

Audio Transcript of Sermon

March 19, 2022

What We Can Earn And What We Can Receive

Hello. Thank you for joining us today. My name is Tom Laign with Sabbath Bible Study. We recently studied the connection of prophecy to love and that study reminded me of a section from the Book of Isaiah. In Isaiah fifty-eight verse one is an iconic verse that I've heard read many times.

Isaiah 58:1

1. Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins.

The very next chapter of Isaiah goes on to explain that it is sin that separated people from God to the point where even if people call out to God, God will not hear them. Through the prophet Isaiah, God explains that the people are blood-thirsty, living lives of sin while speaking words of sin while living in a society where people are devoid of any concept of justice preferring lies over the truth, living their life on the edge of danger than within the serenity of peace. They prefer a challenging and difficult lifestyle over a lifestyle that is based on peace. Isaiah fifty-nine verse one.

Isaiah 59:1-8

1. Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear:

2. But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.

3. For your hands are defiled with blood, and your fingers with iniquity; your lips have spoken lies, your tongue hath muttered perverseness.

4. None calleth for justice, nor any pleadeth for truth: they trust in vanity, and speak lies; they conceive mischief, and bring forth iniquity.

5. They hatch cockatrice' eggs, and weave the spider's web: he that eateth of their eggs dieth, and that which is crushed breaketh out into a viper.

6. Their webs shall not become garments, neither shall they cover themselves with their works: their works are works of iniquity, and the act of violence is in their hands.

7. Their feet run to evil, and they make haste to shed innocent blood: their thoughts are thoughts of iniquity; wasting and destruction are in their paths.
8. The way of peace they know not; and there is no judgment in their goings: they have made them crooked paths: whosoever goeth therein shall not know peace.

As Christians we know we are to live a different type of life, a life where sin does not rule our bodies. We also know that unlike the people referred to in Isaiah we are not to live lives of unrighteousness and are instead to live a life yielding ourselves to God. Romans six verse twelve.

Romans 6:12-23

12. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.

13. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.

Paul tells the Romans that sin is not to control our lives because we are no longer under the law but under grace. Paul then poses a question that has been part of the Christian mindset ever since it was first written by him. He asked if we should sin because we are under grace, and then tells us certainly not. He went on to remind the Romans that whoever a person voluntarily subjugates themselves to has control over that person, and that he encouraged them to subjugate themselves to obedience which leads to righteousness. Verse fourteen.

14. For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.

15. What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid.

16. Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?

He then added that through God, even though people were servants of sin, they have the opportunity to become servants of righteousness as they have been made free from sin. Verse seventeen.

17. But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you.

18. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.

As Christians, we are to be as enthusiastic in serving the cause of righteousness as we once served unrighteousness prior to our calling, knowing that when we served sin, righteousness was an abstract concept even though sin leads to death. Now that we are called and have been given the Holy Spirit, we are made free from sin having become the servants of God, as we pursue eternal life, knowing that the wages of sin is death and the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ. Verse nineteen.

19. I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness.

20. For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness.

21. What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death.

22. But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.

23. For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Throughout the Bible we are given different examples of sin, and what is thought to be the very first New Testament book written after the death of Jesus Christ is no different. In the Letter of James, we are told that conflict between brethren comes from self-serving greed. Sometimes overlooked by the reader is the idea these letters were written to the church, so the people who James was cautioning against having self-serving greed were members of the church. He told the church that people ask and do not receive because what they ask for is to fulfill self-serving greed. James four verse one.

James 4:1-17

1. From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members?

2. Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not.

3. Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.

James warns those in the church against becoming friendly with the world. Just as Jesus taught that we have to love our family less than we love Jesus, we cannot hold the world on par to God. Our relationship to God must always be more important than our relationship with this world and the people who live in the world. Just like we love our family less than we love Jesus does not make our family our enemy, loving the world less than God does not make the world our enemy. We won't be friends with the world, and we won't be their enemy. We will simply put God first in all we do. We will submit ourselves to God and in resisting the devil, Satan will flee from us, and God will lift us up.

4. Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.

5. Do ye think that the scripture saith in vain, The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy?

6. But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.

7. Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

8. Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded.

9. Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness.

10. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.

We are not to speak evil of others, because when we spend time belittling others we have positioned ourselves to be a judge evaluating how others live their lives, instead of living our life according to how God would want us to live our life. Verse eleven.

11. Speak not evil one of another, brethren. He that speaketh evil of his brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law: but if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge.

12. There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy: who art thou that judgest another?

We are not to be presumptuous in our life relying on our own effort. We are to at all times rely on God Who will help us succeed according to His will. Verse thirteen.

13. Go to now, ye that say, To day or to morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain:

14. Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.

15. For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that.

16. But now ye rejoice in your boastings: all such rejoicing is evil.

James then provides a working definition of sin we can use in our daily life. James tells us if we know to do good and we do not do good, to us it is sin. Verse seventeen.

17. Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.

In John's first letter, he writes that we cannot walk in light and darkness, that we must either be part of team Jesus where there is no darkness, or we are part of team Satan where there is darkness. When we choose to walk in the light of Jesus our sins are forgiven, all of them. Anyone who claims to be without sin is a liar and the truth is not in them, and this shows we all need forgiveness of sin. First John one verse five.

1 John 1:5-10

5. This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.

6. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth:

7. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

- 8. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.**
- 9. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.**
- 10. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.**

For the Church of God there has been a desire to best understand the relationship between our sin and our relationship to Jesus Christ which leads to salvation. For instance, referencing the verses we just read, when a person sins, does that constitute walking in darkness that would cause a person to lose out on salvation? We start to have answers provided to us as we read the Bible. Returning to Romans chapter five we find that Paul tells us we are justified by faith. When we are justified by faith, it is like our faith allows for a spiritual judgment of not guilty to be adjudicated on our behalf. With this grace that comes through faith we can boldly stand rejoicing in the gift we have been given, even when this incredible gift is given to us during a time of tribulation. We know that God can use any circumstance, including tribulation to develop patience within us that will help us grow the fruit of the Holy Spirit. Romans five verse one.

Romans 5:1-21

- 1. Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:**
- 2. By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.**
- 3. And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience;**
- 4. And patience, experience; and experience, hope:**
- 5. And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.**

When we read the next few verses we see that as it is translated, when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. The word translated were, is from Strong's Greek word 5607, *on*, and in the Greek it is a present participle, present as signifying now not in the past. It's easier to understand the use of wording by changing to the past tense when translating in the English language, but if consistently translated and understanding the perspective, it

could be accurate to use the present tense. Inconsistent use of tenses could cause problems in understanding what is written.

What we can find in these verses is that while we were yet sinners, walking in the darkness instead of the light as we previously read, that Jesus died for us, when we were ungodly and without any spiritual strength. Verse six.

6. For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.

7. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die.

8. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

It is through faith and the blood of Jesus Christ that we are adjudicated not guilty of sin and we know we will be saved from wrath having received atonement that comes through the death of Jesus Christ. We know from Hebrews that Jesus only had to die once for sin to be forgiven. Paul reminds us that through Adam sin entered the world and that all have sinned, and that through Jesus Christ and the grace his death and resurrection provide, the gift of eternal life is provided. Contrasting law to grace, when looking at the law it is easy to see violations of the law. When looking at grace, there will always be enough grace to cover sin. Through Jesus many will be made righteous leading them to eternal life. Verse nine.

9. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.

10. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.

11. And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.

12. Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:

13. For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law.

14. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come.

15. But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many.

16. And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification.

17. For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.

18. Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.

19. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.

20. Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound:

21. That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.

In Galatians, Paul further explains the difference between being led by the Holy Spirit, walking in the light, and being led by the flesh, walking in darkness. Paul writes that we have been called to freedom, freedom from the penalty of sin, death. We know this freedom comes through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. We are reminded to not use this freedom for selfish purposes, to serve the flesh, but in love to serve one another. The flesh that Paul is writing about is not only sexual acts, but any act of selfishness. Notice in love we are to serve one another, not take from one another. We are then told loving your neighbor as you love yourself is how we fulfil the law. How are we serving one another? How are we loving our neighbor as ourselves? Galatians five verse thirteen.

Galatians 5:13-26

13. For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.

14. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

We are then warned against mutual self-destruction. It is easy to become discontent with others to the point we might despise others and this type of spiritual cancer can eat us alive. We are then told to walk in the spirit and not fulfil the lust of the flesh. Part of how we do that circles back to fulfilling the law by loving our neighbors as ourselves. It is when we are led by the Holy Spirit that we are not under the law, and the law is there to punish the works of the flesh. Verse fifteen.

15. But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another.

16. This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.

17. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.

18. But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law.

19. Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness,

20. Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies,

21. Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

We were just told in verse twenty-one that those who do the works of the flesh will not inherit the Kingdom of God. The word *do* in this verse comes from Strong's Greek word 4238, *prasso*, repeating something to the point of being a habit, your routine. If it is our habit to do the works of the flesh, to do these without any thought or reflection, to consistently do these at different times of day and in varying circumstances, then these are habits and we are doing the works of the flesh and would not inherit the Kingdom of God. *Prasso* is not a single or isolated act. Anyone who thinks that doing the works of the flesh is a one and done act may not realize they are using the very definition of the curse of the law. In the mind of these people when they have had the curse of the law removed from them by the sacrifice and resurrection of Jesus Christ and the resulting forgiveness of sin, they voluntarily reimpose upon themselves the curse of the law.

