

ROMANS
Lesson 161–January 18, 2015

Welcome To
BARAH MINISTRIES
a Christian Church
Rory Clark
Pastor-Teacher

Good Morning!

Welcome to Barah Ministries...a worldwide Christian Church based in Mesa, AZ...my name is Pastor Rory Clark.

I don't know the apostle Paul, the man who wrote at least half of the New Testament, the spiritual instructions to the current age of believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. All I know about him comes from accounts about him that are written by others who did not know him. I have never had the pleasure of shaking his hand. I have never had the pleasure of looking him in the eye. Yet I am looking forward with joy to the pleasure all of us who are believers in Christ will have in the future in heaven when we get to do both of those things.

Based on what I know of him, I think Paul is a good man.

You may wonder how I can say that? After all, Paul is a man who has committed murders. Many murders. If you look at his human resume, he has done so many things wrong that if you were reading about him in the newspaper, and if you read of all of the atrocities that occurred at his hand, you would be appalled. Ladies, if you were married to him, you'd have nothing good to say about him.

In fact, based on what I know of him, I'm surprised that when bible verses from his letters are read from this pulpit, that you don't get up and walk out! Well I know this. If you knew that I had done the same exact things that Paul did in his life, you would get up and walk out, too. You wouldn't want to listen to me. In fact, if you knew of the things that any of the writers in the bible had done in their lives...if you knew their skeletons...if you knew all the bad things about them...you wouldn't want to hear what they had to say, either.

The writers of the Word of God are very much like today's professional

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athletes. Most of them are good guys who want to do good things. Imagine what it is like in sports for the man who wants to do good. The image of who they are gets shaped in our minds by an entity, the media, who are much like the kingdom of death...vicious liars who seek to destroy.

I read an amazing article written by Golden Tate, a wide receiver for the Detroit Lions of the National American Football League. In the article, he mentioned that he was accused of having an affair with his former quarterback Russell Wilson's wife, which is alleged to have lead to Russell and his wife's eventual divorce. He denied the allegations. Here's an excerpt of what he had to say about the incident in an article called, "Silence Isn't Golden."

GOLDEN TATE
"Silence Isn't Golden"

The false rumors about me served to open my eyes and to sensitize me to what I read or hear in the media.

GOLDEN TATE
"Silence Isn't Golden"

Imagine, for a moment, walking in my shoes—having malicious and damaging accusations flying fast and furious, only you had no way of stemming the tide; no one person to call out...no one person to demand a retraction and an apology from.

GOLDEN TATE
"Silence Isn't Golden"

Now, imagine yourself squarely in the public eye, facing thousands of people lambasting you for something you didn't say or do.

For the apostle Paul, and for the professional athlete, the things Golden Tate is describing happen to them in the public eye, in full view of everyone. For people like you and me, these same things happen in the privacy of our homes. Malicious and damaging words fly between us, coming fast and furious, with no way to stem the tide.

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Yet there is something I know about all of us who are listening to this message right now...we are good men and women. We would describe ourselves the same way Paul describes himself in Romans, Chapter 7, Verses 21 to 24. As we wrestle with our demons and with the attacks from Satan and the kingdom of death, we would think to ourselves what Paul says out loud...

ROM 7:21

I find then the principle that evil is present in me, the one who wants to do good.

ROM 7:22

For I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man...

ROM 7:23

...but I see a different law in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin which is in my members.

ROM 7:24

Wretched man that I am!

In today's lesson, I ask you to consider a question...

QUESTION FOR REFLECTION

How does Satan and his kingdom of death influence your use of freedom?

You are always being influenced by someone other than yourself to use your freedom. Who are you listening to? Are you listening to God and His Word? Or are you listening to Satan and his destruction. Because Satan, the enemy of God wants to destroy everything that is precious to you. Most of the time, we are willing victims.

Welcome to a place where you can get your soul tuned to the right channel, to the God channel, WGOD, through the study of the Word of God.

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MUSIC AND REFLECTION

Be Occupied with the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ
Enjoy the Singing of His Praises

The Voice of Truth

Let's begin our worship of the Lord with a song...June isn't with us today, so we'll hear music from another source...let's begin with a song by Casting Crowns called THE VOICE OF TRUTH.

