

Romans 5:1-11; 8:31-39

¹Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,

²through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we boast in the hope of the glory of God.

³Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance;

⁴perseverance, character; and character, hope.

⁵And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.

⁶You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly.

⁷Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person someone might possibly dare to die.

⁸But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

⁹Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him!

¹⁰For if, while we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!

¹¹Not only is this so, but we also boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

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

³²He 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?

³³Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies.

³⁴Who 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.

³⁵Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?

³⁶As it is written:

“For your sake we face death all day long;
we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.”

³⁷No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.

³⁸For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers,

³⁹neither 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.

Good Morning My Sisters and Brothers in Christ. Before I do anything else I want to thank each and every one of you for your prayers, texts and emails during the past week. I was able to get an appointment with a reflexologist and since about 1:30 pm on Friday my pain has been greatly improved. I believe it was in answer to your prayers that I was able to see and move in a direction that is giving me some relief. Thank you!

On last Sunday, Resurrection Sunday, I asked

“Where Have You Put Jesus?”

I reminded you that Jesus was no longer dead in a borrowed tomb, but rather He had risen, ascended to His Father, and left us with some homework. I reminded you of the homework assignment by quoting one of my favorite scriptures, Matthew 28:19-20.

19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

I pray that sometime during the week you have considered the place Jesus has in your life. Because the place Jesus holds in your life has a lot to do with where you put Him. I don't know about you but when I get something that I really like I take care of it; I place it where I can see it often and reflect on what it says to me and I tell others about it. Ask yourself again: **“Where Have You Put Jesus?”**

Today I will attempt to build on last Sunday's sermon and ask another question:

“Are You (We) Becoming More Like Jesus?”

SHALL WE PRAY!

Father God sometimes we miss those things that you have given us in your Word because they are familiar and we do not read them with prayer and care. Please forgive us and remind us to do better. Now we ask that you help us to understand what Paul was saying to the church at Rome and help us to make application for today. Abba, use me for your glory and the edification of your kingdom. In the name of your Son Jesus the Christ. Amen and Amen.

“Are You (We) Becoming More Like Jesus?”

I have chosen my title this morning, fully believing that **you know you are called to be like Jesus**. But there may be someone in the house who needs to read some of the passages again for themselves so here are three:

Ephesians 5:1-2 (NIV)

¹ Follow God's example, therefore, as dearly loved children
² and walk in the way of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

2 Corinthians 5:17 (NIV)

¹⁷ Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!

1 John 2:5

⁵ But if anyone obeys his word, love for God is truly made complete in them. This is how we know we are in him: ⁶ Whoever claims to live in him must live as Jesus did.

Now let's add to that a portion of the passage before us this morning.

Reading from The Message

²⁹⁻³⁰ God knew what he was doing from the very beginning. **He decided from the outset to shape the lives of those who love him along the same lines as the life of his Son. The Son stands first in the line of humanity he restored. We see the original and intended shape of our lives there in him.** After God made that decision of what his children should be like, he followed it up by calling people by name. After he called them by name, he set them on a solid basis with himself. And then, after getting them established, he stayed with them to the end, gloriously completing what he had begun.

“Are You (We) Becoming More Like Jesus?”

In the 1990's the phrase WWJD – What Would Jesus Do - was very popular among Christians. We had bumper stickers, wall plaques and even jewelry with the initials WWJD. What Would Jesus Do was to help us to remember that in all situations we are called to reflect and do what Jesus would do. Even today if we type in WWJD we can find bracelets, book marks and other items. But the Rev. Dr. Marvin McMickle in a sermon to new pastors and young seminarians raised another statement for our consideration he said: **Do What Jesus Did**. I believe Dr. McMickle was telling us that it is not sufficient to simply consider what

Jesus would do but rather if we are truly to be transformed into His likeness, the likeness of Christ we are called to **Do What Jesus Did**.

I can hear someone thinking... how can I do in 2017 what Jesus did over 2000 years ago? Well, first of all, you have to know what Jesus did in order to find ways to act on it in your time and location. So, let's make a list of some of the key things Jesus did and measure how we are doing. Keep your scoring simple: Yes, Never, Sometimes.

1. Jesus was obedient to the Father – His Father – Our Father

a. As a child

⁴⁹ “Why were you searching for me?” he asked. “Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house?”⁵⁰ But they did not understand what he was saying to them. ⁵¹ Then he went down to Nazareth with them and was **obedient** to them. But his mother treasured all these things in her heart. ⁵² And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man. (Luke 2)

b. Early in His Ministry

¹⁰ your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven (Matthew 6)

c. At the end of His Earthly Ministry

³⁹ Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, “My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will.”

⁴² He went away a second time and prayed, “My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, may your will be done.” (Matthew 26)

“Are You (We) Becoming More Like Jesus?”

Yes, Never, Sometimes

2. Jesus spend time with the Father in prayer

a. At His Baptism

²¹ When all the people were being baptized, Jesus was baptized too. **And as he was praying, heaven was opened (Luke 3)**

b. During His Ministry

³⁵ Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed. (Mark 1)

c. When He was preparing to work

⁴¹ So they took away the stone. Then Jesus looked up and said, "Father, I thank you that you have heard me. ⁴² I knew that you always hear me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that you sent me." ⁴³ When he had said this, Jesus called in a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" ⁴⁴ The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face. (John 11)

d. Preparing for Death

³⁶ Then Jesus went with his disciples to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to them, "Sit here while I go over there and pray." (Matthew 26)

"Are You (We) Becoming More Like Jesus?"

Yes, Never, Sometimes

3. Jesus cared for others

Scripture records that Jesus performed 37 miracles all of them were for others. While it is fair to say that we may not be able to raise another from the dead; or change water into wine; or in a literal sense cast out demons and heal the sick; there are some things we can do in 2017 that demonstrate care for others.

³⁴ "Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. ³⁵ For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, ³⁶ I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.' ⁴⁰ "The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.' (Matthew 25)

"Are You (We) Becoming More Like Jesus?"

Yes, Never, Sometimes

37 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.

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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.