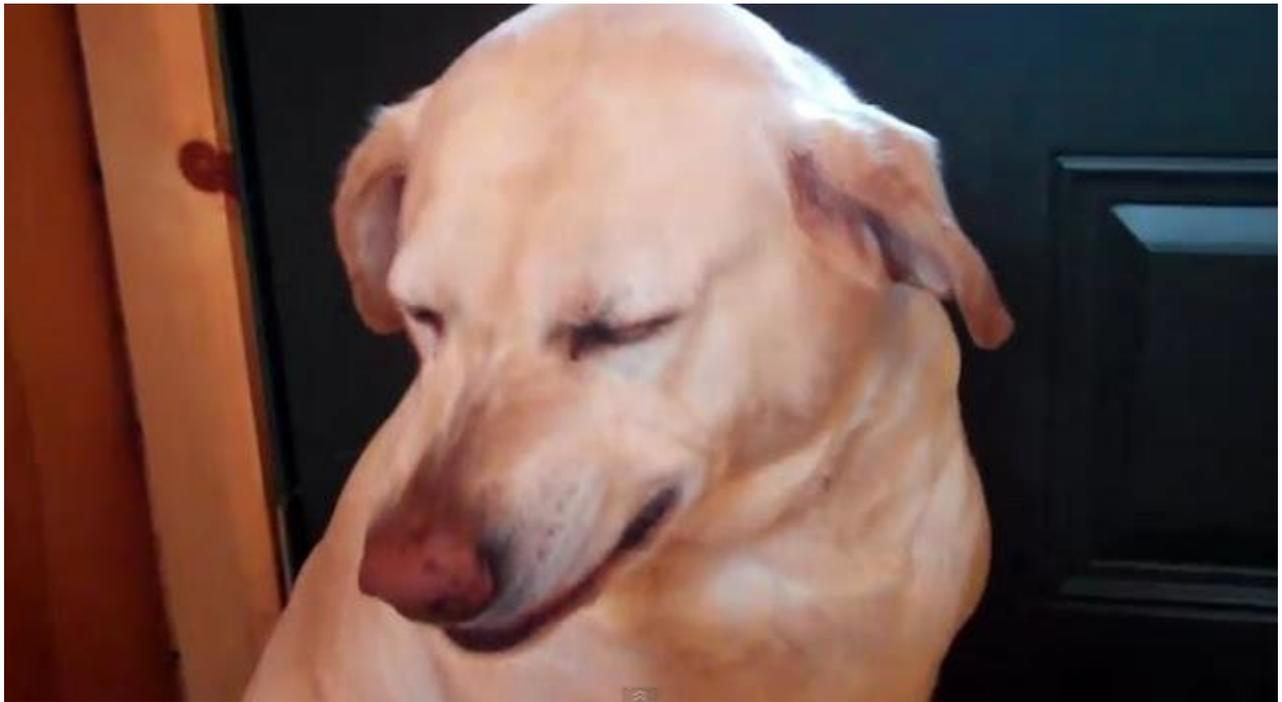


ARE YOU FULL OF GUILT?

Saturday, September 17, 2016



by Pastor Mike Taylor

“Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations:

That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:” (1st Peter 1:6-7)

I was listening to a minister talk about an interview that Peggy Noonan had with Patti Davis, the daughter of President Reagan and it struck me odd about what she said. She was talking about when she was a little girl, that she saw the plight of the black people of this country, which is a sad story of in itself, and she wished that her family and herself could somehow be changed to being black. She said that she felt so guilty about the plight of the black man. She also went on to being full of guilt for the suffering of people in other countries, and the poor who have not got it as good as the poorest among us and being American, while expressing the emotional feelings of “guilt”.

First off, I would like to ask Ms. Davis, if she were around, what would you change about being white, privileged, or being born in America if you could? First off, you cannot change the fact that you were born of the white race (anymore than you can change the color of any person's skin). It's out of your control. You can do nothing about being born in the USA and have had the privileges that most Americans take for granted. Even the poorest in the USA have it FAR better than some of the people in third world countries. I would say a better emotional response would be to be “thankful”. When I heard this I wondered why anyone would be feeling guilty about being a white American, let alone being blessed with material wealth? I believe it is a mindset of secular society about how they handle the world around them. Let me see if I can put this into a perspective, by the end of this sermon so maybe you will understand.

