



Worship Service – 02/19/2017
2 Corinthians 12:7 – 10
Romans 8:4 & 16

I want you to open your Bibles to where we are which is 2 Corinthians 12. Sothern Baptists, I think the one great failure that we've had in our convention, in our denomination, is we have mistaken the means of the Gospel for the end of the Gospel. We have done a really good job of preaching and I want you to stay in 2 Corinthians 12. I'm going to read you a couple verses out of Romans 8. We've done a really good job of preaching the blood of Jesus, it's our only hope for forgiveness, and we've done great job of that. And through that God's released a lot of people but you need to understand that the blood of Christ on the cross is the means to an end. It is not the end in and of itself. There is a purpose for the cross. Now we've talked about the fact that we live in three time frames. There's Adam and Eve's time frame. There's the time frame we live in now where everything is broken where it was not in Adam and Eve's day. In Adam and Eve's day the world was not broken, they were not broken, now the world's broken, we're broken. There's coming a day when we die in Christ and we go to a world that's not broken and we're completely fixed. But in this timeframe, the world's broken and we're broken. Now God' purpose for us is in Genesis 1 where it says He made, He said, "Let us make man in our image." And so our purpose is to know Him and to reflect Him. So that we do in the garden what He wants us to do; we talk with Him when He comes down in the cool of the day. So we have this two-fold aspect of being in the image of God. We show Him off; if you see us you see what God would want in a person. And we have a relationship with Him. Now those two things have been broken. So Jesus Christ comes. God had already set it in motion. He already had the plan. Worked everything out; fullness of time. Jesus came and He died on the cross and His blood was shed. The only person ever to live on this planet, the only man to live on this planet, the man God whose life was perfect so that His lack of sin was able to take on our sin and His blood cleaned us up.

Now that's where Baptists stop it. We are really really good at that statement. But the purpose of forgiveness is so that the Holy Spirit can indwell us and He in turn

does two things. Now I want you to listen, you stay in 2 Corinthians, but I want you to listen. Here are the two things, Romans 8, he says:

⁴that the righteous requirements of the law might be filled up in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

And then he says in Romans 8:16.

¹⁶This same Spirit bears witness with our spirit that we're the children of God,

So the Holy Spirit when He indwells you, and He indwells you because you've been cleaned up. He's the Holy Spirit. The Bible says God can't even look on evil. So the Holy Spirit's able to indwell you permanently because you've been cleansed by the blood of Jesus. So as the Holy Spirit comes in you He does two things. He reawakens you to the Father and He gives you the power to reflect God's character in your life. I love the Greek in Romans 8. It says that the righteous works of the law which couldn't be done in our flesh will be filled up in us. In other words they will just fill us with God's holiness as we live in the Spirit. So the cross is a means to an end. The blood of Jesus, most important act in history, but the purpose behind that blood was so that the Holy Spirit could re-indwell us and we could know God again personally and reflect who He was. If you understand that you can understand discipline in your life from God. If you don't understand that then you don't understand discipline. Now remember, we talked about it last week, as a Christian I will never experience God's punishment. I only experience God's discipline. If you don't know Jesus, you never experience God's discipline. You will, though, only experience His punishment. We, though, are going to be disciplined.

Now the question inevitably becomes, "Why?" Because if this is God's plan for us, right, then the enemy is going to have two agendas in our life. The first agenda is going to be to stop us from surrendering to Jesus. Don't allow the blood of Jesus to forgive us. So he's going to do everything he can to stop us there. If you embrace Jesus then his next agenda is to cut short your relationship with him so it has no effect in your life and to cut the power of the Holy Spirit out of your life so that you never look like God. You look like just a normal man that's a little different than others. You go to church, they don't, but you don't really reflect the righteousness of God. You show the goodness of man, but not the righteousness of God. So he's going to try to short circuit both those things. Now the only way he can do that is to get us to sin. Now I want you to listen to me carefully today. I want us to really wrap our head around this. There are really three kinds of sin in the life of a believer. First kind of sin in the life of a believer is sin that when he came to Christ stopped. For example the apostle Paul, before he comes to Christ, he said in Galatians 2, "I'm climbing the ladder, man. I'm the best rabbi of my day. I'm studying under the best guy. I'm climbing the ladder above all my contemporaries." He's rising as a Pharisee. As a Pharisee he would do everything the Pharisees did.

