

Sunday

Week #2. Freedom From Blame

Blame is a disease of the soul – a form of judging – whereby someone is faulted for a circumstance of your life. Blaming conveniently takes you off the hook, relieves you of the responsibility for whatever part you may have played in the situation.

“Take comfort, and recollect however little you and I may know, God knows . . . and His mercy is over all His works.”

Charles Kingsley

So, since not one of us is perfect and since nothing we ever intend is without fault and since nothing you and I set out to do is without some measure of error, and, since nothing we ever achieve is achieved without the grace of God, it makes sense to put into play – to cure blame and faulty judging – to put into play the only cure there is:

Forgiveness

The word forgiveness nowadays has been watered down by careless practice, being little more than a shrug of the shoulders or a comment such as – “Don’t do that again.”

Forgiveness with punch, with vitality, with strength, with power, is a miracle, because, when God forgives us, we have imparted to us the versatility to be exactly the opposite of what we were before.

That’s pretty creative, because, if you’re a new person, a new form of life can come forth from you – all because you were forgiven.

So, from Scripture, we have an offer on the table – consider –

“Be even-tempered . . . quick to forgive an offense. Forgive as quickly and completely as the Master forgave you.” The Message (Colossians 3:13)

Forgiveness – you have to want it. We all need it. You have to want it and request it. Until then, nothing happens. To get at the power of the offer, we must request it. Then, and only then can we recognize the unspeakable wonder of the transaction – what Jesus did on the cross.

The Divine Miracle of Grace, flowing from Jesus, gives us the power necessary to forgive anyone we’ve blamed or falsely judged. The Bible says, “Be ye kind one

to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake has forgiven you."

When God forgives, He also forgets, promising to blow off our sins like a cloud. And a cloud is out of sight when it's gone.

It's crucial to recognize that more new life springs from acts of forgiveness than from any other action. You can't be forgiven without being changed by the forgiveness. Through forgiveness you receive the heredity of Jesus. Thereby your mindset becomes the mindset of the forgiven.

Thus, your role in the world changes. Your words bear witness to the fact that your heart has turned from blame and faulty judgments to forgiveness. So, now, your story affirms that anyone who wants to be forgiven has only to ask and they will receive the same gift you received.

A caution is to be considered here. You can't be forgiven for stuff you didn't do, of course. But, since there are things you've done that only you know about and since you've been shown the way to forgiveness – it stands to reason that if you refuse the gift of forgiveness and if you refuse to forgive those you've falsely judged and blamed in the past – there'll be a price to pay someday. That's reality. Everything else is illusion.

Week 2 Food Diary

Monday

Breakfast

Lunch

Dinner

Snacks

Tuesday

Breakfast

Lunch

Dinner

Snacks

Wednesday

Breakfast

Lunch

Dinner

Snacks

Thursday

Breakfast

Lunch

Dinner

Snacks

Friday

Breakfast

Lunch

Dinner

Snacks

Monday

Week 2 – Day 1

Morning Prayer

Theme: Ask God to heal our families

Today pray that your church family will show the love of God in their everyday lives, through loving each other, loving their neighbors, and loving their immediate families.

Evening Prayer

Theme: Changing what is, through the power of the Holy Spirit The Holy Spirit As A Source of Meaning In Food

A thing to do.

Monitor your body closely for a week and see what it reveals to you about how your foods influence your feelings of stress, of fear, of joy, of calmness, of fatigue, of worry.

Write down your impressions.

Then, consider whether fatigue might be causing a barrier in your becoming involved in service to others.

Pray for the Holy Spirit to give you the energy to serve others.

Wrapping UP

Let the day's events stream through your mind. Let them teach you. List five things you did today that were good. Thank God for each.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Make a list of six things you intend doing tomorrow. Ask the Holy Spirit's guidance.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

Tuesday

Week 2 – Day 2

Morning Prayer

Theme: Pray that God will heal our work communities

Today pray that your workplace will become a place of joy with spontaneous creativity, celebrating the pleasures of being and doing.

Evening Prayer

Theme: Changing what is, through the power of the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit As A Source of Divine Friendship

Reality – the claim of the Bible

Reality is better than illusion because it wins out 100% of the time. The Bible claims to put us in touch with reality through the work of deep inquiry – a work of the Holy Spirit. We are put in touch with God, and with the people and with the world He created. We are in touch with Jesus who redeems people and then loves them forever. We are in touch with our feelings of hope and despair; of doubt and faith, with our virtues and vices, with things visible and invisible, with things right and wrong, good and evil, living by faith, in touch with reality, conspicuously sane.