We are told to pursue the fruit of the Holy Spirit because there is no law against these knowing that the law of God is fulfilled in the concept of loving our neighbors as ourselves. Those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh, meaning we do not seek a life serving the lusts of the flesh but the fruit of the Holy Spirit. Verse twenty-two.

22. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,

23. Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

24. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.

25. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

26. Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another.

In his second letter, Peter writes that God's concept of time is much different than ours and His focus is not on a number of years but in bringing all people to repentance. God is very patient to all, so that all have the opportunity for eternal life. Living our lives on earth as mortal men, we have every reason to be aware of the lusts of the flesh, and Peter tells us to focus on the spiritual matters, because the world and universe we see will one day become spirit, and focusing on the fruit of the Holy Spirit is where our focus needs to be. Second Peter three verse eight.

2 Peter 3:8-16

8. But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.

9. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

10. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.

11. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness,

12. Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?

13. Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.

14. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.

15. And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you;

16. As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction.

Going back to Romans, Paul writes that there is no condemnation to those who are in Jesus Christ who walk after the Holy Spirit and not after the flesh. Walking after the Holy Spirit allows for righteousness to grow within us and we know we are doing this as we love our neighbors as ourselves. If we are wondering if we are in the Spirit where we can please God or are in the flesh where it is impossible to please God, we need to consider if we have the Holy Spirit. If we have the Holy Spirit, we are in the Spirit. Romans eight verse one.

Romans 8:1-11

1. There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

2. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.

3. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:

4. That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

5. For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit.

6. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.

7. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.

8. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.

9. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

10. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.

11. But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.

Circling back to the first verse we read today, we will continue in Isaiah fifty-eight to see its context. We are to cry aloud and show God's people their sin. Today, God's people are found within his church. The dialog of Isaiah fifty-eight shows that the people are concerned because they in their mind approached God with a mindset of being righteous even fasting. In the passage, God took exception to the people because they fasted for strife and debate, and did not fast to undo the heavy burdens. Instead of feeding the hungry these people sat in an assumed position of authority and judged others. They did not love their neighbors as themselves. These people despised their neighbors. Isaiah fifty-eight verse one.

Isaiah 58:1-14

1. Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins.

2. Yet they seek me daily, and delight to know my ways, as a nation that did righteousness, and forsook not the ordinance of their God: they ask of me the ordinances of justice; they take delight in approaching to God.

3. Wherefore have we fasted, say they, and thou seest not? wherefore have we afflicted our soul, and thou takest no knowledge? Behold, in the day of your fast ye find pleasure, and exact all your labours.

4. Behold, ye fast for strife and debate, and to smite with the fist of wickedness: ye shall not fast as ye do this day, to make your voice to be heard on high.

5. Is it such a fast that I have chosen? a day for a man to afflict his soul? is it to bow down his head as a bulrush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? wilt thou call this a fast, and an acceptable day to the Lord?

- 6. Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke?**
- 7. Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?**
- 8. Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily: and thy righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of the Lord shall be thy rereward.**
- 9. Then shalt thou call, and the Lord shall answer; thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I am. If thou take away from the midst of thee the yoke, the putting forth of the finger, and speaking vanity;**
- 10. And if thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul; then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noonday:**
- 11. And the Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones: and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not.**
- 12. And they that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in.**
- 13. If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable; and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words:**
- 14. Then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.**

Instead of being like the people of Isaiah fifty-eight and judging others we need to reflect and understand that our will should be that all people be saved even if they lack the knowledge we have been given, understanding that it is not knowledge that saves us, but the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. If we limit ourselves to be saved by the law, we are condemning ourselves because breaking one law results in disobedience to the law. We have faith that through Jesus we are saved and will have eternal life knowing that when called, whoever calls upon the name of Jesus will be saved. Romans ten verse one.

Romans 10:1-13

- 1. Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved.**
- 2. For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge.**
- 3. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.**
- 4. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.**
- 5. For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them.**
- 6. But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? that is, to bring Christ down from above:**
- 7. Or, Who shall descend into the deep? that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.**
- 8. But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach;**
- 9. That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.**
- 10. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.**
- 11. For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.**
- 12. For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him.**
- 13. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.**

As Christians, we have faith that through Jesus Christ we are saved, and that through Jesus Christ we are justified, adjudicated to be not guilty of sin. We have this hope for ourselves as we live our life walking after the Holy Spirit and not the works of the flesh, knowing that we must walk in the light of the Holy Spirit and not the darkness that is brought about through the flesh. We have this hope for ourselves and for others knowing that God's desire is that all be saved and come to repentance. All we could earn is death, because the wages of sin is death. Eternal life is a gift we are given through faith in Jesus Christ recognizing that we all need forgiveness of our sins and that without this forgiveness there would be no hope for us other than death. We focus our lives not on the works of the flesh, but on the fruit of the Holy Spirit as this leads to eternal life.

Thank you for joining us today. God-willing we'll get together next time on the Sabbath. Until then, thank you for joining us today.