OPENING PRAYER

Let us pray...

We're grateful to you, Heavenly Father, for the privilege of studying Your absolute truth...the Word of God...

Thank you for always reminding us in Your Word that we are good men and women, not because evil is not present in us, but because we have willing hearts that continue, on a daily basis, to be open to Your Word...

Thank you for always being the one we can turn to in the face of tribulation...those times when we get sucked into the winds of the hurricane...

We ask you Father to restore our peace in times of trouble...to clear our minds in times of tribulation...to use our freedom for peace and not for destruction...teach us today how to handle the ups and downs of our lives...

We ask this through the power of God the Holy Spirit...in Christ's name... Amen.

TODAY'S STUDY

How does Satan and his kingdom of death influence the believer in Christ's use of freedom?

Turn in your bibles to Romans, Chapter 6 where we continue our study of Paul's letter to the Romans, a foundational biblical work that teaches us the Christian Way of Living. The letter opens by dealing with a subject near

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and dear to our hearts and to our everyday, moment by moment experience...this question...

QUESTION FOR REFLECTION

What is the proper use of your freedom?

We considered that question a couple of lesson ago. You are always being encouraged to use your freedom. You are being encouraged by God to use your freedom to “take advantage” of Him in this way...

TAKE ADVANTAGE OF (Meaning 1)

To use someone or something that is favorable to your success for positive gain

You are being encouraged by Satan, the enemy of God, to use your freedom to “take advantage” of God in this way...

TAKE ADVANTAGE OF (Meaning 2)

To exploit...to use someone or something for selfish ends

What’s your choice? What IS the proper use of your freedom? In the last lesson we got a partial answer to the question. One use of freedom is faith! What is faith?

FAITH

A gift from God that allows you to use your free will to place your complete trust and your complete confidence in someone or something

In Romans Chapter 6, Verses 1 and 2, Paul is asking you to consider the proper use of your freedom...

ROM 6:1

What shall we believers in Christ say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase?

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ROM 6:2

May it never be! How shall we believers in Christ (such ones as we...the children of a King), who died to sin (as an established fact at the moment of our salvation), still live in sin (as if sin is still our master)?

The use of freedom is a fantastic subject, and for the next few lessons we're going to stay right here and focus on it.

To look at freedom, we're going to take a trip over to Paul's letter to the Galatians. I'm going to do something I have never done in all the time I have been a Pastor...I'm going to read the book to you, and I'm going to give you an overview of what it says.

The book of Galatians is a short book...only six chapters, and there is nothing really remarkable about it to the casual observer. If you did what many Christians do as a goal, to read through the bible in a year, when you got to Paul's letter to the Galatians you would breeze through this six chapters without breaking a sweat. In my bible with the big print it covers two columns and nearly eight pages.

Paul's letter to the Galatians is a letter on freedom. Freedom is what separates Christianity from religion...freedom is what separates Christianity from legalism...freedom is what separates Christianity from lasciviousness...freedom is what separates the United States from China...freedom is what separates the United States from Russia...freedom is a difference maker. How you use your freedom...how you use your free will...how you make choices is what makes you different from everyone else in this life. You can say anything you want about me as a person...about what I do and what I don't do...about how good I am or how bad I am...but one thing is certain...I will bet money that you do not know a single person personally who, for the last fifteen straight years, has gotten up in a pulpit every week to teach someone, something, from the Word of God. If you do, you know a Pastor. If you do, and you're at the other end of this message, you probably know me. And the stories I have told from this pulpit are stories of freedom...because Christianity is a series of divine victories that are rewards to the obedience of those who are free. Misery is the story of those who allow themselves to be cheated out of their freedom by Satan and his organized system of death, promoted by his demon army. Ephesians, Chapter 6, Verse 12...

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EPH 6:12

... (as believers in Christ)... our struggle is not against flesh and blood (human beings), but (our struggle is) against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.

When we encounter difficulties, we'd like to think that the problem is what we see with our eyes... other people... but our problem is really what is going on in the spiritual realm... Satan and the kingdom of death have an organized and invisible army that is designed to attack our souls with the influence suggestion of how to use our freedom against ourselves... in the book of Galatians, we'll see Pula describe this as "spying out your liberty." Satan and his organization want to cheat you out of your freedom by encouraging you to use your freedom against yourself. It's a shame when you let him succeed. John, Chapter 8, Verses 31 and 32...

