

Theme: **Reforming our lives to God's word means seeing how sin brings saving faith.**

Text: Romans 3: 19 – 28

Season: 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost

Date: July 9, 2017

Place: Shepherd of the Rockies LCMS, Bailey, CO

*Grace and peace to you as you let the grace of God work in your life, from God, our Father, our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. Amen.*

Throughout the Pentecost season this year we are working on reforming our lives to God's Word with the use of the book of Romans. The Apostle Paul began the Book of Romans by tell us that we are God's chosen children and He wants us to receive His love, His peace and His joy in our lives. This love, peace and joy that God wants to give to you and me is the same love, peace and joy that everyone in this world is looking for in their life. So, you might ask, why does everyone have this perfect love, peace and joy in their life if God wants to give it to them? The answer to this question is given to us in the first chapter as the Apostle Paul says, **"For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Christian first and also to the non-Christians.<sup>17</sup> For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, "The righteous shall live by faith."<sup>18</sup> For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.<sup>19</sup> For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them.<sup>20</sup> For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So, they are without excuse.** (Rom. 1:16 – 20)

We have no excuse, because God has shown Himself in all of creation and the need for faith in God is given to us as a part of our nature but sin stops that faith and thus we need to let God reform our lives so that we can receive His love, peace and joy. Letting someone reform your life is a hard thing to do and that is true for a 2-year-old to 120-year-old. I can give you a whole lot of examples of this from the past week, as the Scheele family gathered for a baptism of the youngest grandchild, 'Levi.' In the midst of this family gathering there were 12 grandchildren ranging from the age of 3 weeks old to 8-year-old and we saw a lot of conflict between children wanting to do it their own way and yet not being able to do it at all without a mess. So, which one of the grandchildren do you suppose needed the most help and didn't want any help from

grandma or grandpa or anyone else? Well I'm sure you can all guess it was the 2 year olds, though the 3 and 4 year olds came in a close second at times. The help someone needs is hard to give when they think they are big enough to do it on their own, which starts when we are young and causes us problems even when we are a 120 years old. This is a problem every parent sees with their children and this is the problem that God has with in us as His children.

Sin is a problem at any age and in everyone's life for when we let sin be the driving force in our life it takes us away from the love, peace and joy of God and bring us into a world of hatred, turmoil and sadness. The Apostle Paul in chapter 3 reminds us of this as he says, **"Now we know that whatever the law says it speaks to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be stopped, and the whole world may be held accountable to God. <sup>20</sup> For by works of the law no human being will be justified in His sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin."** (Rom. 3:19 – 20)

Why does God allow sin to happen in this world? Some would say because of His great love for us and others would say to show us our need for Him in our lives. Still others would say that it is because we have to have free will, so that we can know what God's love, peace and joy is all about. The Apostle Paul say, **"God gave us a knowledge of our sins so that every mouth may be stopped, and the whole world may be held accountable to Him."**

The laws of God are in our conscience and in the Ten Commandments showing us our inability to become righteous and to receive the love, peace and joy that God wants to give to us. God's love, peace and joy is something that we all need in our lives but it is not something that we can earn or even help in accomplishing it for ourselves because we are filled with sin. In our lives, we fall short of God's perfect love, peace and joy and that brings us to the hatred, turmoil and sadness of this world. The Apostle Paul says it this way, **"But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it— <sup>22</sup> the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: <sup>23</sup> for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, <sup>24</sup> and are justified by His grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, <sup>25</sup> whom God put forward as a propitiation by His blood, to be received by faith. (Rom 3:21-25)**

A young family was getting into their car after church one Sunday, as everyone got into their seats, the father started the car and look back to see if everyone was buckled up. His son asked, "Dad, the pastor in his sermon today said that God's grace is free. So, if grace is free how come you keep telling us that everything in this world that is worth anything cost something." The father stopped the car and look at his son said. "The Pastor is right, John, God's grace is a free gift give to us because of God great love for us. Why God is constantly giving us free gifts in this world from life, to the air that we breath, the sun that warms the earth and the weather that makes all the earth grow and change. Yet the greatest gift of all was God's grace of forgiving all our sins so that we can live in His love, peace and joy now in this world and with Him for all eternity in heaven. That's why on Christmas and on birthday we give gifts to each other because of our love for them and God's love for us. But God's greatest gift also had a price to be paid and that price was God's only Son, for it was Jesus blood shed on the cross that paid for that free gift of grace, peace and love that God has given to us, just as pastor also said in his sermon." His son though a little while and then asked, "Dad if God gave us so many free gifts why do you still say that everything in this world cost something?" His father explained, "Because John we live in a world filled with sin and as long as we live in this world we will be paying for those sins in some way because we are not loving each other as much and God loves us."

The sin of the world is seen in all that is wrong with the world that we live in, but God sent His Only Son, Jesus Christ, into our world to show us the greatness of His love for us. The sad thing is that not all the world wants God's love, because they don't see any need for Him in their lives. In this world, they will continue to receive God's blessings as a free gift but when their life is over, then all those blessings of God will be gone and that's what we call Hell. The Apostle Paul explains why God sent His Only Son into this world this way, **"This was to show God's righteousness, because in His divine forbearance He had passed over former sins. <sup>26</sup> It was to show His righteousness at the present time, so that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus."** (Rom 3:25-26)

It is by God's law in our hearts and in our minds that we see our sins and the need for a Savior. It is in coming to know, through God's Word, what God did about our sins through His Only Son, Jesus Christ, that we come to know the greatness of God's Love for us, so that we

receive the peace that is beyond this world and the joy that comes from the hope given to us by the free gift of Grace. Grace alone, Christ alone, God's Word alone that's how God reforms our lives to receive God's love, peace and joy. That's why the Apostle Paul says, "**Then what becomes of our boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? By a law of works? No, but by the law of faith.**" <sup>28</sup> **For we hold that one is justified by faith apart from works of the law."** (Rom. 3:27 – 28)

It has become a common practice for a job applicant to "embellish" their resumes with a little boasting. This is done to distinguish themselves in the eyes of the interviewer, because many feel the need to be creative when listing their experiences and accomplishments. Doing so may make the difference between their being hired or not. Before God, however, there is no difference among us. Our resume states simply, "Sinner." When given into the hands of Jesus though we are given a new resume, for He puts our name at the top of His resume. All that He has done and accomplished is credited to us. And this is not to get a job but to receive the kingdom of heaven that He has prepared for us. Yes, reforming our lives in God's Word is seeing our sins and put our minds, hearts and our whole body into Jesus' waiting arms so that He can give us the free gift of His Grace that bring us into the love, peace and joy of God forever. This is the love, peace and joy that we are all looking for in life and this is the love, peace and joy that we need to share with one another in our life even if they don't want our help. Amen.