



St. Timothy Presbyterian Church

RIGHTEOUSNESS

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2014 - 2018
Sermons

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Bondage and Freedom

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Mark 5:1-20

Bondage and Freedom

Yesterday was the 70th anniversary of the liberation of Korea from Japanese occupation with the end of the World War Two. It is so strange that one country should invade another country to conquer it. Why do they do that? Why does one person conquer another person?

Unfortunately, that is our human history and it is very sad that this is our human history. It is sad that we see this as our reality and many of us simply accept that as our reality without trying to fight against it and build an alternate reality. It is also very sad to see it still going on now, not necessarily politically and militaristically, but in many other ways such as racism, sexism, classism, and so on. At the micro level, we always see more popular people and more powerful people looking down upon less popular and less powerful people. This will always happen. It is all a game of power. Is that what life is about, a game of power? Reflecting on this, I was thinking about bondage and freedom. I hope that today's passage illuminates our understanding on that topic.

You know, whenever I read this passage, I feel really sorry and bad for the man of the Gerasenes who was tortured by the unclean spirit. Even though he had a family, he could not have a nice dinner with the family. He was all out there by himself in the mountains and among the tombs. He wandered around howling in pain. He could not stay with his family. Day and night he was wandering around and howling. He must have been so tormented if he went around howling like that. He had to just let it all out through howling. He couldn't contain it within himself, he was so frustrated. Something truly pressed him so much that he had to howl, but was he totally powerless then? No, I don't think so. He had the power. No chain could restrain him. He broke chains into pieces and he was so strong that no one had enough strength to restrain him or subdue him. The power he had was not the power that he could control. He had the power but he could not control that power, rather, that power controlled him.

Bondage is a condition where the power that we cannot control controls us. Jesus asked him his name and he said: "Legion, my name is Legion." Legion was the Roman military unit. One legion consisted of five to 6,000 soldiers, so it is like he had the power of five to 6,000 soldiers within him. That's a tremendous power but this power completely controlled him and this power drove him crazy. I just read a New York Times article about Islamic State "ISIS" and how ISIS invaded regions of Syria and Iraq and made women as their sex slaves. They'll go into a village and conquer the village to capture all of them and then divide the civilians by gender. Then they kill all the men and will select a few women and sexually abuse them and sell them as sex slaves. Many of these people escape from that camp and they become a witness and have done interviews with the New York Times.

This also happened when Japan occupied Korea. They made many Korean women as sex slaves for their soldiers. They called them "comfort women." It is scary to think about what the powerful people can do to the powerless. And yet we love power. We admire power. We pursue power and we continuously work hard to acquire power, but we have to understand very well about the nature and dynamics of power. Otherwise, you will become slaves and victims to that power. Power controls you and you are trapped in bondage. Many people have power, but they are still in bondage so they turn around to make other people in bondage. They enslave other people just as they are enslaved by their own power.

As long as we love power, I don't think liberation is possible. We can never be liberated from the bondage as long as we love power. Slowly, that power will take life away from us. Whatever power that may be, whether it'd be a religious power, money power, reputation power, political power, or military power, that power will slowly take life away from us. That power can easily cause us to be lured into the temptation of power and to lose dignity, humanity, joy, and the meaning of life. We love power so much that we we throw away life itself without realizing how precious life is. Life should not be trampled by power because life is so precious. We can't throw away life just to have the power. Who said that it's a good life? Who said that power is the way to life? So many of us have become blinded by the power. Much of Jesus' teaching was about not falling into the lure and temptation of power. Jesus said, "Deny yourself. Take up your cross. Be like children. If you want to be the first, be the last. If you want to

be the chief, you must be the servant.” All about Jesus’ teaching was warning against the power. Do not fall into the play of power.

Resist Temptation

You’re going to lose your life. When we look at three temptations of Jesus, they were all about power. Satan said, display your power as the son of God and do the things that you want to do with power. That will be much easier, much more practical and a much more realistic way to achieve what you want to achieve. However, Jesus rejected all of those suggestions Satan made. Jesus knew the dynamics of power so well. Jesus knew that the real freedom can never come from the power. Sadly, this world is operated by power and many people have become victims of the world that they created. They worshiped power. They evaluated each other by how powerful you are. They put a high value on power so it is very difficult for Christians to survive in this world without blindly following what the world does. Slowly, people became slaves to power. If you’re powerful, you’re blinded. If you’re powerless and you feel small and weak, you are controlled by power. All of their thinkings become influenced by the power and they enslave each other. One group enslaves the other. One country enslaves another country. The haves exploit the have-nots. The powerful control the weak.

