

LESSON NO. 11 - Please read again Acts 12:25 - 15:25 and Romans 1:18-32

- Acts 14:27 Now when they had come and gathered the church together, they reported all that God had done with them, and **that He had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles.**
- Acts 15:28-29 For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things: that you abstain from things offered to idols, from blood, from things strangled, and **from sexual immorality.** If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well.

Theme Question for this Lesson: Why was there such great rejoicing wherever Paul went and declared the truth about the love of Jesus Christ for mankind?

Answer: We are all guilty! We know it! Mankind's greatest burden is our guilt and fear. Guilt over our past and fear for the future where we are certain we will face righteous judgment from a Holy God. When the Holy Spirit has convicted us of our sins and gives us a new heart, the first overwhelming emotional reaction is the fruit of the Spirit: Love, Joy, Peace . . . The "new born one" is always filled with overflowing joy and gratefulness for the love of Christ who reconciled him into fellowship with his Holy Righteous Creator.

Comment: Paul and his companions delivered the truth about Jesus Christ in whom one discovers freedom. When a man believes and trusts in Jesus Christ as his all-sufficient Savior and Friend, he is relieved from Guilt and Fear. The shackles of the fear of death have been broken off. For the first time in his entire existence that man can breathe the pure air of freedom that he has been rightly reconciled to his Holy Creator. The Christ-follower receives pure joy in the place of abject fear of death. That joy is manifested in all his thoughts and actions because he realizes he has become a new creature.

- 2 Corinthians 5:17 Therefore, if anyone *is* in Christ, *he is* a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.

Question: What shackles, chains and suffocates fallen man? Sin!

Theme: We will do much good in regularly giving thanks for what we have been delivered from. This begins with truly thinking about the heinousness of sin.

- Genesis 2:16-17 And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil **you shall not eat**, for in the day that you eat of it **you shall surely die.**"

Truth: Do we even remotely comprehend the holiness of God? No evil can reside with God in heaven. There was only one sin [disobedience / rebellion] which Adam could commit, eating a piece of fruit from one single tree in the entire Creation.

Righteous, omniscient **God knew exactly** what even one single act of disobedience and rebellion would produce in His perfect created order.

What then, was produced from this single act of disobedience and rebellion?

- Galatians 5:19-21 Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: **adultery, fornication, uncleanness**, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told *you* in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.
- Romans 1:18-32 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven ... they are without excuse ... they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts ... their foolish hearts were darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools... God also **gave them up to uncleanness**, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves...served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. ... God gave them up to vile passions. ... **women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature. Likewise also**

the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful... God gave them over to a debased mind...being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality...

Truth: God's first command and blessing conferred upon man was to have a people like Him and together they were to be fruitful and multiply as they filled the entire earth with creatures who would love their Creator.

- Genesis 1:26-27 Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." So God created man in His *own* image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. Then God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

Truth: The devil hates Holy God and hates everything God loves. He especially hates men and women whom God made in His own image. The devil's entire purpose is to lie, deceive and destroy relationships! First, between man and God. Second, between man and his fellow man.

Question: What area of humanity is the very first place the devil chose to attack?

Answer: Marriage! God's perfect plan of union between a man and woman to whom He had given dominion over the entire earth. The first recorded attempt of the devil to separate a man and his wife was simply by enticing Eve to first take a bite of the fruit. The devil introduced the horrific thought of questioning Holy God's authority and goodness.

- Genesis 3:1 Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said to the woman, "Has God indeed said, 'You shall not eat of every tree of the garden'?"

The serpent called God a liar!

- Genesis 3:4 Then the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die."
- Genesis 3:6 So when the woman saw that the tree *was* good for food, that it *was* pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make *one* wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate.

Truth: Do we realize that every death, every pain, every tear, every fear, every sickness, sorrow, sadness was caused by ONE SINGLE SIN? It only took one act of disobedience and rebellion to condemn the entire human race, and also, to condemn and mark for utter destruction the entire universe [see Isaiah 34:4; Romans 8:32; Isaiah 65:17; Isaiah 66:22; 2 Peter 3:13; Revelation 21:1-2].

