

[Gauger:] How badly do you hate your sin? A little? A lot? When was the last time you even thought about it? A new look at an ancient curse next.

Verse-by-verse teaching for day-by-day change. This is *PROCLAIM!* with Dr. Michael Easley, President of the Moody Bible Institute in Downtown Chicago. And, I'm Jon Gauger welcoming you to our Friday broadcast. Romans 8:12-13 is our text in a message that Michael has titled “Dead Reckoning”. Let's join him along with the Congregation of Emmanuel Bible Church in Northern Virginia for the conclusion of this great message.

[Easley:] Martin Lloyd Jones, Lloyd Jones is a wonderful Writer, but the guy was really depressed. I mean he really was. Lloyd Jones -- put it this way. “Pull it out, look at it, denounce it, hate it for what it really is, then you've really dealt with it.” Is that a sick guy or what? You know, the problem with that is it still doesn't fix it, does it? When I read that I go well, great Martin, but doesn't conclude it, doesn't help me. I mean, I hate to sin, but it's still there. It's still bamboo. I'm still hacking it down. I can't get rid of this sin that's rooted so deeply according to the flesh.

You know, some of you are -- you know, Roger Clemmons is probably the guy people love to hate, right? Roger Clemmons started out with the Boston Red Sox and the Toronto Blue Jays, then he went for the New York Yankees, and the Houston Astros. A Yankee fan was quoted as saying, “We always loved him unless he was a Red Sox.” He's the guy we love to hate. You have to hate your sin more than Roger Clemmons. You got to hate your sin more than terrorism. You got to hate your sin more than any malevolent creature that comes to your mind. You got to look at your sin, you got to pull it out of the closet, out of the shadows, out of the crevices of your heart and mind, and you have to look it full in the face and say, “This is disgusting, it's evil, it's wicked, it's not holy, I can't harbor it, I can't hide it. It is hateful, malevolent evil sin.” And, until and unless you begin there you will never walk in the Spirit of Christ. He does not hoodwink our sin. He doesn't say oh, that's not a big deal. Don't worry about it. We'll deal with it later. I paid for it already. He hates it. And, you and I have to have the same hate toward our sin. Don't coddle it.

Secondly, we have to accept responsibility. Paul says the same in Titus 2:12. Like every theology there's a pendulum of confusion here. On the one hand we try, try to make the flesh better. On the other hand, we can sort of give up and say I'm, you know, I'm impotent to help. I just give up. Both are wrong. But I don't think it's a balance either. I don't think it's trying a little less and giving up a little less somewhere in the center here. I think our paradigm needs to be changed entirely and say, well, how do I approach this thing?

When my children were little I used to do a thing with 'em to teach this whole idea of accepting responsibility. If I abdicate my responsibility in an area and I give up totally on it, then I'm sort of this passive well, maybe God will help me. That's wrong. Accepting responsibility is part of maturing. It's part of growing up. It's very ridiculous when we see an adult act like a child, isn't it? We say grow up. It's an inappropriate for you to live this way.

John Whitmer said it this way, “Our responsibility is a positive one to live each day under the power and the control of the Holy Spirit.” I believe I've shared this with you many times. On my screensaver on my computer for over five years when it would be on for like five minutes I had it set up, a marquis would roll across it and it would say, “Michael, who is going to control your life today, you or the Holy Spirit?” I had it on 3x5 card taped on the middle portion of my steering wheel for a number of years. I had it on my shaving mirror for a number of years. When I opened it up, “Michael, who is going to control your life today, you or the Holy Spirit?”

I say it to myself when I'm in meetings where I'm about to go nuts. Ever been in those meetings? Or when you're with your family and your children, and one of your children is about to, you know, they're going to see Jesus early if something doesn't change. And, you say, "God, I don't want to do this in the flesh. If You don't control me, I'm going to get in trouble here. I need Your help right now. I need Your Spirit to control me and I have to accept responsibility."

Thirdly, acknowledge I am 100% dependent on the Spirit of God. The only time we need God is when we need God, and that's a silly thought, but that's the way we live. When I have money, and I'm happy, and my car is working well, and I like my job, and all those things are fine; I don't need anything. We need the Holy Spirit 100% of the time, not just 10% of the time. We need a desperate dependence upon the Spirit of God in our lives.

When my children were little I would do this thing with them. I would make them put their legs together tight and make fists, and put their fists on their side, and hold themselves rigid. I would come up behind them and scoot them up by their fist and I would hold them like this and I would walk around the house with them like that. And, they would giggle with glee until they got limp or lost a little control and it was sort of balancing. And then, they would fall down and they'd say do it again, right, do it again, do it again. When you first started it doesn't work very well, but as they get used to it they can do this a long time. If they do it under the strength of themselves, holding themselves very rigid, they will only do it until they tire. But if they learn to sort of get in a position right, a posture, they can do it a long time.

I observed this yesterday. I was in the yard. You know, this is the time of year we get to rake leaves, right. So, I'm blowing with the blower and raking and hacking down the vegetation that's dead, you know. I'm working out there and I realize very quickly I'm starting to get blisters and I got to compensate. And, I do this every time. I do it every -- I never learn. I go, if I would quit holding that thing so tightly, I wouldn't get blisters. If I would quit pushing the machine so hard and let it work, it wouldn't hurt my hands anymore. If I adjust a little bit on the blower, it doesn't worry my hands as much in the same place and then become a problem later on. If I let it do its work, but I've got to be in a posture, right? I've got to let it work and I have to agree with it. You got to cooperate with the Spirit of God. It is not a total try nor is it a total abdication. It is a posture. It is a relationship. It's working with Him. And, I have to be 100% dependent upon Him and so do you. Our need is not partial, it is total. Our need is not only in a problem. Our need is every day, all day long.

