

## Our Rights or God's

Romans 12:03a

Sermon Transcript by Rev. Ernest O'Neill

It's very easy to hear a brother like Clyde talking like that and say, "Well, it sounds very good and sure I'm for that business, I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me, and sure I know that somewhere in the realm of eternity that is possible, but I myself don't live there and I frankly think there are lots of people that don't live there." I think many of us would feel like that. "It would be nice to be able to say that and I know that in some ways it's true."

For instance, if I was Moses at the Red Sea with all the Israelites gathered around me and the Egyptian army attacking I could say, "I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me." Or, "If I were Reagan the President of the United States and Hinckley shot me, boy I would know that there were lots of people praying for me and it was necessary for me to get up and keep going so I could do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me."

"I know that it's true in that realm of great achievements and mighty works and mighty acts. Where I live I am not involved in that kind of glorious enterprise at all, I'm just involved in trying to be as like what God wants me to be as possible with my family, and with my colleagues at work, and with the people in my school and well, sometimes I manage it and sometimes I don't. But I think it's a bit like what Clyde says, what's the big deal? Who sees whenever I kind of cut at my wife a little? Who sees when I have that kind of resentment against my colleague at work? Do you really believe God gets all worked up about that?"

And yet loved ones, don't you feel we're just excusing ourselves? That those are really the things that spoil our lives. I mean, it is kind of the resentment deep down in our hearts towards the person on the other side of the aisle in the office that actually prevents them seeing the beauty of Jesus, isn't it? We know that fine well. We like to think it's because we don't speak to them about Jesus, or because we don't slip a tract onto their desk or something but we know fine well that the reason they aren't able to see the beauty of Jesus in us is because we have all kinds of resentments against them and critical attitudes toward them that we know foul up the whole air between them and us.

And we know it's the same at home. Why do our children have difficulty seeing Christ? Well, it's because we lose our temper at home, we are petty at home, we are selfish at home. Not all the time but at those times when it really counts, at those times when the children, or our wives, or our husbands can either see supernatural victory or they can see natural defeat. And so we know fine well that those so called little failings on our part are the very things that destroy our witness to others and indeed, they destroy us ourselves because you and I are constantly faced with that kind of verse in the Bible, "I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me."

And I don't know what you're like but I got to the point where I said, "Ah, that's a poetic exaggeration. It's just a hyperbole, it's just a poetic statement to express the generalized truth. But in actual detailed fact it isn't true." And yet I felt all the time my life was contradicting God's word and isn't that what brings uncertainty in our faith? I mean, you go to God in faith for your mother who has cancer, or you go to God in faith for your son or your daughter who is going the wrong way, or you go to God in faith for some financial situation and your faith is eaten away

repeatedly by the fact that you know your conscience is not clean before God.

You're not walking in the light that he has given you. You're not able to go before him and say, "Now the evil one has nothing in me, there's no reason why you can't answer me according to my righteousness as you did David, so Lord answer me." We can't do that because we know our life is filled with all kinds of secret failings in anger, and selfishness, and resentment, and discouragement, and disheartenment, and depression, and anxiety that aren't at all what God wants for us. And so we listen to Clyde but we really say, "No, I live more in Romans 7:15, I live more in that truth, the good that I would -- I want to do it, boy I want to live that way -- but the good that I would I cannot and the evil that I hate -- and I really do hate it when I lose my temper, I really hate it when I have unclean thoughts, I hate it when I'm angry with other people -- but the very evil that I hate, that's the thing I do. And I can will a thing but I can't do it."

And so of course, it doesn't matter how much you go to church, you see that your life contradicts God's word. I can do all things through Christ you strengthen me but in reality I can will what is right but I cannot do it. And that was the situation I was in and it was life when I learned that that situation was sub Christian. And I was like you, I believed that that was the way most Christians lived and probably it was, but I believed that was the way a Christian should live, that that was the internal conflict that went on until we see Jesus face-to-face. The battle against what we know is right and the battle of what we actually do in our own lives.

And it was relief when I began to see that that is sub Christian and that the reason that occurs is because there is a whole set of rights that I have inside myself that I have never ever thought I had to give over to Jesus. A whole set of rights that I never believed I had to give over to Jesus. And I'll tell you we're all connected up strangely enough with the rights he gave up on Calvary. He was the king of the universe, he could have just with one look destroyed everybody around that Calvary cross and he gave up the right to do that.

And gradually I saw that when he gave up that right he had me inside himself and he actually broke that right in me also. And that right was the right to destroy them with my anger or destroy them with my resentment, or destroy them with my criticism. And I saw that Jesus was saying to me, "Look, I gave up that right on Calvary and I gave over to my Father the God ordained right to do what he wants with those who are out to destroy me and I had you inside me when I died. When I died for all, all died and when you died inside me I destroyed that right in you." Now, the moment you agree with that that moment you'll be delivered from the carnal self that produces anger and resentment, and pride, and jealousy.

And that's it, loved ones, that's it. It all comes down to that kind of thing. When we're critical of our husband secretly, or our wife, or our son, or our daughter -- I don't mean outwardly critical, most of us are not dumb we keep quiet -- but inwardly critical, when we are inwardly critical of somebody else we are taking to ourselves the right to judge them and the right to criticize them. That right was destroyed in Jesus on Calvary and in order to retain that right in your own heart you have to ease yourself down out of Christ. That's it.

That's why when you're angry at least you're not living like a child of God, you're not living like a person in Jesus. The truth is you're not living like that because you're not actually in him at that moment. You've taken yourself out of Christ in order to take back to yourself a right that actually was never yours but a right that you have grabbed from God the Father.

