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Soccer Sunday - It's All About Jesus

Romans 8:31-39

July 10, 2016, Pastor Steve Karadimas & Adrian Moskal

Steve: Hey good morning everybody, we are so glad that you're all here with us. We've had an amazing week here at CRBC. It's been one of those very exhausting but very good weeks. We just finished our soccer camp which really was quite a week. We had around 115 kids from all over the community take part, we had a whole bunch of volunteers, some as young as 12 years old helping us out. And the fun isn't over yet. Today after church we're going to be having a picnic celebrating what God did this week as well. But before we get into our message today we're going to talk about what God has been doing over the last year.

Adrian: This is actually our second soccer camp, it started last year when we felt like God had given us so much, we have a soccer field right here, we have the resources and the people to put on a soccer camp, and we also see that our community has a really big need. A lot of kids don't have much to do this summer and they can't afford a 200 dollar soccer camp so what if we put a camp on for 20 bucks and if people can't afford that we can cover the cost. As we went door to door handing out soccer registration brochures last year, we started to get the idea that this might be a good idea. We made wonderful connections with the kids and the families at the door. We had such positive conversations. We also offered to pick kids up with a bus for those kids without a way of getting here. I was part of the bus team last year. I think the relationships I made with the kids and parents on the bus last year was pretty special. Some of those kids were also on my soccer team. At the beginning of the week it was a struggle to just keep all my kids going in the same directions as we went from soccer station to soccer station. By the end of the week, we were not just laughing but having great conversations about Jesus. The highlight for me was when one little boy at soccer Sunday last year asked for a bible. This same boy, brought this bible to our weekly kids program that we did in his complex and had us look up the story that we shared in his bible. So I will say this now, if anyone this morning, wants a bible, we have one for you. Come up after the service and ask me, I would love to give you one as a free gift.

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Steve: After Soccer camp we wanted to make sure that we continued a relationship with the kids that we met last year, so we started to meet them where they were at. We had a lot of kids at Rockland Makola housing so we started going there every week to play games with the kids, sing songs and share Jesus with them and their families. The more time we spent with the kids, the more we loved them and the families. It's the highlight of my week when we go there. This year It was great to see that so many of them came out to soccer camp. My team was full of kids that I knew from that and it was great to get to see them again. And throughout the week we've been sharing the story of Jesus with the kids, and this has been one of the highlights for me, and today we are going to be sharing some of that stuff with you as well. We are going to be reading a passage in the book of Romans. If you don't have a bible, no problem. We will

have all it all on the screen up here at the front. The passage is Romans 8:31-39. When we go back to bible times there was a guy named Paul and he was living in a particularly difficult time to be a Christian, his friends were being persecuted and even killed for believing in Jesus. And it's strange because Paul doesn't spend his whole time talking about how bad it is. This is confusing because I don't know if you're like me, but when I'm not in the best of moods I can look for things to complain about. If I was living in this time, every word out of my mouth would be "ughh, this is terrible. why are bad things happening? This is too tough, this isn't fair, God, why are you doing this?" But Paul is different, he actually shares about his Joy.

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This is what he says in *Romans 8: 31: What shall we say about such wonderful things as these? If God is for us, who can ever be against us?* Adrian this is a pretty simple verse but what sticks out for you? This is a great verse. What shall we say about such wonderful things as these. It is referring to the previous section was talking about what a life with Christ is like. Even if we have struggles, we can look forward to life in heaven without struggles.

Verse 28 says:

28 And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them.

Everything means everything. Those things that are good and even those things that are hard. For those who follow Christ, he works all things out for good for us.

