

Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Sermon Road Map

Pastor Roger W. Huffman

Ezekiel 33:7-11

September 9, 2018

Why would you die and not live?

- Imagine yourself in a car filling with water, looking out and seeing people standing there, no one wanted to get involved. *Please rescue me!*
- Imagine seeing someone else in a car filling with water. Would you think, *It's none of my business?* But you have an emergency window hammer & seat belt cutter in your vehicle? You'd leap to help a family member! You'd help a stranger. What about someone in our church family?
- What if you saw someone in your church family drowning in sin? You have the rescue tool – God's Word – law and gospel. Do you wait until they are in over their head or go when they're wading into danger?
 - ♦ Why do we hesitate to rescue a brother or sister in Christ from drowning in sin? Today's lessons make it clear. It's our mission.
 - ♦ So what's stopping us from stepping forward to rescue a fellow Christians from drowning in sin?
- ❖ Not recognizing what sin is and does to people
 - Treating sin as *no big deal*. *Sin happens. It's normal. To err is human.*
 - **Sin** = rejecting God's lordship - in part of life - in heart & mind, thus all
 - ♦ Sin thinks God is *silly and foolish*, and *wickedness is better and wiser*.
 - Sin separates from God - bans God from the regions where sin reigns
 - ♦ Creates space where God is not allowed in. **Sin is the master**.
 - ♦ Where sin reigns, there is death. For death = absence of God & his good
 - Remember the Pride Lands under Scar's reign? Death reigned.
 - Life is where God reigns. Death is where God is absent - expelled.
 - When sin reigned over Adam and Eve - shame, fear, separation
 - Where sin reigns - they're drowning in sin. Rescue needed!
 - *...if you do warn the wicked person to turn from their ways and they do not do so, they will die in their sin...*
 - *Our offenses and sins weigh us down, and we are wasting away because of them. (are upon us and we are rotting)*
 - Lack this conviction - see sin and dismiss it as *their problem, not mine*.
- ❖ Thinking it is the Pastor's job
 - Ezekiel was called to be the watchman. God calls pastors to warn people.
 - Jesus says watch. Jesus gave all followers Matthew 18 and 28.
 - Paul chides Corinth about ignoring public sin - 2 Tim. 2:17 - gangrene
- ❖ Thinking: *Who am I to say anything? I sin too.*
 - **Mission confusion:** Not morality police! It's Rescue Mission.
 - *Son of Man* - (93 times). Literally: *Son of Adam* - points to corruption
 - ♦ Yahweh **sends repentant sinners** to **rescue impenitent sinners**.
 - *...warn the wicked person to turn from their ways...*
 - ♦ **Wicked** = identity - **ways** = life, lifestyle, routine and route
 - ♦ Not merely a matter of sin happening. Rather: Sin is life. Serves sin.
 - Difference between sin happening vs. sin reigning - defines person & life
 - ♦ The **repentant** know their sin and **long to live free of sin**.
 - ♦ The **wicked long to live in sin**- their drowning & don't know it
- ❖ Not recognizing that community is critical for God's rescue mission.
 - *...made you a watchman for the people of Israel* i.e. *household of Israel*
 - *Turn from your evil ways! Why will you die, people of Israel?*
 - *...brother or sister ...refuse to listen even to the church* - Matthew 18
 - Only God's people have, know, and treasure this rescue mission from sin.
 - God's care brings us into his caring family - new hearts like his
 - The more we are knit together we're stronger, encouragement is preventive
 - ♦ The closer the bonds, the less reluctant to go rescue or be rescued.
 - When close: *Why would you die and not live?* is powerful.
 - We're called to partner with each other to be freed from sin's work
 - ♦ Going to church merely for religion, undermines this mission.
 - When not close: *Why would you die and not live?* is easily dismissed.
- ❖ God's humble repentant people daily experience God's grace and life
 - Daily ask yourself: **Why would you die and not live?**
 - ♦ Look sin straight in the face - see through it and see death
 - ♦ Look to Jesus' eyes and heart to see his passion to give us life.
 - ♦ Then when a brother is drowning in sin, you'll see a mercy mission!
 - Daily pray for fellow believers - consider how to encourage & bond
 - ♦ Open yourself up to others for them to rescue you.
 - ♦ Be a trusted friend, they know they can count on to care for them.

Why would you die and not live?

That's God's gracious invitation - our mission.