Thus, when people around us are going crazy with illusion, we can point them to the way of rich and relevant sanity – the Bible.

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Make a list of six things you intend doing tomorrow. Ask the Holy Spirit for help.

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- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

Wednesday

Week 2 – Day 3

Morning Prayer

Theme: Pray for the healing of our living communities

Today ask God to provide nurturing communities so that our children can actualize their potential and grow love throughout their lifetimes.

Evening Prayer

Theme: Changing what is, through the power of the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit As A Source of Divine Friendship

God's joy.

Read Psalm 126.

The world's vision of joy is a metaphor for cheap happiness made quick. The Psalm reminds us that the promises of God are with all those children of His who are wandering and weeping, and will be with them until they arrive home, exuberant, to "bring in the sheaves."

Thus, laughter doesn't exclude tears. Pain and hardship still come, but they are unable to drive out the happiness of the Redeemed.

So each day come home laughing, with armloads of blessing.

Pray for the Holy Spirit to fill you with God's Joy.

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- 6.

Thursday

Week 2 – Day 4

Morning Prayer

Theme: Pray for the healing of our nation

Today ask God to restore a sense of faith in our nation

Evening Prayer

Theme: Changing what is, through the power of the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit As A Source of Divine Friendship

Putting hope on the line.

Everyday you and I put hope on the line. The future is a projection, there is no assurance of what the next hour may hold.

Even so, hope is the only reasonable response to a future which has its foundation in the promises of God.

So, hope, as grace cultivated in the present, alerts us to the possibilities of the future as a field of action. Thus, we can embrace the present as a time of energy and joy and peace.

“So, roll up your sleeves, put your mind in gear. Be totally ready to receive the gift that’s coming when Jesus arrives.” (1 Peter 1:13, The Message)

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Friday

Week 2 – Day 5

Morning Prayer

Theme: Pray for the healing of the world

Today pray for world peace. Help protect the earth's future by promoting peace every day.

Evening Prayer

Fundamental Friday(A review of the Spiritual Foundations of Change)

Principle #2 - Gluttony and sloth are sins. (Proverbs 19:15,24 ; 21:25 ; 23:21 ; Ecc 10:17-18 ; Philippians 3:19; Isaiah 22:13)

Gluttony is, simply put, eating and drinking more than you need.

Sloth is, simply put, laziness.

Sin is the outcome of a relationship set up between you and the devil whereby you declare yourself boss over your eating and your actions. Thus, you choose to have an active, exciting life or you choose to "go with the crowd" and drift along, lazy-like, eating and drinking more than you need, calling your own shots, as boring as that is.

So, your sin is not the wrong of your eating atrociously or your lazy way of drifting along, it's your allowing yourself to be the person to whom that is happening, letting your heart give you bad directions, killing your dreams. But, the good news about the sins of gluttony and sloth are that you can be delivered from them. So, you have a choice. Either you believe God can deliver you or you believe He can't. Or, you want to be delivered. Or, you don't.

But, the moment you say you want to be delivered, the power of God becomes yours. Thus begins your growth in grace as the life of the Holy Spirit exerts itself against your tendency to continue eating as you wish.

Look at it this way. When you are born from above you will realize that the life of God has entered into you as eternal life and as light. When you walk in light as God is in the light, the sins of gluttony and sloth will no longer be.

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Saturday Eating Realities

Week 2 - Nutrition Basics (continued)

Fats - Fatty Acids

Good Effects - supplies energy to the body, carries vitamins, helps to build cell walls.

Bad Effects - are stored in the body as fat cells (adipose tissue) which accumulate around the organs. In large amounts they will clog up the blood vessels (clogged arteries).

Types of Fats:

1) Transfat - partially hydrogenated fatty acids - Found in cooking oils used to fry foods (French fries, chicken nuggets, chips, etc.) and in processed foods like commercially baked goods such as cookies, cakes, pies, donuts, fast foods, margarine, vegetable shortening). This type of fat is the most likely to raise the bad cholesterol and lead to heart attacks and strokes.

