

CLEAR THE AIR: Burning Issues Confronting Christians Today

Sermon #6: THE BIBLE AND ADDICTION

(DRUGS, ALCOHOL, NICOTINE, PORN)

Galatians 2:20; John 8:36

INTRODUCTION: THE BIG MYTH

- **The Lie the Church Believes About Addiction**

"Addiction is so difficult to get free from that we need more than what God has provided in Christ—and it is up to us to do what we need to do."

- **It's Worse Than a Disease**

Medical studies have offered evidence that suggests there may be a genetic propensity towards certain addictions in some people. But to simply relegate addictive behavior to the category of "disease" greatly diminishes hope in Christ for victory over it.

In truth, addiction is *worse* than an incurable disease. It is spiritual bondage, and programs that rely on what the person has to do will not work permanently. The good news is, that God has an answer for spiritual bondage: "if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed" (John 8:36).

THE TRUTH TO HELP PEOPLE FIND FREEDOM FROM ADDICTIVE BEHAVIOR

- **If I'm So Good, Why Do I Act So Bad? A review of Romans 7:15-20**

1. He doesn't want to do the bad behavior, but hates it.
2. He is no longer the one doing the bad behavior, but sin, which dwells in him.
3. Nothing good dwells in him—that is, in his flesh.

- **Three preconditions for a person to find freedom:**

- 1) Desperation: a willingness to give up on yourself, your resources, and anything you can do.
Only when all our plans and agendas are in the toilet and we are convinced that apart from Christ we can do nothing are we able to receive God's answer. This sounds devastating—and it is—but it is a wonderful place of release where we find our freedom.
- 2) A desire to walk with God, not just get rid of the problem.
- 3) A dependence on Christ alone, not Christ plus your program, the 12 Steps, your group, your counselor, or anything else.

Ask yourself:

“Do I want advice or an answer?”

“Do I want to cope or to change?”

“Do I want to rehash the problem, or do I want resolution?”

• **The Birthright of a Child of God**

Romans 6:1-2 What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? 2 By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer?

You're dead to sin. You may not feel dead to sin, you don't act dead to sin, you don't even look dead to sin, but God says you're dead to sin. Truth is what God says, regardless of your feelings. Reality is how God sees you, regardless of your actions.

How do you die to sin? You don't! You have already *died* to sin (Romans 6:2). Our identity is an issue of belief, not experience. Our identity originates in the historical fact of our co-crucifixion and co-resurrection with Christ.

It's Not Up to Us

Many Christians struggle with addictive behaviors and cannot seem to get free because they don't really have an understanding of the completeness of God's grace.

Through Jesus Christ, we didn't get just forgiveness and eternal life. Salvation is not just addition, it is transformation. “God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God” (2 Corinthians 5:21). That in a nutshell is the gospel

CONCLUSION: LIVING IN THE FREEDOM CHRIST HAS PROVIDED

God's plan is not to strengthen you, but to weaken you. His plan is not to improve you, but to break you of your self-sufficiency. His plan is not to change you, but for you to exchange your life for Christ's life. God is not going to give you anything else, because He has already given everything to you. You have Jesus. You have it all. You are complete in Him.

There is a price to pay for freedom and it is brokenness—the condition that exists when we've given up all confidence in our own ability to manage life. You can't live two lives. You can't live your life and Christ's life. Not until you know that Christ is your life and that your life is hidden with Him in God. Not until you know that is the only life you have and you can say with conviction: “I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me” (Galatians 2:20).