

Title: *Reigning in Life*
Series: *Romans: Living Free*
Date: Feb 6/7, 2010

NOTE TO LEADERS: This is an abridged version of Pastor Dan's sermon notes, with the addition of possible discussion questions, for your own personal study and to use in your life group meeting. Please review these notes well in advance of your meeting, add your own questions and direct the discussion as you see fit. The key to a good discussion is to keep it simple, to ask several "open-ended" questions and to give opportunity for everyone in the group to contribute.

Introduction: Salvation by faith in Christ promises to every person eternal life. **Romans 3:23** says that everyone on this planet is infected with the same terminal spiritual disease – sin. The good news is that when we have faith in Christ we can stop the disease of sin's advancement, begin to reverse its effect and **reclaim the potential of our lives. This potential for our lives is about much more than merely overcoming sin; it is about reigning in this life and in the life to come.**

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS: Pastor Dan commented that the life we live on earth is "boot camp" for eternity. What do you think he meant by this? How do you think this has been true in your own life?

Text: Romans 5:12-21 Ask a group member to read the text.

DISCUSSION QUESTION: We see the word "reign" five times in these verses – vv. 14, 17 and 21 (you may want to read these verses again). According to Paul, "reigning" is the fundamental characteristic of the Christ-centered life. What do you think it means to "reign in life"? Give some examples from your own life.

I. Definition of the word *reign*. The word *reign* comes from the Greek word *basileou* – meaning king or kingdom (see vv. 17, 21).

- **Romans 5:17** *For if by the one man's offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.)*

In the times of kings, everyone had a very clear understanding of what it meant to reign. Kings had great power to do as they pleased – both for good and for bad. It spoke of authority, influence and power.

Greek Dictionary defines *basileou* as:

- 1) Reign: to be king, to exercise kingly power, to reign
 - a) of the governor of a province
 - b) of the rule of the Messiah
 - c) of the reign of Christians in the millennium

2) to exercise the highest influence, to control

Paul says all of us are influenced by two men – Adam and Christ - and the two epochs they initiated, one is the reign of death and the other is the reign of life.

II. Reign of Death v 12-14

12. Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned--

14. ... death reigned.

A. Death came through sin

Death entered the world through the transgression of Adam. Romans says death reigned from Adam to Moses – even though the Law was not yet given. Man during those days was not so much a transgressor but more like a trespasser – wandering from a dependence on God to a selfish life. Death continues to reign for those who under the curse of Adam.

B. Result of Adam and Eve's sin.

We are all children of Adam and we will all wake up sooner or later in some moment of truth to see the **self-centeredness** of our lives: We see the sheer **egotism** that dictates our actions; we treat “self” as god. The old life produces futility, corruption, condemnation, restlessness, and death. And it manifests itself in lust and in cruelty, in jealousy and in envy, in hate and in sharpness, in resentment and in bitterness, in laziness and, oh, so many other ways.

C. Sin is natural. Life without Christ can not deal with the evil that is at our core. Though we can appear good and respectable for awhile, ultimately its end is **futility** and **death**. There is not a thing *you* can do about it -- not a thing! This is what Paul calls "*the law of sin and death*," (**Romans 8:2**).

Who taught you how to be lazy? How to be jealous? How to be envious? How to be greedy, and cruel, and impatient, and bitter? Do you have to plan these out carefully each morning when you get up? Do you think ahead, and say, "Well, now, in such a situation, I am really going to let my anger go -- I'm going to blow my top, and, oh, will I tell her off!"

You accomplish these things, as the old song says, by *doing what comes naturally*.

- Earnest Hemingway, before he died, said it well, "*I live in a vacuum which is as empty and as lonely as a radio tube when the batteries are dead and there is no current to plug it into.*"

III. Sin increases through the Law

Romans 5:20 *Moreover the law entered that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more,*

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS: Discuss Romans 5:20. Read the verse again. What does it mean? How would you explain the purpose of the law? What illustration or metaphor could you use to explain this to an unbeliever or seeker? Can you share an example from your own life where grace “abounded” for you?

The Law shows us our condition – it gives the **perfect diagnosis** that we are born with the disease of sin. You may feel pretty good but a blood test shows that you have a fatal disease. When you hear the Law you know that you are a sinner. The problem is that the Law has **no remedy** – it only increases the knowledge of sin.

The Law leaves everyone without excuse, brings our sin out into the open and intensifies our feeling of guilt.

IV. Reigning in Life v 15-21

A. Christ came to rectify the effects of Adam

- **Romans 5:18 (Message Bible)** *Here it is in a nutshell: Just as one person did it wrong and got us in all this trouble with sin and death, another person did it right and got us out of it. But more than just getting us out of trouble, he got us into life!*

Contrast: Both Adam and Christ have affected all mankind. Adam is the source of all natural life and Jesus is the source of all spiritual life. Through Adam all die. Through Christ all can live. One initiated an epoch of sin and death while the other an epic of grace and life.

DISCUSSION QUESTION: Can anyone share about an experience early in your Christian life when the “reign of Christ” dethroned the “reign of sin” (an area of sin) in your life?

B. The gift of righteousness is *not like the offense*.

- **Romans 5:15** *But the free gift is not like the offense. For if by the one man's offense many died, much more the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abounded to many*

First, it's cost was far greater. Adam ate a piece of fruit, Jesus Christ gave His life. One's disobedience is nothing like the other's obedience.