One of the things they did that he would now stop, now that he's come to Christ, is they had market day Tuesdays and Thursdays. So the Pharisees would fast on Tuesdays and Thursdays. So they would walk into the crowd and look real down and gloomy and holy and everybody would go, "Wow. I wish I could be like that Pharisee." And then go home and eat whatever they wanted. So the Pharisees, now Paul's going to stop that when he comes to Christ. That's a sin he committed, performing works so everybody would see him. He stops that when he comes to Jesus. What you will discover there really are going to be certain sins when you come to Christ that just sort of overnight are gone. I had, I know this is so hard to believe, but I had a pretty foul mouth growing up. As a matter of fact it got to the place where it was second nature for me. I didn't think about it. I just used the words. And the weird thing was that when I came to Christ overnight Holy Spirit just took it out. Never struggled with it. Never repeated it. Not come out of my mouth. Because the Holy Spirit literally just took it away. Now you're going to find certain things in your life that when you come to Christ they just seem to disappear. They're gone. Holy Spirit removes them overnight.

The second thing you will discover is there are certain sins that are not removed overnight. Now listen to me carefully. They are going to be repetitive in your life, but not necessarily controlling. For example this guy that wrote this book has a best friend named Barnabas. He and Barnabas had been buddies. They took the first missionary trip together. They go to all these cities; start all these churches. Barnabas brought him into the church when nobody wanted him. They didn't trust him. He and Barnabas had been best friends. So they go, they meet and said, "Look. Let's start another journey. Let's go back and see all the churches we started." So he and Barnabas meet at the dock and they get ready to leave and Paul looks up, remember Galatians 2, I went above all my contemporaries, type A, short, bald, type A. He looks at Barnabas and goes because Barnabas' cousin is here, John Mark, and he goes, "He ain't going. He quit on us. He's not going." And Barnabas, sweet, nice guy, looks at him and says, "Well, yeah, I think he should." And they have, now remember the Bible's a book of understatement. If it were overstatement you wouldn't be able to carry it. It's understatement. It says they had a sharp disagreement. Yeah. OK. They had a sharp disagreement, like an Alabama/Auburn final play in the Iron Bowl. They had a sharp disagreement. Paul is losing it and so he says, "Fine. You take that little punk. You go wherever you want to go. I'm going over here with Silas. Have a nice day." And they, they're friendship is broken that day. Now Paul admits later in his life he was wrong. But I guarantee you Paul's temple right there, which surfaced, I guarantee you that's not the last time that thing surfaced. I guarantee you there are days when his temper surfaced after that over and over and over. He had that repetitive sin in his life that obviously God didn't take out on that day. You're going to have certain sins that are going to be repetitive. But they're not necessarily in control of you. As a matter of fact what should happen is the longer you live in Christ those episodes of repetition should get further and further apart. But you're never going to stop. There are certain sins

that are just proclivities you're going to struggle with for the rest of your life. Some of you in here have great difficulty with forgiveness. You have trouble forgiving people. Somebody hurt you, you have great difficulty praying for them. Bible tells you to. You have to really practice praying. "Well, God, Bob hurt my feelings yesterday. I'm praying for today that if he has an auto accident, I hope he does that somebody will come by and take care of him. In Jesus name. Amen." I mean there are some of us that's how we're praying. Because if somebody hurts us, we want them bad back. We don't shoot them. We don't kill them. But we certainly have great difficulty forgiving them. And so some of us have sins that are repetitive. He's not going to discipline you over repetitive sins. He knows the proclivity in you, he knows what you face, he's not going to discipline you over those.

However there is a third type of sin that happened to the apostle here that at times happens to us. He says, now remember he's in 2 Corinthians, right, the whole book is defending his ministry against these false teachers that have come into Corinth. They've come in and said, "Look, man, we've been persecuted." Paul writes 2 Corinthians 11, says, "I've been whacked way more than they've been whacked." And they said, "Listen we know something he doesn't know, y'all don't know. We have a secret knowledge about Jesus we need to tell you." And so Paul goes really nuts and goes, "Let me tell you. I really have a secret knowledge and I'll prove it by the discipline I've gone through." He says, "Fourteen years ago I went to heaven. Don't know how I got there, but I went there. I saw things no man can utter. And when I came back something changed in his life." When he came back he began to become and turned toward arrogance. Which would be a struggle in his life because he's really smart, he's really gifted, and so it would be a struggle for him and so he began to turn toward this thing of when he would preach to a church think, "You know, I'm better than y'all. I know more than you know. I've been to heaven. You haven't been. I've seen things you haven't seen. I'm better than you. I know more than you." And all of a sudden this attitude began to creep into this life. And so he writes and he says in verse 7 of chapter 12, 2 Corinthians:

⁷because of the super-abundance of the revelation therefore that I might not be puffed up, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan, that it might buffet me that I might not be puffed up. I might not be elated. On behalf of this I asked God three times that he might take it from me.