Jesus healed the man. He no longer had the power because the legion was chased out of him, but he came to his senses. He woke up. This is what verse 15 says: “They came to Jesus and saw the demoniac sitting there clothed and in his right mind”. The very man who had the legion and everyone was afraid of came to his right mind. I hope that all of us come to our right mind.

But in verse 17, we see a strange reaction of the people. it says: “Then they began to beg Jesus to leave their neighborhood”. They asked Jesus to leave even though he did a wonderful thing healing this man. Why did they do that? Because they lost 2000 pigs. They lost profit. They wanted the power, not healing. We’d rather choose pigs over a right mind. We’d rather choose money over a right mind. We’d rather choose power over life. Even though I’m miserable, I need power and I want power, that’s what people say. The man with the unclean spirits was liberated and experienced freedom, but these people were still in bondage. That’s why Jesus told him not to remain there, those people were still in bondage. You become my witness as

a liberated person. I believe that today's passage is a great challenge to all of us.

Real Freedom

What controls my life? Should I just blindly let anything control my life. Should I let the world control my life? Who said the world knew what was best for me? This is my life and I want to live my life in the most authentic and beautiful way. Who said following the world is the best way to do so? Does your boss have the right to tell you what the best life is for you? What controls my life? What am I pursuing? Healing or power? Do I have real freedom or am I still in bondage? True freedom is being free from the desire for power. Whether you have power or not, when you're free from that desire for power, then you will have true freedom. Jesus said: "You shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free". Jesus wants us to be set free because that is the most beautiful life. Be free from the vanity of power. That is the most beautiful life you can live in the one life we have. I want to live the most beautiful life without being lured into the game and lose all of my precious ears, precious time and precious life. I will not do that so that I can be humble. Being humble means to be awake, to see what the power does to me and not falling into the lure of power. That's what being humble means. Awake.

Let us not let the power lure us and dominate our thinking, but let us build solidarity with each other to pursue liberation from the bondage. Let us share the truth with each other, that's what this spiritual community is all about. We are different. We are pursuing an alternate reality. We are not pursuing the reality that people out there set up for us. We are pursuing the reality Jesus taught us to live and that's what spiritual community is all about. That's what this community is all about. From the micro level to the macro level, we treat each other with dignity and with respect, with love and honour. Instead of trying to control each other and telling others what to do, we empower each other to pursue the wonderful freedom Jesus gave us and live a meaningful life. It's hard to do it by yourself. It is hard to do it by myself. We need each other to build that alternative reality to live a good life.

Prejudice

June 12, 2016

Galatians 3:28

Prejudice

I was quite disturbed by the comment Donald Trump made about the judge Gonzalo Curiel of United States district court. Donald Trump said that a Mexican American judge in a case involving trump university was biased against him because of his heritage ethnicity. In other words, the ethnicity of the judge is the cause for the bias. It doesn't matter what that person is, if that person has certain ethnicity, he or she cannot do the good job. Judge Curiel or was born in Indiana, he was born American, of course, he has a Mexican heritage and he fought against the, drug lord of Mexico. Now, he's always surrounded by bodyguards, so wherever he goes, he has to go with a bodyguard because, the head of the drug dealers ordered people to kill him. That's why he always has to have body guards. He risked his life for the peace and justice of the country, and he's a good judge, but as long as he has a certain ethnicity, his ethnicity, will not make him a competent judge. That is a blatant racism.

As a speaker, Paul N'Dri in the nation's highest ranking Republican said it was a textbook definition of racism. I just can't believe how a person who says blatant racism can get so many votes, that's the kind of a world that we live in North America. I was thinking of, my own context in our church. We have a Korean's born in North America. They're excellent in what they do. They're smart, they're all this culture, and also they know the language well enough, and there are maybe some judges in the future, but as Donald Trump said, or did many people in this country may question theater ability because of their ethnicity, prejudice. It is a strange thing. It really blinds our eyes, as long as we have prejudice, reason doesn't work and we human beings easily fall into our own prejudice. When we are victims of prejudice, all our logics and reasons will become powerless and useless and these reasons will be only used to legitimize and justify their own prejudice and these reasons and logic will drive them only further into their own deeper prejudice. In other words, the prejudice incapacitates the power of reason. God gave us reason to know the truth, not to justify your own bias. Narrow-mindedness and prejudice God gave us reasons so that we can think and we can discern what it

is; what is the truth? So when you don't use reasoning that way. Then you're committing sins. As you look at this passage, you see St Paul experienced complete healing from his own prejudice in Christ. Listen to what he said.