And then the second part of verse 31 says, if God is for us, who can ever be against us? Let's think about that for a second. If the God who created the heavens and the earth, who parted the Red Sea, who created life... if he is for us, nothing really else matters. This is the God of the bible and the God we are talking about today. And in verse 32 it talks about the ultimate sacrifice he made for us

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32: Since he did not spare even his own Son but gave him up for us all, won't he also give us everything else? This is something the kids learned this week. God loves us so much, that he sent his perfect son to us to be a perfect sacrifice for us. You see, Jesus came and lived on earth 2000 years ago and lived without sin. Sin is this what we do when we rebel against God. We all do it. We do something we shouldn't, we don't do something we should. The problem is that God is holy and can't be around sin. This is at the heart of this verse. Because God loves us and hates sin, he still pursues us and takes care of sin. He has the solution. He sent his son Jesus. Who came to die and be the perfect sacrifice not for just your sin, but mine and everyone else. As a dad of two girls, these aren't just words. This is huge. When my kids are mistreated at school my heart breaks for them. Just imagine how much God loves us that he sends his son (who he loves soooo much and who was without sin) to die for us. Jesus is the perfect sacrifice because he never sinned. . He came to take the penalty and be the perfect sacrifice for all of our sins. If he loves us that much, will he not take care of us? Of course, he will.

Steve: You're right, and because he gave us Jesus, it says he's willing to give us everything else, which means: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self control. Which comes from a relationship with Jesus. This is what we talked about this week, God has great stuff in store for us, but it comes with a relationship with Jesus, when we talk with God when we submit our troubles and problems to him he fills us with his love. And God wants that for us, because he loves us, it goes on to say in verse 33-34:

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Who dares accuse us whom God has chosen for his own? No one—for God himself has given us right standing with himself. Who then will condemn us? No one for Christ Jesus died for us and was raised to life for us, and he is sitting in the place of honor at God's right hand, pleading for us. This is what it's all about, A Christian is a follower of Christ, he died on the cross, he rose to life, he conquered sin and death and our place in heaven for eternity is secured with a relationship with Jesus. But as Christians we can get caught up in a lot of other minor things, and I don't know if this is just Christians, I think it's just people in general can get very easily distracted. We have a tough time keeping the main thing the main thing.

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Here's a great example, when we're driving a vehicle going 100 kilometres an hour you would think that would be the main thing, but our phone starts ringing in our pockets and that now becomes the main thing, and we're focused on sending winky texts to our boyfriend or girlfriend while you're rocketing a giant piece of metal through a highway. We get distracted, and Christians in general get very distracted. We look at the bible and we start looking in depth into this one word here, and we wonder what this means back here, and I wonder what this rule applies to, and the bible's actually very simple. The beginning shows us how messed up we are and how we need Jesus, the middle shows us Jesus and how he lived a perfect life and died for all of us messed up people. And then the end says that Jesus is coming back again and everyone who has a relationship with him can spend eternity with him in heaven. That's a pretty simple book. God made it that way so that we can all understand it. If it was a complicated book, believe me I wouldn't be able to understand it and I wouldn't be reading it today. But it was made for us simple folk. But just like texting and driving we get distracted in our relationship with Jesus. And just like if we're not focused on the road we're going to crash, if we're not focused on Jesus, sooner or later we're going to make a mess out of our lives.

It is all about Jesus, he died for all of us because he loves us, so that when we mess up we can be forgiven and loved and we still have that relationship with him.

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Adrian: Yes, it's key to keep Jesus first, The bible continues on in this passage and says this in 35-37: Can anything ever separate us from Christ's love? Does it mean he no longer loves us if we have trouble or calamity, or are persecuted, or hungry, or destitute, or in danger, or threatened with death? (As the Scriptures say, "For your sake we are killed every day;

we are being slaughtered like sheep.” No, despite all these things, overwhelming victory is ours through Christ, who loved us.

On Tuesday with the kids, we talked about nothing can separate us from God’s love. Nothing. This passage also cautions us that a life with Christ, does not mean free from harm. It does not mean we will be healthy and wealthy. In fact it says, despite the struggles of life, Christ loves us through and through. I am glad it is so clear in the bible, because we all know struggle. We all have faced some issues: health problems, financial problems, relationship problems, or addiction problems.

It is a relief to know that you are loved even when you mess up. I remember when I was young and was playing catch with my sister in the front of our house. My sister kept throwing the ball over my head and it would roll all the way down the street. Finally after 4 or 5 times, I picked up the ball and heaved it at her and hit her right in the thigh. OOPS!! Let me tell you, I was not popular with her and I had consequences with my parents. But...I was forgiven. I was still loved. I was not forgotten or thrown out of the house.