So Paul says this, now remember this is not some cupcake. This is a guy that if you read 2 Corinthians 11 has gone through all sorts of trials. He says, "I got so arrogant that I couldn't stop it. It wasn't just repetitive, it now controlled me. And that sin by being in control of me is going to cut off my fellowship with the Father. It's going to cut off the power of the Spirit in my life. So I can't manifest His holiness and so I am in great danger of the purpose for which I was saved being lost. I get mad at somebody else down the road; it's not going to do that. There are certain sins that

are gone. But this sin has now begun to control me and it is in charge of my life and I can't stop what I'm thinking about myself." And so he says, "God sent something physical in my life." Now if you read 2 Corinthians 11 where he details all the stuff he went through, this must have been really hard. He asked God three times to take it away, God said no. Now look in verse 9:

9He said to me,

Now he says two things to Paul. One:

"My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is perfected in weakness.

So he says two things to Paul. He says, number one, listen I know this is hard for you, son, but my grace will get you through this difficulty. The discipline I brought on you physically which is intensely difficult for you, and I'm not going to release. Sometimes he releases us from it, but he's not here. He said, "I'm not going to release as long as you live. But I want you to know my grace will get you through this added pain in your life. I'll get you through it." And the purpose of my allowing this discipline, look, is so that my power is perfected in weakness. You're going to be less than what you were as a result of this discipline. But my grace will get you through it and in that weakness I will restore my power in your life so that you can know me again and reflect me again in a way that for the rest of your life my image will show up in who you are. Now that is when he disciplines us. He disciplines us, not on repetitive sins that we sometimes do over and over and over, should get less, but he will discipline us when we step aside and there's a certain sin that grabs us that we literally can't control anymore. And when that sin gets hold of us, that is when God will bring discipline in our life. Again, why? Because he's just trying to kick us when we're down? When we're struggling? No. He brings the discipline to bring us back to the purpose of the cross. The purpose of the cross is so we know Him and reflect Him and so the discipline God may bring in your life is not because He's trying to punish you, not because He's beating you, not because He doesn't love you, it's a matter of fact, it is absolutely because He loves you that He brings that discipline and so He can restore you, so you can experience Him and reflect Him again. And this is, for some of us, really hard. For example some of us may struggle with forgiveness, but it can turn into bitterness that will control us and consume us. There are some people, somebody's hurt them and they will come into a church and not even speak to them. I remember in my second church I had a, I had a guy that came every Sunday. He was never friendly, never nice, but he came every Sunday. Couple Sundays he missed and I happen to see him somewhere, I don't even remember where it was, I think it was at, I went by his house, his wife was sick or something, I went by to visit him and her. He looked at me and he said, "You know why I don't come to church anymore." And I've got to admit I'm kind of thinking, "You know not seeing that mean face has really been rather pleasant for me. So." I acted the pastoral role, "No, brother, why?" We have to do that time to

time. Just deal with it. So I did the pastoral thing. And he said, "I'll tell you why. My brother has come the last two Sundays." "OK. What does that mean?" He said, "Well he cut my hay and he left a cut on the ground and it rained and it got ruined and I'm telling you I'm not forgiving him for that." I said, "Well did he apologize?" "Yeah." Then I said, "When did this happen? This year?" "No. 23 years ago." "Well, dude, don't believe you're a Christian." 23 years been coming to a church, but he's not going to come the Sunday his brother shows up in worship. What in the world is wrong with us? You can have a sin that will control you just like drugs, just like alcohol. And what God will do when that happens is he will bring discipline in your life so for one purpose. Not because He's beating you up. But so that He can restore you back. I never saw that guy smile and I'm telling you, God wants to restore the joy of your salvation and you can't have His joy when you can't meet with Him and you can't reflect Him. When those two things are true, there's a joy in your life that can overrule every single trial mentionable. That's why he says,

¹⁰"So I'm going to rejoice even in weaknesses, insults, troubles, persecutions, difficulties, on behalf of Christ for whenever I am weak, then I am powerful.