Find Exile of Prejudice and Freedom in Christ

This is actually scripture passage for today, which I forgot. Again, there is no longer Jew or Greek. There is no longer slave or free. There is no longer male and female for all of you are one in Christ Jesus. This was spoken 2000 years ago by an Asian man. Freedom from prejudice, Greek or Jew doesn't mean just the race is to also talk, he's talking about the religion. His message was to eradicate the racial and religious prejudice, socio-economic inequality, gender discrimination, and to promote tolerance. Even in today's standard. It was a very bold statement, and he found that in Christ, he found this truth in Christ because he was a victim of prejudice because of his religiosity, whatever that may be, the religion or morality or self righteous or whatever. If that makes you a person of prejudice, then your reason doesn't work anymore. Your reason only justifies your prejudice. Paul experienced tremendous freedom in Christ. It's not that all of a sudden he decided, okay, this is the right thing to do. No, he found this freedom in Christ. He found his healing in Christ. To me, that is freedom. Doing whatever you want. It's not freedom. What Paul experienced was true freedom. That is what true conversion looks like, on people talk about conversion, true conversion is true healing from this kind of prejudice. Paul's conversion was not religious conversion. Paul's conversion was not moral conversion. Paul's conversion was not ideological conversion, these convergence are easy, you can just make decision on that because Paul's conversion was spiritual conversion, and through the spiritual conversion, he's eyes which used to be blind because of his prejudice are completely open and was able to see

Converge to overcome Prejudice

that's true convergence. That's true change, only in true conversion, we can overcome our own prejudice, and then our reason will come alive, and we can expand the horizons of our understanding. Until then, we'll just live in our own prejudice. When this happens, we get new vision for ourselves and for the world. We'll be able to overcome our own fear, we'll be able to overcome our insatiable desire and hunger for power and domination. We don't need to have that

anymore. We can truly build unity and we can build a better world together. We won't build a world where one percent of the population uses 99 percent of the money, we won't build that kind of world. That's North America just last week, New York Times reported one percent of American population owns 99 percent of the money. We won't build that kind of world. Just imagine it. For example, let's say here is about 100 people here. Out there, there are 100 Kimbap. One person is with 99 Kimbap, and with one piece of Kimbap 99 people have to share this. Can you say that's a sane world? That's insane, but that's the kind of world we live in. As long as we have prejudice, all our reasons will not operate, will not work.

Build a World of Respect, Dignity, and Equality

We'll build a world where everyone is treated with respect, dignity and equality. I went to a seminar last Tuesday, presented by Joe Park. It is about the mental health for the Korean community and all the came and their doctor know, who is used to be a who used to teach at Cambridge and he said the infant mortality rate is a very good indicator of determining socio economic status of a group. And he said the African American in the United States has higher infant mortality rate than that of Bangladesh. And the sad thing is the mortality rate of Canadian abroad gentle originals is even higher than African Americans. Yeah, living in a such a nice world, but they are also people who are suffering in this heaven like world utopia kind of world. We are living in a world where prejudice is uncritically accepted that was not the vision of Jesus Christ. And Paul saw the true vision of Jesus Christ and dad is that there is no longer chew or a Greek. There is no longer slave or free. There is no longer male and female for all of you are one in Christ Jesus. And that is a legacy we should carry on.

Maybe all are saying, timothy, people should memorize this. It's not that difficult. It's not that long. Maybe we all memorize and always keep that in mind in whatever we do. I hope that we all become the leaders to eradicate the prejudice around us and build unity and harmony.

The Lord's Parable

a few weeks ago I preached on good Shepherd. Jesus gave us that parable, good Shepherd. In that story, there are three kinds of people we see, one is a thief, and the other is hired hands, they are paid to

do whatever they were supposed to do, but once danger comes they flee, and finally, there are good shepherds. Take care of sheep and who will even sacrifice for the sheep. I wonder what kind of people there are in the world. Maybe there are thieves out there, who only take profit all the time, maybe 99 percent of money and there are higher men working crazy just to make a living, but beyond that they don't care, but there are also good shepherd who loves humanity, who love this world, who will do anything to make this world better. Sometimes even sacrifice themselves to make this world better than our living just for themselves. They're not living, robbing other people. they are living for other people. Jesus called us to be good shepherd. Not thieves, not higher than, but good shepherd. This time I'd like to challenge you to think through what kind of life am I living? Am I just hired hands? Or am I... do I want to live like the good shepherd helping others, making this world better place? Let us pray.

