

Deep in the Word – What’s New?

June 25, 2017

An interactive devotional linked to Chandler First Church’s June 25 Sunday morning sermon “What’s New?” based on Romans 6:1b-11; Genesis 21:8-21; Psalm 86; Matthew 10:24-39.

Encounter the Word

Read Romans 6:1b-11. In this passage, Paul asks an interesting question:

- Because God’s grace covers all our sin, why don’t we just let go and do whatever we want to? How would YOU answer this?

In chapter 6 Paul moves from talking about God’s life to writing about OUR lives—about the new ones that we live NOW, based on our new lives that have been recreated by God.

But one thing Paul has said has created a problem before he even begins this new subject. In emphasizing the action of God, Paul has said that God does *everything* and we do *nothing*. He excluded from justification any work we might do or any merit we might claim. No scheme of self-improvement, no mystical experience, no high-minded religion is worth anything. God did everything on God’s own initiative and treated *all* people equally—both religious and pagan. God says that we are sinners.

Having said this, how can Paul then tell us to *do* something? If nothing we do makes any difference, why do *anything*? If our sin does not turn God away from us, why not sin? If nothing we do can make God withdraw his offer of salvation, why not live it up?

Paul answers by stating that the new life of holiness is what should naturally follow from our justification. From this point on (after we are justified by God) every sin is a contradiction of who we are and therefore destructive to the new life growing within us. So, for the believer, sin involves personal injury, not a judicial penalty. It affects our everyday life, not our eternal life. All our sin against God was taken care of on the cross. It has all been dealt with. My sins from now on are failures to live out my new life.

Think about a butterfly. Its metamorphosis from a caterpillar to being encased in a cocoon and then becoming a butterfly can be an analogy for us as we think about our life in Christ. As butterflies who have been justified (God created us as new creatures), how would it be if we tried to go back to our former life as caterpillars? The food we once ate (munching on leaves) is no longer possible. We do not have the same type of mouth that we used to have. Butterflies no longer chew up leaves, they spread pollen. Different purpose now! A whole new world for the butterfly. The things that the caterpillar did are no good for the butterfly. If the butterfly tries to go back to the life he once led, it is harmful to him.

When we repent and we are forgiven and live for Christ. We aren't focused too much on dying; we focus more on giving up the OLD so we can have the NEW. What does our life look like if we are going to call ourselves Christians?