FEELINGS OF GUILT BECAUSE OF SIN

I've had numerous emails from people who express feelings of guilt and shame for their inability to stop sinning in their life. It ranges from sins of the flesh, to sins of the mind and thought processes that disturbs

these folks deeply. So deeply that they seek counseling for reasons that they are unable to purge every aspect of a sinful nature. I am reminded of Paul and his lamenting about the same problem. I tell these folks, “welcome to the human race.” Paul speaks in Romans chapter 7,

15 “For that which I do I allow not: for what I would , that do I not; but what I hate , that do I .

16, If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good.

17, Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

18 For I know that in me (that is , in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.

19 For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do.

20 Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

21 I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me.

22 For I delight in the law of God after the inward man:

23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.

24 O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?

25, I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.”

Paul was explaining that those who continue to commit sin in their life, do so because they are mortal. Even though they are called by God, saved and baptized, they cannot rid themselves of a sin nature. Can any of us? Of course, the answer is no, not in this life at least. Folks, none of us will be able to fully extinguish a sinful nature, but through our overcoming these natures of our flesh, we build something that can be used by God. How can we understand why we are being tested and what is God's purpose behind these tests? I'm reminded of the passage in Acts chapter 16, when Paul got himself into trouble with a girl who had the spirit of divination.

16 “And it came to pass , as we went to prayer, a certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination met us, which brought her masters much gain by soothsaying :

17 The same followed Paul and us, and cried , saying , These men are the servants of the most high God, which shew unto us the way of salvation.

18 And this did she many days. But Paul, being grieved , turned and said to the spirit, I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And he came out the same hour.

19 And when her masters saw that the hope of their gains was gone , they caught Paul and Silas, and drew them into the marketplace unto the rulers,

20 And brought them to the magistrates, saying , These men, being Jews, do exceedingly trouble our city,

21 And teach customs, which are not lawful for us to receive , neither to observe , being Romans.

22 And the multitude rose up together against them: and the magistrates rent off their clothes, and commanded to beat them.”

GUILTY OR GRATEFUL?

Of course, the charges were a lie, but Paul and Silas were beaten for causing trouble to these men. Paul only infraction was becoming frustrated with being followed around by a demon possessed girl. And what became of this situation?

23, “And when they had laid many stripes upon them, they cast them into prison, charging the jailor to keep them safely:

24, Who, having received such a charge, thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks.

25, And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed , and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them.

26, And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken : and immediately all the doors were opened , and every one's bands were loosed . 27 And the keeper of the prison awaking out of his sleep, and seeing the prison doors open , he drew out his sword, and would have killed himself, supposing that the prisoners had been fled.”

Because of this persecution and wrongful treatment, Paul and Silas were cast into prison and the jailer would have killed himself, if Paul had not stopped him. As the passage progresses, the jailer comes to him trembling and ask “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” Paul spoke to him the gospel and the man believed and his house and were baptized. Do you see in the above verses, what was the result of this affliction brought onto these men of God? They didn't feel guilty, they felt grateful. They sang praises to God, as they were tried, and were joyful because of their trial. You say, how can they be joyful when you realize the pain they must have been in, the position that they were forced to endure with their hands and feet in stocks and no ability to even sleep? Answer is because they understood that their trial would be used for good because they were afflicted because of their belief in Jesus Christ, even in their pain. Being persecuted, or tried brought about the salvation of a whole house of unbelievers to become saved that night.

PETER BEFORE THE JEWISH COUNCIL

Another passage speaks of another apostle who had a similar experience. It's found in Acts chapter 5.

17 “Then the high priest rose up , and all they that were with him, (which is the sect of the Sadducees,) and were filled with indignation,

18 And laid their hands on the apostles, and put them in the common prison.

19 But the angel of the Lord by night opened the prison doors, and brought them forth , and said ,

20 Go , stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life.

21 And when they heard that, they entered into the temple early in the morning , and taught .”

So you ask, how does this apply to me? Although you have not been tried as these men were, not yet anyway, you are still being tested. If you have thoughts that are impure that plague you, or you succumbed to a sin that left you shaken in your faith and wondering about your condition before God. How will you look at it? Will you be guilty or grateful? Grateful? How so? Because we have an advocate that is before the Father who forgives us when we repent. Why would He forgive? Because He was tempted in all points as we are,

but without sin. He knows our struggles and can relate to them. That is why He is our High Priest. If we respond as we should, we are remorseful and saddened by our fragile condition of being flesh. But we need not fear. When we have overcome a sin through faith and repentance because of being mortal, we become stronger not to continue in that sin. But the better part of that trial, is when you meet someone who is struggling with the same problem. You can empathize with them, as you have struggled with the same sin and won over it, by the power of God's Holy Spirit. That person may be struggling with a sinful nature, lost in that sin, and feel's powerless and hopeless. You can give that person a lifeline, as you have been in their shoes and experienced their feelings of being remorseful. All of us have been there and experienced sin in our lives. No one is immune, "for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." (Romans 3:23)

Now I'm not advocating that we should go out and sin like the heathen, but when we do fail as a Christian follower of Jesus Christ, (and it's a given, because sin is sin and doesn't have degrees in God's eyes) we come to our God and Father through His Son and He forgives that sin, immediately. From that lesson, (and my brothers and sisters, we are all in spiritual school) we learn not to repeat that same error. Or if we do, the discipline and lesson will become more severe until we do learn (and that is a given)! James said it most clear in chapter 1 of 1st James beginning in verse 12,

"Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried , he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.

