

St. Matthew A.M.E. Church  
Bible Study  
Monday, March 9, 2009

Romans 6:8-14

Consecration

Consecration is an old term of the Judaeo-Christian faith which means to “be set apart to be used by God.” As simple as the meaning is it is badly misunderstood by so many believers. Many, especially young believers in the Lord, have been victimized time and time again in this matter of consecration. Often believers are told and pressured to consecrate, surrender and commit their lives to Christ on the basis of what Jesus did for us on Calvary. Over and over again believers are pressured to march down front to consecrate and re-consecrate, surrender and re-surrender, commit and re-commit themselves to Christ. After awhile the believer comes to dread this. Every hungry hearted Christian yearns to be consecrated and conditioned for effective living and service. And from the outset, the well meaning believer thinks that since they have the will to obey God and be what He intends for them, they should attempt to carry it out. They seek to struggle forward via the love motive (God did for me, so I must do for Him). But they soon find that the love motive cannot supply the power they need to consecrate their lives to God. They think because they have the will it is enough, and now they are able to do it. But our will is not enough.

It is not the love motive but the “life motive” that will enable us to consecrate our lives to God. The “life motive” refers to Christ living in us. This is what Paul meant when he said, “for me to live is Christ.” (Philippians 1:21) Our consecration will never hold up if it is our responding to God from any other motive than the response of Christ living in us. If our consecration is not based on Christ living in us it is based on “our old selves” and our “old selves” has not been crucified and will not be consecrated. This is why the “old self” must be crucified. This matter of “crucifying self” is hard for many believers to embrace because we cannot comprehend this matter of “the flesh.” The flesh is our nature and its sinful desires. Our flesh is at war with the spirit. (Galatians 5:17) As long as we are in the flesh there is going to be warfare, unless of course we totally surrender to the flesh. The “works of the flesh” include:

- a. Sins of immorality
- b. Sins of idolatry
- c. Infractions of the law of love (neighbor, etc.....)
- d. Sins of intemperance (excesses, etc.....)

To “crucify the flesh” we must:

1. Take captive our thoughts. (2 Corinthians 10:5) Anything that is contrary to God’s Word and will we must dismiss or put out of our minds immediately. If we dwell or ponder on it, it will take hold in our minds and we may act on it. We must also not debate, argue or rationalize God’s Word. God’s Word is authoritative and final; it is not for debate or argument. Debate and argument are tricks of the enemy and we must not fall for the trick.
2. Walk in the Spirit. We cannot defeat the flesh on our own. God has given us help in our struggle. Our help is the Holy Spirit which the Word calls our “helper” and our “comforter.” (John 14:16, 15:26) The Holy Spirit aids us in our conduct. Believers are to walk in the Spirit (Galatians 5:16, 25) When the flesh tempts us we should call out for the Holy Spirit to help us.
3. We must not battle the flesh, which will become a daily struggle. We are told not to battle but to “crucify the flesh.” The purpose of crucifixion is to kill. We are to kill our “old nature” or “old self” in order that a new man or a new us can be born or raised.

While we know what we must do, “crucify the flesh”, the decision to do it is not an easy one for us to make, because the desires of the flesh sometimes appeal to us. There are some desires we are reluctant to let go of. This is because all of the desires of the flesh are grounded in pleasure. If pleasure was not involved it would be easy for us to “crucify the flesh.” But when we think of crucifying the flesh we think of the pleasures that these desires bring us. All of us want pleasure in our lives but our mind tells us that the pleasures of sin are more desirable than the pleasure of God. To put it another way the pleasure of sin (lust, which includes physical, sexual, etc...) are more appealing than holiness. God wants us to be holy (righteous). We cannot be sinful and holy at the same time. So therefore we wrestle within ourselves about letting go of the desires of the flesh, which is why it is difficult for us to take our thoughts captive. Many people never move to crucifying the flesh because they will not or cannot let go of their desire for the things of the flesh. Thus we are slave’s sin. Notice Paul cautions us not to let sin reign in our mortal bodies. (Romans 6:12) Reign means to have its way where we obey at its whim. The decision to “crucify the flesh” is one many of us seek to avoid but it is a decision many make by default. Our “old self” remains and the resurrected or “new man” never emerges because crucifixion did not occur.

Remember, in order for us to be consecrated God has to be able to use us. This requires us to be changed. God cannot use us as we are or our old selves. This is why Paul says to us, “Be ye transformed by the renewing of your minds; that you might prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.” (Romans 12:1) Change or transformation cannot occur until we have crucified the flesh and a new us emerges.

This new man or woman emerges because now Christ lives in us. Paul speaks of this in Philippians when he writes, “for me to live is Christ.” (Philippians 1:21) God can now use us, not because He loves us or because we love Him, but because Christ lives in us. This is important because it is not the “old life” but “the Christ –life” that is consecrated by God. God sees only that which is centered in His Son, who is our life. From this point we are to count ourselves dead to sin, self, the law, the world, and alive unto God in Christ- Risen to walk in “newness of life”. (Romans 6:11)

“Newness of life” - means that we are now righteous, that sin does not have dominion over us. Instead our members, meaning the parts that make up our body, are now ready to be consecrated to the service of God. However, none of this will occur unless we make the decision and take the steps to “crucify the flesh.”