty daily. Rome promised peace and prosperity, but instead brought suffering (verse 18), decay (21), pain (22), and groaning (23).
6. We see in the New Testament, the early church didn't always agree on what is an idol. Revelation was clear: don't eat meat sacrificed to pagan gods (Revelation 2:18-29). But Paul had a more lenient view, advising believers to flee from idolatry but also acknowledged that eating sacrificial meat isn't inherently sinful (1 Corinthians 10:14-33).
7. Those who followed Jesus had opportunities to worship many idols: attending campaign events (public celebrations), participating in ritual sacrifices to false Gods, exchanging money with merchants at guild meetings, or buying and selling in the market.
8. In Romans 1, Paul's words against idol worship show tension among believers. They debated what counted as idolatry. What are our idols today? Where are you building your hope?
9. Remember what Jesus said, 'we are not of the world, even as I am not of the world' (John 17:16). We are called out: 'And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God' (Romans 12:2)''
10. What we suffer now is nothing compared to the glory that will be revealed later.
11. Covet not this world's vain riches that so rapidly decay. Seek to gain the heavenly treasures. They will never pass away. When your journey is completed, If to God you have been true, Fair and bright the home in Glory. Your enraptured soul will view.

IDLEWILD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Demarius Brinkley
Sunday, July 28, 2024

(That brings me to final point)

Power-Renew Your Mind:

1. In verse 12. Paul says, "but if through the power of the Spirit you put to death the deeds of your sinful nature, you will live. For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God.
2. Now, the language of debt and owing in verse 12 is important to break down. The Greek word 'debtors' doesn't mean owing money or paying someone back. Paul isn't saying we owe God a repayment. He's talking about a deeper responsibility (deeper calling).
3. Because we know God, we should live by the Spirit, not by the flesh. It's a matter of relationship, people of God. Our knowledge of who God is and what God is able to do is what keeps us living in the Spirit.
4. Lamentations 3:20-24 (KJV): "My soul hath them still in remembrance, and is humbled in me. This I recall to my mind, therefore I hope. It is of the LORD'S mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness. The LORD is my portion, saith my soul; therefore will I hope in him." And let's not miss the community aspect here. The verbs Paul uses are plural. This isn't just about you or me individually. It's about us together. We cry out to God together (verse 15), we groan together (verses 22-23), even creation joins in this collective groaning. Paul is speaking to the church as a whole, one body united in Christ (verse 10).
5. In my church we say, when I think of the goodness of Jesus and all He has done for me. My soul cries out hallelujah.
6. And let's not overlook Paul's inclusivity. The verbs Paul uses are plural. This isn't just about you or me individually. It's about us together. We cry out to God together (verse 15), we groan together (verses 22-23), even creation joins in this collective groaning. Paul is speaking to the entire church, all who are in Christ, one body united in the Lord's church (verse 10).
7. Don't lose hope, church. Paul reminds us, 'Who hopes for what is seen?' Just because you can't see it, doesn't mean it's not there. Hold on to hope, because God is at work even when we can't see it."
8. If by earthly friends forsaken, still more closely to Him cling, covet not this world's vain that so rapidly decay.

Ending:

9. "For we walk by faith, not by sight." (2 Corinthians 5:7)
10. "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." (Hebrews 11:1)
11. "I can do all things through Christ which strengthen me." (Philippians 4:13)
12. Where are you building your Hope Church?
13. "Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths." (Proverbs 3:5-6 KJV)
14. Time is filled with swift transition. Naught of earth unmoved can stand. Build your hopes on things eternal. Hold to God's unchanging hand. Refrain: Hold to His hand, God's unchanging hand. Trust in Him who will not leave you. Whatsoever years may bring. If

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by earthly friends forsaken, Still more closely to Him cling. Build your hope on thing eternal.

15. It doesn't matter if your reformed, liberationist, Baptist, Presbyterian, Jew or Gentile, rich or poor, Greek, Roman, Pharisee or Sadducee, Black, White, Republican or Democrat. Our only hope is Jesus.
16. "The earth is the LORD's, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein." (Psalm 24:1 KJV) Paul and sin (no longer slaves)
17. "The name of the LORD is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe." (Proverbs 18:10 KJV)/
18. (Paul said/preached) We were given this hope when we were saved. (If we already have something, we don't need to hope for it. But if we look forward to something we don't yet have, we must wait patiently and confidently.
19. Build your hope on Jesus (the solid rock) and wait on the Lord and be of good courage!