

Lenten Faith Formation: Week 4  
St. Paul's letter to the Romans  
Chapters 6-8

## Chapter 6

### Dying & Rising with Christ in Baptism

- Entire chapter 6 can be summed up in verses 3-4
- Baptism as a death
- Purpose of chapter 6: Paul wants the church at Rome to understand that God has called us to the pursuit of sanctification and salvation (6:22), all toward the goal of eternal life (18-22)baptism
- Faith and baptism are Paul's twin instruments of salvation. The Roman Church calls baptism the "sacrament of faith." (Catechism 1253)
- Verse 6: presents a difficult concept:
  - Our old self/our sinful body

### Freedom through Death

- Death frees us from life's burdens
- Baptism frees us from the burden of sin
- \*\* One who has died with Christ in baptism has been "Justified" from sin (Paul's thesis)
- Paul has shifted from relating justification to faith. He now makes justification an effect of baptism. Baptism and faith join together to cause justification.
- The Roman Church calls baptism the sacrament of justification (Catechism 1992)

## Chapter 7

### The Law of Moses and The Law of sin

- Continuation of chapter 6
- Justification: God's gift, without cost, available by grace through faith
- Sanctification: the absolute identification with Jesus Christ (through his death, burial, and resurrection) by which God transforms sinners into a likeness of Christ

The Law has jurisdiction over an individual for the course of his life. (Verses 1-3)

- Paul then moves from illustration to application
- A death has taken place which frees the believer to embark on another relationship...a new union with Christ. Believers then are dead to The Law. Spiritual solidarity with Adam dies in baptism

### The Discourse of the Letter to the Church at Rome (vs. 7-end of chapter)

- The discourse involves the interaction between sin and The Law
- Use of the word "I" (Greek = ego)
- Is the discourse autobiographical or rhetorical?

### The Torah (The Law)

- 1) exposes sin (shows it for what it is)
- 2) exacerbates sin (shows the seriousness of it in order for the sinful action to appear in its complete rebellion against God)

### Chapter 7: Second Half (vss. 13-25)

- Theological analysis of sin within the framework of the human experience
  - The big conundrum: we know what we should do, we desire to do it, we fail to do it
- Qumran Scrolls: 2 spirits dwelling within 1 being: 1 spirit is truthful and 1 spirit is perverse  
Rabbinic teaching: 2 impulses tugging at the heart: 1 impulse is good and 1 impulse is evil

### Paul's use of term "in the flesh"

- Not just the body (as distinct from mind or spirit)
- A realm or state of being
- To be "in the flesh" is to exist in a fallen state, to live in a mortal body where sin asserts itself against the will of God
- Baptized Christians are NOT "in the flesh;" they are in Christ Jesus

### ONCE SAVED, ALWAYS SAVED??

#### Pelagius (354-418)

- Theologian and ascetic
- Believed by scholars to be Celtic and from a wealthy family
- St. Jerome said (in a very derogatory manner) that he was Irish
- In the year 380, moved to Rome
- Pelagius was greatly troubled by the moral laxity of Roman Christians. He accused Augustine of promoting this by his preaching on divine grace
- Augustine in turn accused Pelagius of denying the need for divine help
- Pelagius taught that the only grace necessary for salvation was The Law, that humanity is not wounded by Adam's sin, and that humanity is fully capable of fulfilling The Law without divine help
- Pelagius declared a Heretic at the Council of Ephesus in 431

#### Pelagianism in the 20<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> centuries

- Pelagianism is an active heresy in the contemporary church
- Man can avoid sinning
- Man can freely choose to obey The Law through human autonomy and free will
- Grace = the gift of free will, The Torah, and the teachings of Jesus. With these 3 gifts, one could live a moral life and thus gain salvation
- A done only with the grace of God. God enables but does not force

## Two Views

### The Council of Trent (1563-1565)

Document on the Decree of Justification (Chapter 8)

“None of those things that precede justification....whether they be faith or whether they be good works...merit the free grace of justification itself.”

### Planned Parenthood of SE Pennsylvania v. Casey (1992)

Justice Anthony Kennedy’s statement

“At the heart of liberty is the right to define one’s own concept of existence, of meaning, of the universe, and of the mystery of human life.”

## Chapter 8

### The Law of the Spirit and the Love of God

Three-fold focus

- The divine work of the Spirit
- The divine gift of sonship
- The divine purpose of suffering

### Children of God by adoption

Three theological concepts from Scripture

- Adoption
- Sonship
- Inheritance

### Revelation and redemption of the children of God

Suffering

- is important in the plan of salvation
- is nothing when compared to the blessings that await the Christian
- Christian hope is neither presumptive nor wishful thinking.
- We know by faith that God’s purpose will be fully and finally realized
- Our prayer in the midst of suffering is both heard and helped by God
- Suffering does not have the power to separate up from the love of God.

The summation of Chapter 8 is found in verses 38-39