

**Sermon Notes of
Guest Speaker Ron Morgan's Sermon on June 13, 2021:**

**"What's it all about Alphie? The Gospel According to Ron
(Romans 8:1-39)"**

[In today's sermon, guest speaker Ron Morgan on Zoom shows us that God loves each one of us and His plan is that we will become heirs with Jesus Christ in the kingdom.]

Introduction:

- A Kindergarten teacher was observing her classroom as the children drew pictures.
- The teacher would occasionally walk around and see each child's artwork.
- As she approached one little girl who was working especially hard, she asked what the drawing was.

- The little girl told her: "I'm drawing God!"
- "But sweetie," the teacher replied, "No one actually knows what God looks like."
- Automatically, the little girl continued drawing and said: "Well, they certainly will in a minute!"

- Ron's hope today is to refresh in our magnificent a little bit better picture in our minds of what God looks like and what WE look like in the eyes of God.
- Ron wants us to imagine being in the presence of God where He is making all these promises personally to each one of us.

The Revised Common Lectionary:

- According to the schedule this is the Proper 6, the third week after Pentecost.
- First scripture reading: 1 Samuel 15:34 - 16:13.
 - Samuel is disgusted with Saul. Did not return to see him again.
 - The Lord regretted that he had made Saul king over Israel.
 - The Lord sent Samuel to see Jesse because HE had chosen one of Jesse's sons to be king.
 - The process of sorting through all of his sons.
 - God said, "Do not consider appearance or height."
 - The last and the youngest – David is chosen and anointed.
 - From that day, The Spirit of the Lord came powerfully upon David.
- Second scripture reading: Psalm 20 which is a psalm of David. It's a beautiful prayer and blessing.
- Alternative first reading: Ezekiel 17:22-24.
 - God plants a sprig of cedar that high on a mountain top – it becomes a noble cedar, bears branches and produce fruit.
 - Then God says, "I am the Lord; I have spoken and I will do it."
- Third scripture reading: Psalm 92:1-4;12-15 which is a song for the Sabbath day. A prayer and blessing for the righteous.

- Alternative second reading: 2 Corinthians 5:6 -17 which tells us: "Therefore we are always confident and know that as long as we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord. For we live by faith not by sight." [verse 6]
- Fourth scripture reading: Mark 4:26-34 which is "The parable of the Growing Seed."
 - This is what the kingdom of God is like – A man scatters seed on the ground and the seed does its thing and we don't know how.

Today's sermon:

- Now, as we watch or listen to the news today, it's all pretty bad, which can be depressing.
- If we concentrate on what's being fed to us, we can come up with the saying, "What's it all about Alphie?"
- So, the first part of Ron's sermon title is: "What's it all about Alphie?"
- And the second part of his title is: The Gospel According to Ron."
- Ron is going to share with us today his point of view of the gospel.
- The gospel is so big that Ron doesn't think anyone can tell us the entirety of the gospel truth.
- The first part of his question to us: Does everything go? Are we entitled to do what we think and feel?
- Answer: No – Everything doesn't go. There are rules and regulations.
- The second part of his question to us is: Are we all in the same boat or not?
- Yes – we all are on the same boat – but we could possibly be on different decks of the same boat.
- Now the destination of this boat has been guaranteed and secured through the death and resurrected life of our Lord, Jesus Christ.
- So, while the destination of this boat has been guaranteed, the faith of some of the passengers may yet be determined.
- And Ron is using the word faith in a couple of different contexts.
- First of all, the faith that everyone's ultimate destination to be in the kingdom of God may yet be determined.
- And the second kind of faith is: what is your faith in the plan of the salvation of God through Jesus Christ for you?
- Now, we're going to look at Romans 8 today.

Romans 8:1 (NIV), Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, 2) because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death. 3) For what the law was powerless to do because it was weakened by the flesh, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in the flesh, 4) in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

- The key here is that Jesus fulfilled the requirements of the law in the flesh.
- He didn't come to do away with the law, but to fulfill it.

5) Those who live according to the flesh have their minds set on what the flesh desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. 6) The mind governed by the flesh is death, but the mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace. 7) The mind governed by the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. 8) Those who are in the realm of the flesh cannot please God.

- We don't have to live perfectly but we should live in accordance of the Spirit.
- The Spirit doesn't make us perfect, but the Spirit wipes away our penalties.
- As, we see, the mind governed by the flesh has a lot of problems.

9) You, however, are not in the realm of the flesh but are in the realm of the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, they do not belong to Christ. 10) But if Christ is in you, then even though your body is subject to death because of sin, the Spirit gives life because of righteousness.

- In other words, when we are in the Spirit, we have life, as a gift from Christ.
- We should wish and hope and pray for the best for everyone, but we don't have the right or the power to automatically qualify everyone for eternity.
- That's a gift that God bestows.
- Today, some people are quite content to live in the flesh, because they don't believe in God.
- But Ron does hope and pray that God will ultimately change them and that all will be in the kingdom of God.