Second, it is more than just giving us a second try. Christ did not come die and rise again and say “Ok, since I cleaned up Adam's mess we will try this again. So, Bob, don't disobey Me and you can have life without death.” Rather, eternal life is now a gift for us to receive by faith. It has been taken out of the realm of Law and made a promise..

Third, it is has a much greater scope than Adam's sin. The gift of righteousness is not only now receiving the glory that Adam could have had but it far greater than that! You and are now able to reign in life in a way that Adam could only have dreamed of!

C. Much more...

Romans 5:17 *For if by the one man's offense death reigned through the one, **much more** those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.*

Five times in Romans 5 there is the phrase 'much more' – verses 9, 10, 15, 17, 20. **There is a double emphasis in the Greek - 'much, much more.'**

Read these scriptures as a group.

- 5:9 *much more* saved from wrath
- 5:10 *much more* saved by His life
- 5:15 *much more* grace abounded to many
- 5:17 *much more* we shall reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.
- 5:20 *much more* grace abounds than sin

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS: Can you think of other scriptures that reflect this quality of the “much more” that we have in Christ that would encourage us today?

Examples:

- **II Cor 5:17** *Behold if anyone is in Christ is a **new creation***
- **Romans 8:17** *And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, an **joint-heirs** with Christ; if so be that we suffer with [him], that we may be also glorified together.*
- **Romans 8:37** *We are **more than conquerors***
- **Ephesians 2:6** *and raised us up with Him, **and seated us with Him** in the heavenly {places} in Christ Jesus*

DISCUSSION QUESTION: Where have you experienced the “much more” of Christ’s reign and victory in your life?

V. What does *reigning in life through Christ* look like? Let’s look at only five

1. Death is no longer feared.

The results of the eternal judgment have been predetermined. Hebrews says we no longer have the bondage of fear of death when we have Christ.

If you have a relationship with Christ you are saved right **now** – no if, ands or buts about it!

DISCUSSION QUESTION: If you had absolutely no fear of the unknown or the future how would it affect your life today?

2. Sin is no longer Master.

We will see in Romans 6 that sin no longer is said to have *dominion* over us. Sin's authority has been broken. Paul talks about *sin* in two ways; 1) acts of sinning, 2) sin as a power - like an alien force that wants to control you and possess you.

- I know those with sinful addictions struggle greatly with a host of problems but the hear the word of the Lord today, "*Sin shall not reign over you*" for you have '*received an abundance of grace*'

3. Circumstances no longer dictate joy and peace

When you reign in life you are filled with the joy and peace of the Holy Spirit (see Romans 14:7). The peace of God floods our hearts daily by the Spirit's special endowment.

- Example of *reigning* in a trial. You have a fender bender at a red-light what does it look like for you to reign over the situation? Answer: You don't give into anger or embarrassment or defensiveness. You minister to the other person. You tell the truth to the insurance agent. You lift your heart in praise. You use it for good.

DISCUSSION QUESTION: Share an experience from your own life in which you experienced joy and peace in the midst of difficulty, contradictory circumstances.

4. The works of the devil are destroyed

We can exercise kingdom authority. Many of our misfortunes and problems could be averted by reigning in life through applying kingdom power.

We *reign* over sickness, oppression, depression, demonization, etc by the One Jesus Christ.

We *reign* through a life of divine interventions, God's voice, and miracles.

We *reign* as we worship and pray with expectation that through them new doors for the Lord's work are opened

We *reign* as we don't grow weary in battle, give up in the trenches or complain in the delay.

We *reign* not in our own magnificent will power but only through the One Jesus Christ.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS: Read Pastor Dan's comments below. What might this look like in our lives? What spheres of your life would you like to walk in this kind of kingdom experience and authority in a greater way? What needs to happen in your life for this to happen?

*"Here is where some Christians may get nervous. The **much more's** of Romans 5 says to me that life is not simply 'lets hold on until Jesus comes' but rather an ever increasing sphere of kingdom experience and authority – in all realms."*

APPLICATION: Following your discussion on this, break up into small groups of 2-3 and have each person share in a sentence or two where they would like to walk in kingdom authority in a greater way in their life. Take time to pray for each other in these areas.

This of course also means where there is injustice on a larger scale that the church can *reign* there as well. We reign spiritually but its impact is seen physically in the structures of power including education, business, arts, and entertainment.

- Today are you living below your inheritance as someone who has been justified by faith? Have you adjusted downward your expectations to 'just getting by'. To every one of us today, the Lord says, "There is so *much more*".

5. Reigning in the world to come.

Paul speaks of two overlapping ages – the present and the future. Kingdom power can be tasted now but not in its fullness. We have healing now but not in its fullness, we have deliverance now but not to its fullest, we have victory now but not in its perfection.

Presently, we '*taste* of the powers to come' and we see just the '*finger* of God' touch lives. The kingdom in its fullness is yet to come.

Will reign – is in the future tense of the verb. Its implication is that we are on a trajectory of fullness that will be completed in the future. We reign now but in comparison to what is coming it will look like we have experienced almost nothing!

Our future: Rev 22:5 *And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God give them light: and **they shall reign for ever and ever***

IV. Closing

Come on up today to a higher standard of living! Christ wants to give you a new life - a life that is not bound by the 'reign of death' but is characterized by the 'reign of grace'.

Romans 5:17 *For if by the one man's offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness **will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.***