2) Saturated Fatty Acids - mainly come from animal products (dairy products such as milk and cheese or meats such as beef, pork, or chicken). Raises the bad cholesterol, increasing the risk of heart disease.

3) Monounsaturated Fatty Acids - Found in olive oil and canola oil used for cooking. May improve cholesterol slightly.

4) Polyunsaturated Fatty Acids - Found in sunflower oil and corn oil used for cooking, and nuts eaten for snacks. May improve cholesterol by lowering the bad cholesterol and raising the good.

5) Fish Oils (Omega 3 Fatty Acids) - Found in all fish. Herring, mackerel, salmon, trout, and tuna have the highest amounts. Have good overall health benefits by lowering cholesterol and reducing heart disease risk.

Simple Recommendations about Fat Consumption:

- 1) Eliminate Trans Fats - NO fried foods or commercially processed baked goods (cookies, cakes, chips, donuts, pies)
- 2) Limit Saturated Fats - Limit red meat to once a week. Limit cheese and use only skim milk.

Week 2 - Nutrition Basics (continued)

- 3) Monounsaturated/Polyunsaturated Fats are ok in moderation. Use olive and canola oil for cooking. Eat nuts for snacks.
- 4) Increase Fish Oils (Omega 3 Fatty Acids). Eat fish as much as possible (not fried).

Now, review your food diary from this past week. Try to get an idea of the amount and types of Fat you are eating.

Get ready to start the REDUCE Diet on Monday.

Review the Diet rules on page 269.
Review the shopping list on page 270.
Go shopping for the Diet #1 foods.

Start Diet #1 on Monday (page 271)

Make sure and chart your weight daily on the Diet chart (page 280).

Saturday's Message

Week 2

"Don't Leave God Out"

James 4:13-17

I have always been and still remain a firm believer in planning – making careful plans and working hard to carry them out. My wife of 46 years and I made plans for retirement and looked forward to special time together for many years to come. I was certainly shocked and troubled about our careful plans when vision problems made it necessary for me to stop driving a vehicle a few years ago and then when my wife died suddenly on May 5, 2006.

Recently, as I read Holy Scripture, I learned some important truths about planning.

1. In James 4:13-14, James stresses the uncertainty of the future. We make our future plans as did the businessman pictured in our text, but the truth is that we do not even know what even a day may bring forth. I believe that James would agree with me that planning is wise and good but he would have me learn that the right kind of planning must always include God and His will for our lives.

Jesus clearly taught this truth about the uncertainty of the future in Luke 12:16-21. Here we have the story of the rich, but foolish, man who made his fortune and built his plans for the future and never realized that that very night his soul might be required of him – his life might end.

The more I think about this lesson, the more grateful I am that we cannot really know the future. If we did, worry would likely possess our lives. Few things can ruin the joys of abundant life today like worry over our uncertain tomorrows. We need to plan and plan wisely by facing the reality that in the final analysis the future is uncertain. The future is in the hands of God!

2. The uncertainty of the future is NOT a reason to be fearful and inactive. Instead, it is a reason to accept the spiritual truth that we are completely dependent on Almighty God.

Some of the early Christian converts developed a kind of thinking that Paul and other leaders helped them to resolve. Some converts took the position that Christ was coming back and doing so soon. Therefore, they decided to sit back, focus on the second-coming, and wait for Christ's return for them. They became lazy, indifferent and unconcerned. This is not the Christian way and Paul and others worked hard to change this dangerous thinking.

James and Paul would have us to make all our plans in dependence on God. In I Corinthians 4:19 Paul writes: "I will come to you shortly, IF THE LORD WILL." And in I Corinthians 16:7 he declares: "I hope to tarry a while with you, IF THE LORD WILL PERMIT."

3. James closes our text with a warning. The warning in essence is this: When we declare our self-dependence even though we know in our hearts that we are to be dependent on God and committed to His will, we are sinning against God. James writes: "But now ye rejoice in your boastings (about all you are going to do in the future): all such rejoicing is evil. Therefore to him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin." The future is not in man's hands but in the hands of God.

It is my strong conviction that the Word of God teaches truths about planning for the future which can be summarized in the title of this message: "Don't leave God out." As we make our plans, let us follow Paul's example by saying "IF THE LORD WILLS I will do this or that." I will accept my dependence on God and will never leave Him out.

Reverend Phillip R. Morrow Sr.