Fourth and last, you will live, you will live. Life through death is the theme in the Book of Romans. The world says this is life. Everything the world says, this is life, is me, it's entitlement, itself, it's about me, it's acquisition of stuff, it's all about what makes me happy; just contrary in the Word of God. In fact, life in the Word of God is death. Dead reckoning before Christ leads to death and dead reckoning after Christ leads to life. It is that fundamentally different. I am no longer obligated to the flesh. If I dead reckon from the flesh, it will always lead to death. If I dead reckon from the death of Christ, I will always go to life. I can always leave this Christian life under the experience of knowing my point of departure in Christ is going to lead me the right way, never the wrong way. It's 100% accurate dead reckoning. You cannot live according to the flesh. You must live according to the Spirit because He has indwelt us and we are under obligation because of His great benevolence to let Him work through us. Who is the agency who can help us put our sin to death?

Now, I'm not into mantras, or self-talk, or spells and I want you to hear me real clearly, but I want to give you some very practical ways I do this. Let's say I go back to money, sex, and power; let's use those as an illustration. We're tempted in those three areas. So, when the sexual temptations come along I often tell myself well, what turns my head is turning my heart. So, if something turns my head is turning my heart, I need to evaluate that and turn away from it. I can't just stop in the flesh. So, what do I do? I say

I'm dead to that. I'm dead to that. That is an illegitimate means to illegitimate intimacy. I am dead to that, but I am alive in Christ. I am no longer obligated to the flesh. I am now under obligation to the Spirit. And, it is by His Spirit through Him that I can ask for help to come alongside to comfort me, to say no to the flesh, say I'm dead to the flesh, but I'm alive in the Spirit. And, true intimacy and true closeness is in Christ, with Christ, proper sexual intimacy with a husband and wife only. That is the way God fulfills the lie of the world that says you can get intimacy over here and you deserve it. That leads to death. Money, the acquisition of stuff, all that glitters isn't gold, but what sure looks like it.

Cindy and I are doing a Crown Study in our home. We are learning so much about stuff that we've assumed for so long. We are growing like crazy in this area. It's been so fun to do this together. Not fun in some ways, but it's been very good in some ways. And, one of the things he says in this section about debt, Howard Dayton says, you know, "If you have a debt, there's three things you do. Stop looking at catalogs, get rid of your credit cards, and don't go to shopping malls." Well, duh. I don't need a thing 'til I go to the mall. I don't need a thing 'til I see a Kohl's sale in the paper. I don't need a thing until my car just goes to Ross By Less by accident. I don't need any new shirts until I see new shirts on sale somewhere. I'm not saying we don't buy stuff and replace stuff. What I'm saying is the acquisition of material possession is, in affect, a way to feel good, to feel better about who we are, projecting ourselves, I feel better with new shiny things, whatever it is, over against my intimacy with Christ in the Spirit is where I'm going to find true satisfaction. That is death, this is life.

Same is true with power and control. If you're penitent mind is to control other people, what is it about? I'm using the force of my personality to get what I want. No, I'm dead to that. Jesus Christ, help me in Your Holy Spirit to no longer be obliged to the flesh, but be obligated by the Spirit of God to quit trying to control everybody else in my life. That's how you mortify the deeds of the flesh. You consider yourself dead reckoned. You are dead to sin and you are now alive to Jesus Christ. Your navigation determined your departure, how you're going to get where you're going to get. If you know the point of departure you got a good chance of going in the right direction. If you live according to the Spirit, you will navigate well. If you live according to the Spirit, you will get to your destination. You will find life. You will find good intimacy. You will find good contentment. And, most of all, you'll walk closely with Him in life.

[Gauger:] Four vital lessons from Romans 8, Verses 12 and 13.

Michael, I want to zoom in just for a moment on Lesson 2, Accept Responsibility; and, in an age where nobody is responsible for much of anything anymore, that kind of runs against the grain.

[Easley:] Boy, we could go 100 ways with litigation we watch on television and always the blaming. You know, maturity is accepting responsibility for my own stuff, right? And so, the same area of sin, maturity is accepting I am a sinful person and not blaming Cindy or my kids, or people at work, or anyone else. Is hey, I am a sinner. There's nothing more ridiculous then when a, you know, an adult acts like a child. And, we expect this childish behavior of always blaming the sibling. I keep saying to my younger kids, you know, I'll wait for the day when you say, "Hey, I did this dad. This was my fault." You know, I'm dreaming, right? What's going to happen? They're going to have to mature. And so, as maturing Christians we have to learn to accept responsibility. How many conflicts just in our marriage would cease if we'd accept that responsibility? How many conflicts of sin would cease if we would just acknowledge I'm sinning? I need God's help right now.

[Gauger:] Boy, isn't it amazing how practical the Word of God is as we go through these pages of Romans? And, a reminder that the Romans messages are available on compact disc. We've put together 14 messages on 7 CDs and they're at our website, [www.proclaim.mbn.org](http://www.proclaim.mbn.org). Follow the link. I hope you'll check it out. A great value. [www.proclaim.mgn.org](http://www.proclaim.mgn.org).

I'm Jon Gauger. Thanks for listening. See you Monday right here.