Discipline's hard. It's not fun. And sometimes it can be a little long. But He will give you grace and He'll redeem you out of that discipline. I, when Peg and I were in Midland, we bought a house. Didn't really pray about it because the prices were going up and up and up. We went there in '81 and left in '86. In '81 everything was going up and about '82 everything bombed. But we bought this house because it looked like we were going to make great money. And so my thought process was, "We'll sell this thing and make money." Well the bottom fell out, so couldn't sell it, and just to let you know we didn't buy the Taj Mahal. We bought, we bought a three bedroom, two bath, 1,000 square foot home. You could sit in the living room, turn on the fireplace and open the refrigerator at the same time. Our interest rate was 16 ½ percent. You bought on a credit card basically. So we leave Midland, we can't sell it, we get here, we can't sell it. So we have renters over; we had that thing for 12 years. Couldn't buy a house here, with to Travis Bryan, I remember, and he said, "You know, can't do it man, gotta get rid of that house." So we had that thing for 12 years. People would rent it, you know, you know how renters are, they'll break the lease without telling you. And I'm telling you, you can ask my wife, they would always steal the mirrors and the door knobs. They're like two bucks at Wal-Mart. We get in there there are no door knobs on the doors. What's wrong with these people? So we went twelve years living here and making extra house payments. I mean and it was crazy what we went through. I actually one time, I don't know if I've ever told this story in here. But as part of this discipline I sent, we were with Nations Bank, whose name will just live there, deal with it. I paid my \$500 payment to a Nations Bank here. This is absolutely the truth. I get a note the next month that they're foreclosing on my property because I hadn't made a payment. So I call them up, said, "Hey! I've made, I have the payment. I have the check." "Oh, OK. Well send us the back, send us a picture of the check." "Fine." So I sent a picture of the

check. Next month I get a letter: we're foreclosing on your house. I call the lady up and said, "Hey! Do you have my check?" "Yeah, I'm looking at it." "Well why isn't it applied?" "Well I can't read what's on the back of it." I said, "Well I'm not the one that stamped it, ma'am." "Well I can't read it. You'll have to send us another one." This went on for three more months. Finally I called and got another lady and I said, "You're looking at my check, right?" "Yes, sir." "You have my money?" "Yes, sir." "But you're not going to credit it to my account?" "No, sir." "So you're going to foreclose on my house in Midland." "Yes, sir." At this point, it's like I'm in the twilight zone. So I do the only thing I know to do. When you get to that point you call an attorney in your church. So I called Steve Allbritton and said, "Can you make a phone call?" He said, "I know somebody." Made a phone call. The next day everything's fine. That's what happens when you don't do what you ought to do. So God disciplined us for 12 years. We lost \$39,000 on that house. But the crazy thing is once we sold it, bought another home, sold that home a few years later and in the equity we had \$39,000 because we serve a disciplinary, but a redemptive God. So understand I was controlled by material value and God dealt with me. Now He may discipline you but it's to pull you back where you can know him again and reflect Him again. And I'm telling you it's not a matter of being good; it's a matter of us being righteous. You can be good without His power, but you can't be righteous without His power.

There are a lot of people in the country today that despise the president, that would never shoot him, would never threaten to hurt him, would never even think that way because they're good. But they go to bed hating him. As a believer, I may disagree with the quality of my president. I may disagree with the decisions, but not only would I not bring harm, I've got to go to bed loving the man that's in charge of my country that God put there and my responsibility is pray for him, support him, and respect him, and value him. And if he were to step in this room, even if I don't agree with him, we stand because he has an office that God has bestowed on this country. And the only way I can make sure my heart is right and that I do, in the image of God, I reflect Him in regard to that is I must make sure not just that I wouldn't shoot him, but that I don't have any anger or hatred toward him because the power of Jesus Christ has changed who I am in my heart. It is righteousness that the world needs to see; not goodness and that comes when His power is in our lives. He does discipline, but the end result always is His glory.

Let's pray.

Father thank you for the truth of your word. It is at times difficult, but thank you for its truth, thank you for its reality, and Father I pray for those today that if they're in this room and you're in the process of bringing them discipline, let them stay under that, let them hold under that, and let them recover from it. Redeem them, use it, bless them. Father make us in this church what you want us to be in this community. I ask you that in Jesus Christ name.