JOH 8:31-32

So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, "If you continue in My word (if you have faith in what I say), then you are truly disciples (students) of Mine; and you will know the truth (through experience), and the truth will make you free (able to choose what works for you)."

Take a five-minute break.

BREAK

Change My Heart O God

Welcome back!

As we read the book of Galatians together, I want you to notice a pattern. It's a pattern that happens over and over in our lives. It's a pattern that happens over and over throughout the bible. Thus, that's why we call it a pattern! Here's the pattern...

IT STARTS WITH A PERSON FROM GOD

The Apostle Paul
a Man from God

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Paul lived most of his life in religion...most of his life in legalism...and according to Second Corinthians, Chapter 12, he had a thorn in the flesh...he had a malady in his body...we don't know what it is but perhaps it was his bout with lasciviousness...who knows...the point is, like most of us, Paul was quite imperfect...Paul was quite human...say anything negative about him that you want, but he was a man from God who wanted to do good...a human...a Christian...just like you and me...a person who had to decide on the proper use of freedom.

THE PERSON IS A BEARER OF A GIFT FROM GOD

The Gospel Message
the Free Gift of Salvation
for All Who Believe

What is the gospel message? It's a divine disclosure of an eternal truth sent through a man of God and distributed to whosoever!

THE PERSON FROM GOD DELIVERS THE MESSAGE

Faith Alone in
the Lord Jesus Christ alone
is the ticket to eternal life

John, Chapter 3, Verse 36 sums it up...

JOH 3:36

He who believes in the Son has eternal life (the ZOE life); but he who does not obey the (command to believe in the) Son will not see (the Zoe) life, but instead the wrath of God the Father abides on him."

John, Chapter 3, Verse 16 tell to whom the gift is directed...

JOH 3:16

"For God the Father so loved the world unconditional, and so much, that He gave His uniquely born Son (the God-Man), that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life (the resurrection life...the ZOE life)."

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THE MESSAGE IS A REQUEST TO FREEDOM

Believe in Christ
or
Reject Christ
Your Choice

What's your choice? What is the proper use of your freedom when you get the gospel message directed at you?

THE KINGDOM OF DEATH SEEKS TO RUIN YOU

They Spy Out Your Liberty
They Disintegrate Your Unity

If you make the right choice, the choice to accept the gift of eternal life through faith alone in the Lord Jesus Christ alone, the Kingdom of death comes in to “spy out your liberty” ... to “disintegrate your unity” ... to get you to use your freedom against yourself.

That's the pattern. As we take a look at the book of Galatians, I am confident you will notice the pattern.

Let's read the first chapter together.

<READ GALATIANS CHAPTER 1>

As we read this book together we'll notice the pattern. We'll also have to make a choice.

You are always being encouraged to use your freedom. You are being encouraged by God to use your freedom to “take advantage” of Him in this way...

TAKE ADVANTAGE OF (Meaning 1)

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You are being encouraged by Satan, the enemy of God, to use your freedom to “take advantage” of God in this way...

TAKE ADVANTAGE OF (Meaning 2)

To exploit...to use someone or something for selfish ends

How does Satan and his kingdom of death influence the believer in Christ’s use of freedom? They encourage us to use our freedom against ourselves. Remember this...

Liberty is something to be enjoyed,
but it is never enjoyed by slaves

The Promises of the Lord Jesus Christ

When God makes a promise...
it’s a guarantee!

2PE 2:20-21

But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one’s own private interpretation, for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men carried along by God the Holy Spirit spoke directly from the exact thinking of THE God, the Lord Jesus Christ.

2TI 3:16-17

All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

2TI 2:15

Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth.

CLOSING SONG

Come See a Man

CLOSING PRAYER

Let us pray...

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THANKS - INTERCESSION - PETITION

And we pray that You continue to shape the messages from this pulpit that are an accurate reflection of Your unconditional love, Your glorious Person, Your lucid thinking, Your impeccable work, and Your magnificent essence...we ask this through the power of God the Holy Spirit, in Christ's name, Amen.

Thanks for coming...for watching...for listening!

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