Loved ones, the truth is you or I don't have any right to judge anybody, we don't. Who are you, who am I? We're pitiful little creatures. We know a few things right, a few little things right and a million things we don't know at all. We have no right to either judge each other or to judge other people. God has even given that right to his son. He gave to his son the right to execute judgment. If you say to me, "Ah yeah, but we have the right to point out where they are wrong." We don't, he sent the Holy Spirit specifically for that. It's one thing if you're in charge of a group of operators in a machine shop and certainly your job is to tell them how to run the machine. Certainly if you have people working with you in finances and they're making an error you have a responsibility to do that.

But in regard to their own inner heart attitude you have no right to touch it. You have no right to touch a person's heart and to judge, "Oh, they did that because they felt this." That is a right that only the dear Holy Spirit has. And what God is asking us to do is accept the place that he has given us in his son where all our rights were destroyed, even the right to lash back at somebody. And if you say, "But they'll destroy us, they'll destroy us if we don't lash back at them." Then they will destroy you, but at least you're in the hands of him to whom death is no problem. At least you're in the arms of him who can if necessary raise you from the dead.

It's the same with the things that most of us are facing with the recession. You don't have a right to worry, you don't have a right to be anxious. The sheer frustration of worry and anxiety tells us that. All the worry and anxiety in the world will not raise the bank balance. All the worry and anxiety in the world will not repair the automobile. All the worry and the anxiety in the world will not get a job. And it's as if God shows us by the sheer limitations of our worry and anxiety that we are not God, we cannot do anything about these things.

And the truth is, in Jesus we died to those rights, to those rights to be God over our own lives. And so many of us say, "Oh well, anger, jealousy, envy, pride -- I can see they're wrong -- but worry and anxiety, boy that's a very virtuous thing to do. When you worry it takes some kind of a guy to worry and to be anxious. It shows a real sense of civic responsibility." But you know, God put it on the same level with anger. He said, "Do not be anxious, don't be anxious for anything but in everything by prayer and supplication let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God which passes all understanding will keep your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." (Philippians 4:6)

Just a straight cut and dried approach you know. "Don't be anxious, let your requests be made known and carry on and let me determine the kind of life you're going to live. Maybe it will be a life without a car." That would be a tragedy. "Maybe it'll be a life without three coats, only one coat. Maybe it will be a life without a house. Maybe it will be a life without a job, but I'll guarantee you life. I'll guarantee you that I'll give you what you need and I know you well, I know you better than anyone else. I know you better than you know yourself and I'm going to give you what is needed to get you ready for this real life that we're going to engage upon together after this world is wrapped up."

And that's what the Father asks, that we accept that when Jesus died to his rights we, in him, died to ours and if we accept that and are willing for it, you'll find that his Holy Spirit will beget in you a delight, a joy, a love. I hate them stealing this word from us so I'm going to use it because it's a good word, a life of gaiety, a gay life. A life of delight, a life of joy, that's what God can give us. And he can give it to us the moment we step out of being God and accept that those rights are no longer ours.

So Lord Jesus, we have no right to be angry in order to call them back to heal. Lord, we have no right to resent because who are we to decide whether what they're doing is wrong. Lord, we have no right to be critical because who are we to judge anybody else? We were crucified with you, we don't exist in order to judge other people. We have no right to be worried or anxious because we can't control those things anyway and you will do for us what is right for us.

Loved ones, that's the area that God's Spirit wants us to deal with in order to bring us into victory over sin and inward feelings that show that we don't really trust him. And I would encourage you to see that you can come free, you can. And I would urge you again: have no truck with those things. Don't ever believe that anger is normal. Anger is normal for fallen man but not for man in Christ Jesus. Resentment is not normal for man in Christ Jesus. Worry and anxiety are not normal for men and woman in Christ Jesus.

In Christ we have been separated from our rights and in being separated from our rights we're separated from all the wrong passions that we use to try to keep ourselves in that position of God. Do you see what you're doing? You're trying to be God, that's why you sin. Do you see that? You're trying to be God, that's why you sin. You are. When your dad gave you a dollar, when you were seven or eight, he gave you it. The moment you started to worry about how to get more than a dollar you were trying to be Dad and there the strain came into your life.

It's the same with God and ourselves. The moment you try to judge other people you're trying to be God. The moment you try to put your circumstances right you're trying to be God. That's where the strain comes in and you're forced out of your position of gay, joyful, delightful, free, liberated living. So really there is inside you a dear spirit of Jesus that will be himself if you allow him to be. Let us pray.

Dear Lord, we have sensed you within us at times and we have sensed within us an unusual love for others. We have sensed at times a sense of joy and delight in life. I know at moments we've sensed a real freedom and liberty as if we could fly. But Lord, we see how so often these things have been destroyed, how so often they've been suppressed by all these feelings that we get when we try to govern things, or try to govern people, or try to ensure our own safety.

Lord Jesus, we see that we were never meant to be God. We were never meant to be responsible for our own safety, or for that of others. Lord, we're to commit those things to you and to accept Lord Jesus that when you died to your right to destroy us all for what we were doing for you, we also died to our right. And oh Savior, we would rest in you on the cross, we would accept that place and ask you by your Holy Spirit to cleanse our hearts from these things that destroy our home lives and our work lives, these works of the flesh, this anger, and jealousy, and envy, and pride, this bitterness that so often grips our heart.

Lord, we present ourselves to you again and would say cleanse our hearts by faith that we may live inside what we appear to be on the outside, carefree, kind, and loving people. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.