11) And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of his Spirit who lives in you. 12) Therefore, brothers and sisters, we have an obligation – but it is not to the flesh, to live according to it. 13) For if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live.

- We need to believe this.

14) For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God. 15) The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father." 16) The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. 17) Now if we are children, then we are heirs – heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.

- We all have a spirit within us – that is why we identify so much with the struggles of man.
- Now, once THE SPIRIT himself testifies with our spirit – we know that we are God's children.
- And being God's children, we are then "heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ."
- Now, what did we do to deserve this or earn this? Absolutely nothing, it's a gift from God.
- Now all of a sudden your front door bell rang, and standing outside were Jeff Bezos, Bill Gates and Warren Buffet.

- They said that they wanted to make us heirs along with their sons.
- That means that we have become the heirs of the three richest men on the planet.
- Now, you can have all the money of the world, but life will still be short.
- What we have been promised by God is so much greater than this.
- But what if we tell these three men that we really don't want to have anything to do with them or accept their offer.
- Would they say, "That's fine, but we're still going to make you heirs."
- Ron doesn't think that would ever happen.
- But God isn't offended by people's initial rejection.

18) I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. 19) For the creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed. 20) For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope 21) that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God.

- Our life is our learning ground, and God designed that way.

22) We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. 23) Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption to sonship, the redemption of our bodies. 24) For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what they already have? 25) But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently.

- The kingdom is here for us, because of the promise of God.
- Now, we have an obligation in this life to not live in the flesh, but to live in the Spirit.

26) In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans.

- That's so true – we don't know what to pray for.
- Do we pray for the police or the defunding the police?
- Do we pray for the Democrats or the Republicans?
- Do we pray for a balanced budget for our government or to help those suffering in society?
- Do we pray for a stronger border or for the people coming across the border?
- Do we pray for their apprehension or do we pray for them escaping into our country and living a life of freedom and peace?
- Yes, there are some conflicts even in our prayers, but the Spirit helps us in that.

27 And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God's people in accordance with the will of God. 28) And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

- We can't just quote the first half of verse 28, without quoting and understanding the last half of the verse because "God works for the good of those who love him, and have been called according to his purpose."

29) For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. 30) And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.

- Because we have been called by God, we shouldn't be putting ourselves above the rest of mankind.
- Once called, we are a blessed person, but we know that not everybody is at that point.
- But, we know that God wants everyone to come to Him.

31) What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?

- Christ died for all of mankind.

32) He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all – how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? 33) Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. 34) Who then is the one who condemns? No one. Christ Jesus who died – more than that, who was raised to life – is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.

- Now, we have to respond to what God the Father and Jesus have offered us.

35) Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? 36) As it is written: "For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered." 37) No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. 38) For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, 39) neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

- This is very powerful – nothing, absolutely nothing can separate us from the love of God.
- But, in the gospel according to Ron, it doesn't say that we can't separate ourselves from the love of God.
- We do have to be careful.

Philippians 4:4 (NIV), Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! 5) Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near.

- The Lord is near to us – He's not across the universe.
- God is near and His kingdom is near.
- The farthest we are from the kingdom of God is our physical lifetime.
- When we die, the next thing we know, we are in another existence.

6) Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. 7) And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

- So, when you watch the news, which is all kind of depressing, please remember what verse 7 tells us, “And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

8) Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable – if anything is excellent or praiseworthy – think about such things. 9) Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me – put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.

- Ron tries to pay attention to what God is doing around him and in him.
- For example, the homeless problem in California and in the rest of the country is pretty evident.
- Ron often goes to get some coffee at a 7-11, where a lot of homeless people gather around.
- One thing Ron notices is that when he does contribute some money to a sensible homeless person, they always say, “God bless you!”
- Now, have you ever thought that when a person says, “God bless you!” God might look and see who they are talking about?

10) I rejoiced greatly in the Lord that at last you renewed your concern for me. Indeed, you were concerned, but you had no opportunity to show it. 11) I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. 12) I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. 13) I can do all this through him who gives me strength. 14) Therefore, brothers and sisters, we have an obligation – but it is not to the flesh, to live according to it.

- The key word in these verses is “learned”.
- Paul has “learned to be content whatever the circumstances” he finds himself in.

Conclusion:

- Now, let’s go back to Romans 8:12:

Romans 8:12, Therefore, brothers and sisters, we have an obligation – but it is not to the flesh, to live according to it.

- Ron wishes us all God’s peace, which transcends all understanding.
- Let’s not be anxious for anything even though there’s a lot of anxiety right now.
- Please remember that our life struggles exist between birth and death, but our promise from God is secure.