

You Love Evil More Than Good  
Romans 7:14-25  
August 2, 2020

The title of the sermon today is “You love evil more than good.” I realize that some may say it is offensive. It is actually from the Bible, Psalm 52:3, which says, “You love evil more than good, and lying more than speaking the truth.” This psalm was written by David in a specific situation, referring to a specific person. We will explore than some other time. But like most of passages in the Bible we can use this passage for other situations, too.

As we look at some of the things people do in our society in recent days, we feel that some people actually love evil more than good and lying more than speaking the truth. For example, Capitol Hill Autonomous Zone or Capitol Hill Occupied Protest, or Portland Autonomous Zone, or a mob attack on police officers, vandalism and looting, destruction of statues and national monuments, destruction of other people’s businesses and properties, etc. Those people in the mob certainly appear to love evil more than good. But apart from all of that, would it be possible that Psalm 52:3 can refer to you and me?

Do we love to do evil more than good?

Great thinkers over the centuries have struggled with the moral inconsistency of humanity, some people called it “moral dissonance.” The great philosopher, Socrates, asked: “How is it that people know what is good but do what is bad?” They know what is good and what is expected of them but they choose to do something else. They choose to do what is bad, what is evil. Knowing what is good does not guarantee that people will choose to do good.

Mark Twain once remarked that Americans of the nineteenth century were fortunate to have “freedom of conscience, freedom of speech, and the prudence never to practice either of them!” You have conscience and freedom. You know what is good and evil. You know what is moral and immoral. You know what is ethical and unethical. Yet knowing it and having conscience do not warrant that you will always choose to do good.

Psalm 52:3 says, “You love evil more than good, and lying more than speaking the truth.”<sup>1</sup> “Loving evil more than good” probably is not the description of our character. I hope it is not.

Most of people do not consciously decide to do evil, especially good Christians like you. I don’t think any of you gets up in the morning and says to yourself, “I am so glad and I am alive. This is the day that I will do some serious evil.” I don’t think anybody with a healthy mind lives with that sort of attitude.

However, we do find ourselves, at times, doing bad or even evil rather than good: not in obvious ways but in subtle ways. When we do that, we hate ourselves because we know what we are doing is wrong. Our conscience is bothered. But sometime we feel powerless to change. Perhaps because we love what we do too much to change. We have done it many times and now, we are not only familiar with it but we feel comfortable with it. We love certain pleasure too much to change. In fact, the Apostle Paul admitted to having such tendencies. He said:

“I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate...I can will what is right, but I cannot do it. For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do.” (Romans 7:15, 18-19)

“Although I want to do good, evil is right there with me...Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I that do it, but sin that dwells within me. For in my inner being I delight in God’s law; but I see another law at work in me, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within me.” (Romans 7:20-23)

Paul is basically saying there is an internal battle within us. We have a desire to live a good Christian life. We want to be holy, to love God and others, and to be faithful to the Lord. At the same time, we want to enjoy in sin – whatever form it may take.

Jesus once said, “Very truly, I tell you, everyone who commits sin is a slave to sin” (John 8:34).

When most people think of the word “sin,” they usually think of a list of forbidden actions. They think of things like lying, cheating, stealing, committing adultery, etc. Different people have a different list of what they consider to be

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<sup>1</sup> Psalm 52:3.

“sin.” John Wesley once defined sin as “The willful transgression of a known law of God.” When you know what God expects of you and you willfully violate that, Wesley called it sin.

But when Jesus said, “everyone who commits sin is a slave to sin,” it seems like he is referring to something deeper than just individual sins. He doesn’t seem to say that when we commit individual sins, we become the slaves to those particular sins. Rather, he seems to say that when we are the slaves of the power sin, we have no choice but to commit sin, whatever form the sin make take. Before we commit different sins, we are already under the power of evil. And when we are under the power of evil, we are helpless but to commit all kinds of sins. And in order to be free from the power of sin and evil, according to Jesus, we need the truth. Jesus said, “You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:32).

Being under the power of sin is like a disease. And the individual sins we commit are the symptoms of the disease. Because we are under the power of sin and evil, because we are subject to the power of disobedience, we commit sin and continue to commit sin. We are powerless under the oppression of wickedness.

A famous preacher of many years ago had a clock in his church that was always wrong. Sometimes too fast, sometimes too slow, it was impossible to make it accurate. Everyone in the church knew that the clock was always wrong. So, one day, the pastor put a sign on the clock which read, “Don’t blame the hands—the trouble lies deeper.”

The same is true with people: the real trouble lies deeper than what shows on the surface.

However, Jesus said that there is a way to be free from the power of sin. And the way is “truth.” Jesus said, “Knowing the truth will make you free.” Experiencing the truth will make you free. Having the truth, following the truth will make you free. So, what is truth? Jesus said, “I am the truth.” He said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life.”<sup>2</sup>

The only way to be free from the power sin is to submit ourselves to the authority of Christ, to put ourselves under the power of the Holy Spirit. The sin that we need to be concerned about is not just the individual sins we commit; but

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<sup>2</sup> John 14:6.

rather it is the sin that we allow ourselves to be under the power of sin. It is the sin that we submit ourselves under the power of darkness.

The Bible says: “the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil. For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed. But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what they have done has been done in the sight of God” (John 3:19-21).

Romans 3 starting verse 10 describes human nature. It says, “As it is written: ‘There is no one who is righteous, not even one; there is no one who has understanding, there is no one who seeks God. All have turned aside, together they have become worthless; there is no one who shows kindness, not even one.’ ‘Their throats are opened graves; they use their tongues to deceive.’ ‘The venom of vipers is under their lips.’ ‘Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness.’ ‘Their feet are swift to shed blood; ruin and misery are in their paths, and the way of peace they have not known.’ ‘There is no fear of God before their eyes.’<sup>3</sup>

That is the sinful human nature. When we are ruled by our sinful nature, we love darkness more than light. We love evil more than good. So how do we free ourselves from the power of evil? We need to turn to the Lord. We need not only to repent of our sins, but we also need to submit ourselves to the power and authority of Christ.

The great evangelist, Dwight L. Moody, once showed an empty glass to his audience and said, “Tell me, how can I get the air out of this glass?” One man said, “Suck it out with a pump.” “That would create a vacuum and it would eventually shatter the glass,” Moody replied. After a few other futile suggestions, Moody picked up a pitcher of water and filled the glass with it. “There,” he said, “all the air is now removed.” He then explained that victory in spiritual battle does not come by working hard to eliminate destructive thoughts and habits. Repentance is important. But the victory is not accomplished by our effort to remove sins in our lives. Rather it is accomplished by allowing the Holy Spirit to take full control over us, our heart and life.<sup>4</sup> In order to overcome the power of sin, we need to be filled with the Holy Spirit. May the good Lord fill our hearts with his Spirit.

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<sup>3</sup> Romans 3:10-18.

<sup>4</sup> Today in the Word, September, 1991, p. 30