We are All One

November 13, 2016

John 17:22-23

Jesus' Hope

This Sunday, I'd like to reflect on oneness. I'm going to reflect on three scripture passages from three different places, and I'd like to understand, uh, what it means to be a one in Christ and how that can be different from the oneness in the world. The first passage that I'm going to reflect on is from John, Mina read it beautifully and we are going to reflect on that. If you see the background of that passage, that was like Jesus' deathbed, a prayer just before he died. That was Jesus' last prayer for the world. You can see a Jesus' desire. After 33 years of ministry, after life on earth, and that was the prayer that he was wanting to leave behind for the people to hear and listen and take. Take it seriously.

That is the context of that prayer. And when you look at it, verse 20, it says, "I ask not only on behalf of this," I asked – that means Jesus prayed. Then from verse 21 to 23, when you read it carefully every verse, he says this phrase, "They may all be one." Every verse, 21, 22, to 23, "As we are one, I pray that they also may be one." And in the last verse, Jesus added 'completely' to emphasize the oneness, "So that they may completely be one." That was what Jesus wanted for the world. He wanted to see the unity. How appropriate that prayer is for all of us. We Christians should take that prayer very seriously, and we should also do that prayer. As you look at the world, it is fragmented, divided, you name it. For all reasons, we are living in a world that is very fragmented.

A Revolutionary Vision

After Jesus prayed that, a few years later, there was a person who took on the torch of Jesus Christ and carried on that vision of Jesus Christ in his life. And his name is Saint Paul. Saint Paul also prayed and worked for the unity, the oneness of humanity. And he talked about oneness a little bit more in detail than what Jesus prayed for. This is what he said, "There is no longer Jew or a Greek. There is no

longer slave or free. There is no longer male and the female, for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.” That is the crux of Paul’s theology. That is the core of Paul that tried to established in this world. Jews and Greeks? They did not even eat together. Slaves could never be one with the free. Women were not considered as an equal partner. During Paul’s time, women will like properties. As a matter of fact, Jewish people prayed this prayer every morning at that time, and that prayer goes like this: “Thank you God for not making me a gentile, not making me a slave and not making me a woman.” That was what Jewish people prayed every morning. So some scholars said that Paul was seeing there was neither male nor female in the context of that prayer. That prayer was taken for granted at that time. Paul saw the vision that in Christ, they may all become one. He saw the vision of equal partnership, men and women who are equal partners.

In the last scripture passage I’d like to look at is from the Old Testament, Genesis. That was also the vision of writer of Genesis. The Genesis writer thought that this vision was in God’s heart when he created this world. When Eve was created, Adam finally cried out, “This at last is born of my bones and flesh of my flesh.” Complete oneness Adam experienced. There is no division. There is no hierarchy. “Your bone of my bones, flesh of my flesh.” Right from the beginning of creation, God had this vision. That was the order of creation. That’s what God wanted right from the first place, that all become one. So, being one is mandated by the Bible. Being one is a beautiful vision.

But it is a radical vision. It is a dangerous vision. Many people got killed because of that vision. Jesus was killed, St Paul was killed, and in modern days, so many people got killed because they preached the message of oneness. Martin Luther King, Jr. was killed. It’s a dangerous vision. Especially in the world, there are people who are mostly interested in dominating, conquering, and controlling. That vision is a very dangerous vision. To them, being one is making others under their power, whether it’s a religious power, political power, financial power or gender power, whatever that is, to them, being one is making others under their power and their control. The only way they know about achieving oneness is by conquering the weaker ones.

St. Paul & His Concept

Jesus' idea of oneness was very, very different. Jesus emptied himself to be one with us. Jesus was completely stripped of his power on the cross to make all of us one with God and one with each other. Paul's idea of oneness was a challenge to the Roman and Jewish system where the free control, the slave Jews and gentiles did not associate with each other, and men dominated women. So Paul's message of oneness was a challenge to that establishment of that system. American people said loud and clear through this election, we don't want establishment anymore. We are sick and tired of establishment having all the power. I think Bernie Sanders saw it right when he said after the election result that Donald Trump tapped into the anger of a declining middle class that is sick and tired of establishment, economics, establishment politics, and establishment media. When the top 10th of one percent owns almost as much wealth as the bottom 90 percent, and when 99 percent of all new income goes to the top one percent, it is impossible to be one. Establishment rules dictates and dominates, and so American people did not like that. But there is an evil that we need to name though. Donald Trump. Any speech he used had anti-establishment sentiments, but his speeches also echoed the racist and sexist sentiment in America. If a woman has to submit to a man to be one, then that is not true oneness. To be one, we need to understand the power we have, and we should share that power with others.