13 Let no man say when he is tempted , I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man:

14 But every man is tempted , when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.

15 Then when lust hath conceived , it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.

16 Do not err , my beloved brethren.

17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

18 Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.

19 Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear , slow to speak , slow to wrath:

20 For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.

21, Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls."

Each of us suffer being in this world, and the demon inspired conditions that surround the children of God. Some suffer more than others for reasons we do not understand. But we endure and seek a better life, as pilgrims and pioneers on this earth, we know that this is not our home. But we are tested daily to refine those who are called by the Holy Spirit to repentance and putting their trust and faith in the captain of our salvation, Jesus Christ, the Messiah. In beginning that process of sanctification of our spiritual lives, we are continually tempted by Satan the devil and his evil hordes of demons. We have a big bull's eye on our backs and Satan would love to see anyone of us fail. God planted the seed of His Holy Spirit meshed with our spirit that can never be undone. He has put His mark on us. Now it is within our spirit to follow Him, being grateful, or succumb to feelings of guilt for still being human. We struggle to become more Christ-like in our everyday lives.

Romans 8: 13 *“For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die : but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live .*

14 , *For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.*

15, *For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry , Abba, Father.*

16, *The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:*

17 , **And if children, then heirs; heirs of God , and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together .**

18, *For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.”*

FEELINGS OF GUILT OVER BEING BORN IN THE USA

Let us return and examine again why secular Americans may feel guilty about being something they cannot help but be. Whether you are white, black, or some other nationality, you were born that way. You are in a country by history has been the most privileged of any nation on earth. Why would Patti Davis make a statement such as this about feeling guilty about her station in life? Because I believe they have a guilt of who they are, what they are, and what they have achieved by human methods, because they have no one in their life to be grateful to. Liberals or progressives in this country have a deep seeded feelings of guilt, because as Ann Coulter rightly put it in one of her books, “they are 'Godless.” They don't recognize God, so they feel guilty when they see a poor person in the gutter. These people who see the problems of this country, or for that matter the squalor that is in other countries and the only emotion they have is “guilt”. They don't feel grateful, as they don't have God, and they don't recognize sin. They see the conditions around this world, and they seek ways to solve those problems without God's intervention or help, and they wonder why things are progressing worse and worse.

Every human person feels bad for the conditions of the downtrodden, the afflicted, and the poor person as it's in our DNA, but the liberal without God, has no place to go with his feelings that are inbred into each of us, so they internalize it. Problem is, they project it onto the rest of us and drag us along for something they can't do much about. Instead of feeling grateful about being who they are, they feel guilt. I believe that is what Patti Davis was expressing to Peggy Noonan. I don't know her spiritual condition, but it would stand to reason, if she doesn't have a walk with the Lord of Lights, who came down to this world to save men from their sins, then she may be feeling guilty about the world and it's conditions. She may not recognize that sin produces the afflictions of mankind since Adam and Eve introduced sin into our world.

Every Christian person, a real born again individual who has been buried with Jesus Christ in baptism and changed their focus in this life, looks to the next life and is grateful, (no, thankful) that God called them out of this world, guaranteeing them eternal life by depositing an earnest of His Holy Spirit residing with their own.

HE WHO OVERCOMES.....

Though we struggle daily with a sin nature, God has promised each of us a glorious future. We need not fear, but persevere building character, and building patience for our blessed hope. Romans chapter 5,

1 *Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:*

2, *By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand , and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.*

3, *And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience;*

4, *And patience, experience; and experience, hope:*

5, *And hope maketh not ashamed ; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.*

6, *For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.”*

We must overcome this world, as He overcame this world as Jesus told us in John chapter 16

33, “These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer ; I have overcome the world.”

So why are any of us having feelings of guilt? We should be thankful and grateful for His sacrifice on Calvary.

NOTHING CAN SEPARATE US FROM THE LOVE OF GOD!!

Paul confirms in this chapter in Romans 8 that is so glorious, that it should make any believer shout with a glad heart.