This is how God loves us but so much more. His love for us is a perfect love, a sacrificial love. Jesus is with us through the storms of life and because of our relationship with him, it is not just possible but victory is inevitable if we have a relationship with Jesus.

Steve: As Adrian said a life with Jesus isn’t all smiles and sunshine, especially after you get in trouble right? it’s not like the movies where everything just seems to work out fine. But it’s tough, I’m well aware of that, and I’m sure you are too. Life doesn’t come without it’s bumps and bruises along the way. But in that there is still love. In verse 38-39 our passage continues with this.

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“And I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God’s love. Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow not even the powers of hell can separate us from God’s love. No power in the sky above or in the earth below indeed, nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Paul’s talking about how Life can be very tough, and we all get that, bad stuff happens. Loved ones die, financial stress builds up, relationships that seem perfect get torn apart. Paul understood that when he wrote this, his friends were being killed, he was poor, he was persecuted, but for some reason he still had joy. And for some reason he talks about overwhelming Victory. This victory was when Jesus beat death and rose from the dead. We now have victory over death. When Jesus died on the cross and rose from the dead he won a victory over death that we can win because of him. Now nothing not even death can keep us from God. And today I’m willing to bet that a lot of us don’t believe that. Maybe you have heard someone claiming to be a Christian that said that certain sin is so much worse than other sin. Maybe they have implied that because you did this, or you did that that you are not good enough. That even though God is loving he can’t love you because of what you did. And you

may be here this morning thinking that you are too far gone, that God's love may be big but it's not big enough to reach you. No matter what anyone who claims to be a christian has said or implied I am telling you today the same thing that God has told us when he gave us this book that nothing can separate you from God's love.

Adrian: Thanks Steve. Yes. Nothing can separate us from God's Love. Nothing other than us... Let me let that sink in. You see, ever since the very beginning with Adam and Eve where our sin got in the way of our relationship with God, God has always pursued mankind (despite our rebellion to him). He consistently has sought a people where he would be their God and they would be His people. So, if nothing can separate us but us, what does that mean. Well, something we have shared with the kids is that God seeks a relationship with us through Jesus. He sent his son to pay the price for our sin and as Jesus rose from the dead 3 days after he died, he conquered sin and death for us. Our past present and future sins are paid for... If we accept it. You see, that is the ticket. If I give you a gift, put your name on it and it is meant for you and I extend my hands out to give it to you... is it yours? Well it is if you receive it. It is if you accept it.

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Ephesians 2:8-10 says this: For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

Vs 8 says it is by grace you have been saved. Grace is unmerited favour. You have not earned it. It is a gift but with any gift, you have to accept it. You can't pay for it. You can't earn it. You humbly accept it. Verse 9 says you can't earn it, Christ did all the work when he came and died and rose again. We don't boast, we humbly accept it. And finally, verse 10 brings it back to the fact that when we turn to Christ and say, I am done with doing things my way. I am going to follow you Jesus and start to do things your way Jesus. When we do this, we are realizing that God gave us life, Christ is going to shape us and he has a plan for our lives. One that is full of life even if there are struggles. One that he wants to walk with us through because he wants to have a relationship with us. It isn't following a set of rules or beliefs, it is a relationship with a perfect God who created us and everything else.

Steve: If you are here today and you don't know what that relationship means we are here to help. Maybe you've never been into a church before and you don't know what it means to have a relationship with God, or maybe you've been to church many times before but your faith doesn't seem like a relationship, but instead it feels like a laundry list of rules. Well, we want to talk with you. You can start a life with Jesus, and this is the most exciting thing that you can do. One of the verses we talked with the kids this week was John 10:10 and Jesus says this:

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The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy;(and that thief is satan, but Jesus says) I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.

That full life starts here on earth, it starts with a relationship with Jesus, but it also carries on into eternity. God has prepared a perfect place for us after death called heaven, it is free from sin and death and pain, and it is full of love and joy and peace. This is our hope that we can have that full life with Jesus in heaven for eternity. So it is our prayer today that you have life to the full with Jesus, nothing can separate you from God's love and we're going to pray that you accept that love and accept Jesus. I'm going to close in prayer but I ask that if you do have questions about Jesus or if you have made a decision please find one of us today at the lunch because we would love to talk to you.