St. Paul said "The gentiles do not have to follow the way of the Jewish life to be one with them." So St. Paul said, "Don't be circumcised. You don't need to keep the dietary rule. You can never be one by keeping the law. Only in Christ you can be one." Radical message. We are all equal partners in Christ. Today is Women's Sunday. The reason we have Women's Sunday is because women's leadership has not been very well recognized. Even though we are equal partners, often women's ministry was limited to a certain area. We have to recognize the gifts of the people regardless of the gender in order to serve. We have to recognize the faith of a person rather than the gender of a person in order to recognize them as leaders of the church. There is no hierarchy between men and women. When Adam said, "Alas you are born on my bones and flesh of my flesh," there no hierarchy, only complete oneness. We believe that we are one in Christ.

Paul received tremendous persecution, as we studied in Galatians. He received tremendous persecution from the establishment, from

the Roman system and from the Jewish system. From both sides, he received tremendous persecution and ultimately killed because he saw a wonderful vision in Christ. In Christ, everyone is equal. Everyone is worthy and precious. How could you dare or ever say 2000 years ago, that in Christ, there is no room for the power to control, conquer, and dominate. In Christ, we submit to each other in love and respect. That is the gospel. That is the gospel. Jesus prayed for that. If we believe that, then we have to work on that instead of following the pattern of the world, where the powerful subjugates the weak. That is not the message that we believe in. Paul's message was very much an anti-establishment message, but his message was also a radical message overcoming the racial, sexual, and class boundaries. When only recently the slavery was abolished, but Paul said there is no longer slaves or the free. When only 50 years ago – this year is the 50th anniversary of women's ordination – when only 50 years ago, the Presbyterian church in Canada passed the woman ordination, but Paul said there is no longer male and female. Where did he get that idea? Where did he get that idea of equality? Two thousand years ago? I believe there's a spirit. I believe this God who gave that idea.

Moral of the Story

On Thursday, I met two relatively young people and we stayed until 10:30/11, I'm not sure, talking about this world and about life, about faith, about being a Christian. They needed to let out and sought and understand this world after the shocking result of the US election. One person is in finance. So I asked him, "How are you doing? How's your field in finance doing?" And he said, "Reverend, I'm scared. I'm scared not for my job. I'm not scared for the finances. I'm scared for humanity." And we were talking about being a Christian. Being a Christian is not about having power, but about sharing the power. You can say that Jesus had the most powerful power. He had the divine power, and yet he gave all that up and died on the cross. Powerlessly. What is the message? Power can never make us one. Power can never make the humanity one. Only when we start sharing the power we have with the powerless in love, we can be one. Yes, there is a life of power, but there is also a life of love. And the life of love is a life Jesus preached, Paul preached. I hope that we hear the message loud and clear – what we need to do with our lives.

Being Good for the Sake of Goodness

April 2, 2017

Romans 7:15-19

Goodness Within Us

This is Saint Paul's confession after meeting Christ. In a way, it's a very strange confession because for us, being good is very important for all of us. Without being good, I don't think we can live a happy life. If people respect you and people say that you're good and people admire you. Then you know we have a strong sense of acceptance, respect and worthiness. But if some people think that you're not very good, morally or spiritually. That you are not a very good person, then it is really hard to live a happy life with that sense that you are not very good. When you look at your life, a lot of it is based on the assumption that you are okay. You may even think that I may not be so religious, but at least I'm okay. I may not be a saint, but at least I'm not a jerk. We have to believe that there is some goodness within us.

When we do something good for other people or for God, we feel good. Why? Because that proves that there is something good within me. So we love doing good for other people because that proves that there must be something good within me because that is important to us to have that goodness within me to continue our living. So, I realized that goodness has its function and that function is to make your life worthy, viable and livable. Our goodness, gives us confidence, worthiness and validation. When we don't feel very good, we feel shameful, worthless and miserable. For example, when you commit sin, you feel shameful, miserable and worthless. But when we do good things, then you feel elated. It gives certain sense of power. So being good is that important. I realized that goodness has a tremendous function in our lives. Even gangsters among them, loyalty is very important. To them, loyalty is being good. So whatever society you may be in, whatever group you may be in, being good is very important. It serves function to make your life worth living.

