

20:20 Vision Ministries – Devotions by Roger Browning Week 30 (July 23-29, 2017)

This week, we will continue to study some attitudes and actions that will make us more effective in reaching the world with the gospel message.

Sunday, July 23 (read Matthew 5:13-16)

In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in Heaven. (Matthew 5:16)

As the salt of the earth, we are called to give flavor to a world that knows little or nothing of the love of God through Jesus Christ. If we lose our influence for any reason, how can we be useful in fulfilling His call to us (v. 13)? Likewise, we are expected to bring God's light into a world that is living in darkness. If we refuse to witness for Him, how will anyone understand His saving mission (v. 14-15)? Our goal is to bloom where we have been planted, making sure that when others see the good that we are doing, they will glorify our Father in Heaven instead of honoring us (v. 16). By His grace and for His glory! Are you willing to witness with this goal in mind?

Monday, July 24 (read Hebrews 10:19-25)

Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching. (Hebrews 10:25)

Because of the shed blood of Jesus that opens the door for you to come to the Father, and because He is our mediator and intercessor, we should draw near to God with confidence that He will hear and answer our prayers (v. 19-22). Our hope (assurance) is in Jesus Christ, so that we can concentrate on winning and motivating others, knowing that the Lord is interceding constantly for us (v. 23-24). Finally, we should be active in a Bible-believing church. I often hear people say, "I don't have to go to church to be a Christian." This may be true, but it is a violation of the command given in the printed verse. We attend church to worship God, to learn and to grow, and to be an influence and an encouragement to others. The Church is the bride of Christ! Don't neglect your groom!

Tuesday, July 25 (read Romans 5:20-21)

The law was added so that trespass might increase. But where sin increased, grace increased all the more . . . (Romans 5:20)

If you are trying to influence others for Christ, you must not have a holier-than-thou attitude. We all became sinners after God gave Adam a single command (Genesis 2:16-17), and he disobeyed that one and only requirement. The Lord later added 612 more rules and regulations and commands, so that our knowledge of sin would increase; however, as our recognition of sin increased, our understanding of His grace increased proportionately (v. 20). Before we came to Christ, sin **reigned** in our life so that we concentrated on sin, self and Satan (v. 21). Now, however, Jesus has robed us with His robe of righteousness (Isaiah 61:10), because "God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God" (2 Corinthians 5:17); therefore, grace **reigns** through righteousness. As a result, we can look forward to eternal life with Him, not because of our goodness, but because of His death on our behalf. We will continue with this thought in tomorrow's devotion.

Wednesday, July 26 (read Romans 6:1-4)

We were therefore buried with Him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. (Romans 6:4)

After reading yesterday's text on grace, some people say, "If I am saved by grace and my sins, past, present and future are all forgiven, why should I care how I live?" That question is asked only by those who merely join the church and are baptized, but who do not repent of their sins and give the control of their life to Jesus. The question comes up among Paul's listeners as well (v. 1), but he answers it in no uncertain terms in v. 2. While all Christians sin, no true believer should "live in sin." A lifestyle of sin shows that you have not come under the Lordship of Jesus. Allow your baptism to picture His death, burial and resurrection, and determine today that you are going to live a new life so that others will see Jesus in you.

Thursday, July 27 (read Romans 6:5-10)

For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, He cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over Him. (Romans 6:9)

Those who are baptized into Christ, in the manner described in yesterday's text, are assured of eternal life (v. 5). Because of Jesus' death and resurrection, the Holy Spirit lives in us, and we are no longer slaves to sin and the old sin nature (v. 6-7). We know for certain that we will spend eternity with the One who died for us (v. 8). Not only does death not have any mastery over Jesus, but also, death has no control over the true Christian (v. 9; see also John 11:25-26). That's why the Bible often tells you to die to yourself and to your own agenda, so that you can live for Jesus and His will (v. 10). Then He can use you as an effective witness in this sinful world.

Friday, July 28 (read Romans 6:11-14)

Therefore, do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. (Romans 6:12)

There is a big difference between falling short of the glory of God daily and allowing sin to **reign** in our mortal bodies (v. 11-12). The former is the experience of every Christian, because we live in these sinful bodies in this sinful world. We will never be sinless, but we should sin less each day of our Christian journey; however, if you allow sin to **reign** and take no thought of the effect your lifestyle has on your Christian witness, you might want to question whether you really gave your life to Jesus. Any of the parts of your body can be tempted to sin, so you always have to submit daily to the Lord (v. 13). Those who are battling addictions understand what it means to be slaves to sin (v. 14), so be careful that you don't dabble in habits that may become addictive. We will continue this thought in the next devotion.

Saturday, July 29 (read Romans 6:15-23)

For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 6:23)

Read this text carefully and meditate on how far you have come in the faith. Can you say, "I used to, but now . . .?" This entire text reminds you that, although you are saved and kept by **grace**, you should never continue to live in known sin because of that grace (v. 15-16). You are no longer a slave to your old sin nature, because you have been forgiven, and the Spirit of God lives in you to enable you to live a new life (v. 17-18). We all **used to** be slaves to sin, **but now** we have the power living inside to turn from that life of slavery and live under the Lordship of Jesus Christ (19-22). The wages of sin has not changed, but the Gift of God (Jesus) has paid the debt and set us free. Glory to His name!