Comment: God is perfectly holy. One single sin necessitated and brought about the destruction of the entire created universe and death to every human being born. By God's perfect love the solution was found to reverse the destruction brought about by the single sin of Adam. Our perfectly loving God sent His perfect Son to die at the hands of sin-filled men. Jesus' perfect life and blood was accepted as a perfect substitute for our own sins.

- Hebrews 9:22 without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.
- 1 Corinthians 15:22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all [who believe and trust in Jesus Christ] shall be made alive.

We all died in Adam. He was the human representative for all of humanity. All people came from his loins, his offspring yet to be born.

Upon our "new born" experience we are placed in Christ. When He died for our sins as our perfect representative, we also died with Him.

- Galatians 2:20 **I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me;** and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.
- Colossians 3:2-4 Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. **For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.** When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.

With this context in mind, can we understand more clearly why the Holy Spirit inspired the very first written counsel to the new Gentile believers in Christ to **abstain from immorality!**?

- Acts 15:28-29 For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things: that you abstain from things offered to idols, from blood, from things strangled, and **from sexual immorality.** If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well.

Truth: God never gives a command without FIRST giving the power to accomplish it. With God's first command to be fruitful and multiply, He created strong sexual desires in men and women to accomplish His commands.

Truth: As we have noted, this is also the first area which the devil attacks and attempts to corrupt into perversion or rebellion against Holy God.

Let's now examine how Paul continually warned, exhorted the "new born ones" in Christ to flee from immorality and embrace God's perfect design for marriage and sexual activity.

- 1 Corinthians 5:18 **Flee sexual immorality.** Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body.
- 1 Thessalonians 4:3 For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should **abstain from sexual immorality;**
- 1 Corinthians 5:9-12 I wrote to you in my epistle not to keep company with sexually immoral people. Yet **I certainly did not mean with the sexually immoral people of this world,** or with the covetous, or extortioners, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world. But **now** I have written to you **not to keep company with anyone named a brother, who is sexually immoral,** or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner—not even to eat with such a person. For what have I to do with judging those also who are outside? Do you not judge those who are inside? But those who are outside God judges. Therefore "put away from yourselves the evil person."
- Psalm 101:3 **I will set nothing wicked before my eyes;** I hate the work of those who fall away; It shall not cling to me.
- Matthew 5:27-29 "You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not commit adultery.' **But I say to you** that whoever **looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.** If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and

cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell.

- Revelation 21:8 “But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, **sexually immoral**, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death

Opening Theme Question for the Lesson: **Why was there such great rejoicing?**

I'm Free

I'm free from the fear of tomorrow
I'm free from the guilt of the past
I traded my shackles for a glorious song
I'm free, praise the Lord, free at last

God is deadly serious about sin, all sins, every sin, at all times and **we are all guilty!** We need a perfect Substitute as our Representative to pay our death penalty so that righteous God will forgive our sins and credit us with the perfect righteousness of His beloved Son.

- 2 Corinthians 5:21 For He [God] made Him [Jesus] **who knew no sin to be sin for us**, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him [Jesus].

When we think about the exceeding destructiveness of sin, it is no mystery why the “new born ones” are **so filled with joy when placed in Christ**. When He died, in some infinite, unexplainable to the human mind way, God accepted Jesus’ perfect life and death as complete payment for ALL OUR SINS, past, present and future!

- Mark 15:33-34 [The 3 hours when Jesus, the Perfect Man, was separated from His Father] Now when the sixth hour had come, there was **darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour**. And at the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, “Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?” which is translated, “**My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?**”

Knowing we have been rescued from our sins, saved from eternal punishment and have now being given the power to pursue sanctification and holiness, are we consumed enough by love for Jesus Christ to tell others of our freedoms in Christ? Are we filled with a compulsion to Tell Somebody today about our Savior that they also might be saved from the hopelessness of their sins and receive both the pardon from sin and the power to seek righteousness [Matthew 6:33]?

One way we can tell others the incredible sure hope we have in Jesus Christ is to write down the day and events of our salvation just as Paul recorded his own “new-birth” in Acts 9. Please send your Story to us so we may rejoice with you and glorify God’s great work!

We love to receive your questions. Your questions can be sent to write2stm@gmail.com or WastForMeRom832@gmail.com. All our love to you in Christ - Jon + Philis