The Power of Righteousness

We can see that very clearly in the parable of Jesus, about two prayers. One prayer by Pharisee and the other prayer by tax collector. Tax Collector was not very respected at that time. And let me read what Jesus said about the story. “He also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous and regarded others with contempt: “Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee, standing by himself, was praying thus, ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other people: thieves, rogues, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give a tenth of all my income.’ But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even look up to heaven, but was beating his breast and saying, ‘God, be merciful to me, a sinner!’”(Luke 19:9-13)

You can see very clearly the Pharisee was confident and even had a sense of superiority compared with the tax collector, but the tax collector cannot even raise his head. He felt so ashamed, he felt worthless. Now you see what righteousness does to a person. The righteousness has tremendous power to validate your existence, but when you look at the beginning of the story, as I said, it is like this. He also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous. So it's not just the righteousness that gives you that sense of worthiness or validates your existence, but it's your belief of righteousness. You don't even have to be righteous, but if you somehow psych yourself up or trick yourself, believing that you're good, believing that you're righteous believing that you're okay, even that will give you a sense of worthiness and that will validate your existence. So righteousness or the belief of righteousness has a very important function in your life. You're being good to other people sometimes because it is ultimately good to you.

It proves that you are good and that sense is very important for your existence. Our parents taught us to be good so that our life may not be ruined. These fear that if we are not good, then your life will be ruined because goodness is very important for you to live your life with a sense of worthiness. If this goodness is destroyed, then your life will be also destroyed. So we make sure that we have some good. You don't need to go to church, you don't need to do all this stuff, but you at least need to keep that some goodness within you so that your life may be kept intact, unconsciously or consciously. We always do that so we have that goodness in our bank account. We don't want

that bank account to be bankrupt because I cannot survive without that goodness just even little bit of it.

Paul's Belief

But if you read today's story of Paul's confession, you will find something very, very strange, something very different from all of us. We see Paul's goodness being completely destroyed or at least Paul's belief of his own goodness was completely destroyed. Let's go back to our scripture that we read today. "I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. Now if I do what I do not want, I agree that the law is good. But in fact it is no longer I that do it, but sin that dwells within me. For I know that nothing good dwells within me, that is, in my flesh. I can will what is right, but I cannot do it. For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do." (Romans 7:15-19) He could trick himself, but he didn't trick himself. He saw himself nakedly as naked as possible, and that's what he discovered. His belief about his goodness was destroyed. He cannot hold onto his own goodness anymore because he realized that there was none.

Only contradiction he sees within himself. People try to live on a list of goodness to have built, no matter how small it may be, but Paul is saying, "I have none, even the good I try to do, I cannot do it." So some of you who may think that I'm good, think again what that means. The truth is Paul's life was not destroyed. When his belief of his goodness was destroyed, his life was not destroyed. His sense of goodness was destroyed, but he wasn't destroyed. This was Paul's confession. At the end of all the things that he mentioned, this is what he said. "Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord."

God's Goodness

I think Paul found something. He found that he had no goodness within him, but also at the same time he found something else. What would be that something that he found? He found God's goodness. He didn't find his own good, but he found God's goodness, working within him. Not because he was able to establish his goodness, but he saw God's goodness working within him, and that's why his life was not destroyed. We call that grace. Paul's life was not established on his goodness. Paul's life was established on God's goodness. That's the core of the gospel. Where are you going to establish your life on your goodness or God's goodness? My friends, within you,

God's goodness is powerfully working. While we are weak, while we are sinners, yet Christ died for us. That was God's goodness. The goodness that you have built within you is not strong enough to save you or to free you. That kind of righteousness is easily turned into self-righteousness and that self-righteousness will blind you and make you in bondage. It only makes you feel good like the Pharisee in the story of prayer. What saves us, what frees us, is truly God's goodness. Only through faith you will be able to see God's goodness powerfully working within you.

Our goodness is small, and you want to build your life on it, but God's goodness is as big as the ocean. Where are you going to plant your route in your own goodness? Or in God's goodness? When you plan your route in your own good, you will live a feeble life. But when you plant your route in God's goodness, you will experience the abundance of God. I hope that we all experience this grace of God working powerfully within us.