28 *“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.*

29, *For whom he did foreknow , he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.*

30, *Moreover whom he did predestinate , them he also called : and whom he called , them he also justified: and whom he justified , them he also glorified .”*

ARE YOU GUILTY OR GRATEFUL?

I don't mean to disparage your political affiliation, as this sermon has nothing to do with political beliefs. There is enough anxiety around us in this coming election to make anyone fearful. What it does do is focus on what is your motivation. Are you guilt ridden because of the lack of God in your life? Don't laugh, my friend if you be reading this and thinking “oh, brother.” or something along that line. Do you see the hopeful message that I've quoted in the above verses? Can you honestly say that you have peace in your life? Does this world satisfy your needs with it's political, secular and godless agenda? Not if you're honest with yourself you will admit, “only for a limited time.” Then many will feel lost, hopeless and some, even suicidal. That last description of suicide is growing by leaps and bounds in this “modern” world of a cesspool of sin we all live in. Does life seem too hard to endure? Are you experiencing pain that you find no relief from? By pain, it may be physical, emotional, or even spiritual. Do you awake every morning being grateful for another day, or dread another minute of this “hell” you live in? If you can say you're grateful, who are you grateful to? Yourself? Your family? Spouse, etc. etc...adfinito. Unless you fill the vacuum that we all have, that void inside of you that knows it must be filled with what made us, then you have those feelings of guilt that just won't go away.

I know what I speak of, as I see it every day in the young, old, and all in-between ages on the ropes of despair. Many drowning themselves with alcohol, drugs, or ending it all with suicide because they just can't take it any longer. They have no hope, no value, and they are in pain of this life. They struggle to make sense of their existence, but they find none in this world. You know what? There is none found in this world. There is only death and destruction from a sin filled life, devoid of what that empty space inside of you yearns for. That void is the lack of God. We were made by Him and He desires our company, but problem is, God is

Holy. How can we come to Him when we are without any self righteousness? *“Isaiah 64:6 But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.*

But there is hope and there is salvation for all who call upon Jesus Christ in repentance and dedicating their life unto Him, as Lord and Savior. It is so simple, even a child can do it. But it takes faith like that of a little child. Letting your heart be tender as one so innocent. He wants to take you in His arms and take away all your reproach and cleanse you from your sins. Isaiah 53,

5 *“But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.*

6, *All we like sheep have gone astray ; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.”*

Matthew 18:2 *“And Jesus called a little child unto him , and set him in the midst of them,*

3, *And said , Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted , and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.*

4, *Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.”*

Romans 10:

8 *“But what saith it ? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is , the word of faith, which we preach ;*

9, *That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved .*

10, *For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.*

11, *For the scripture saith , Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.”*

And the most loved of all passages that saved a tender hearted 10 year old boy at Vacation Bible School. Saved, because I believed what He said, and He gave me a glad heart, a grateful heart. John chapter 3:

16 *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish , but have everlasting life.*

17, *For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved .*

18, *He that believeth on him is not condemned : but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.”*

Again, are you full of guilt? Do you live with despair and find no joy in this life? Is one day just like another one before it, as hope dwindles in this world full of darkness? How awful that must feel. I never had those feelings, as I accepted my Lord and Savior at an early age, but I have experienced the knocks of this life and sin that every living mortal experiences from veering to the right or to the left of a straight and narrow pathway. But praise God, He brings His own back to center with just a loving hand. Have you experienced

that touch in your life? Have you wondered is there a better way? My friend, there is. His name is Jesus. Won't you accept His free offer of grace. What is grace? It is the undeserved favor of one in need. WE don't deserve His love, we don't deserve His favor, and we don't deserve His sacrifice in blood, His own blood on Calvary's cross for the sins of you, and for me.

What do you do to go from being guilty, to being thankful? Repent of your sins that all of us have committed with tears and remorse. Look upon Him who died for you and accept His payment in full, for all of your sins (past, present, and future), invite Him into your life as Lord. Believe that He died, and rose again to live eternally, so that we may live eternally as well. Believe that He will come again, and it just might be sooner than any of us think. You can achieve through His mercy something that will make your heart sing and a load of bricks will fall from your shoulders, called sin.

Do it today, while the invitation is open. Go from guilty to thankful in the twinkling of any eye.

This is pastor Mike Taylor, praying God's salvation through Jesus Christ our Lord, comes into your life today. If you need counseling, prayer, or just a listening ear, send me an email to realteam1999@sbcglobal.net. Or visit me online at www.churchofgod-usa.org, God bless you,

TILL WE MEET AT JESUS FEET