

SURVIVING SATURDAY

Romans 8:1-9

Newbegun United Methodist Church

June 10, 2018

Ground Hog's Day is one of my favorite movies. Bill Murray plays an obnoxious weather man who is forced to live the same day – February 2 – again and again, and again. Everyday the same thing happens and sometimes he gets it something right and sometimes he deals with it poorly, but no matter what, he can't move past February 2. Everyday is the same.

Have you ever felt that way in your life? Everyday is the same old set of problems and struggles, and try as you might, you never can make any real progress? The tragedy is that there seems to be no real progress, no real victory, just repeating one day after another. You know what? You are stuck in Saturday. What do I mean by this? On Good Friday Jesus died for our sins. His last words were, "It is finished." The work of salvation on our behalf was completed. Then on Sunday Jesus rose from the grave. The Spirit of God reentered the lifeless body of Jesus and breathed life into it once more. By the power of the Holy Spirit of God Jesus was raised from the dead. In Romans 8:11 Paul writes, "And the Spirit of God who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, and God will also give life to your mortal bodies because the same Spirit of God lives in you." That is the promise of Easter. So why is this power just beyond our reach? Why is it always Saturday? Why are some of us stuck in knowing that our sins are forgiven, but the power of the resurrection is just out of our reach? Saturday is not where God wants us to be. So how do we get to Sunday?

First, believe it is possible. Maybe some of us just don't expect victory in the Christian life. They have been beaten down or told negative things all their lives and so they expect to lose and not live victoriously. They think of unanswered prayers, and discouragement, and frustration, and stress, and they lack the will to believe. But the Bible tells us that we can set our sights higher. Romans 8:37 says, "We are more than conquerors through Jesus Christ."

Stop saying, "I am not wanted or needed." Stop saying, "I'll never be able to..." Stop saying, "I'm just a bad person with a temper, selfish by nature and I can never change." Stop saying these negative things about yourself because that is not the person God created you to be. God created you "to be conformed to the image of the Son, Jesus Christ." (Romans 8:29)

The idea of you becoming a victorious Christian may seem impossible to you. But there is One who believes it is possible – the One who died on the cross for your sins. Jesus believes that not only are you worth the price he paid for you, he believes that the Holy Spirit can make you worthy of the price he paid for you. Since God has this great belief in you, then you can also have belief in God. By changing ones expectations it is possible to believe in victorious living. And once you believe it is possible in your life, then you will begin to discover ways to make it happen.

A second thing that is very important to getting past Saturday and living in Sunday's victory is to start feeding the new nature. A tribal chief was responsible for passing along the wisdom of the elders to the children. One day he told them a parable about life. He said, "There are two wolves inside each of us. One is good and one is bad. One fights for anger, greed, jealousy, and rage. The other fights for kindness, joy,

love and happiness. These two wolves fight it out everyday, and it is up to you to determine which wolf will win.” One of the children asked the old chief, “How do I determine this?” The chief replied, “Children, the wolf you feed is the wolf who wins the battle.”

That’s a key to experiencing the victory. You feed whatever it is you want to grow. You feed whatever it is you want to be strong. You feed whatever it is you want to win the battle for supremacy in your life. How do you feed the new nature? You remain in fellowship with other Christians. You pray, study, and worship. You read good books and listen to good music. In our reading from Romans this morning, Paul put it this way, “Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires.” In other words, the wolf that will win is the wolf that you feed.

The battle is for the mind. Where your mind is set is where you’ll live. You not only feed the new nature, make it a point to starve the old nature. You avoid TV shows that the old nature likes. You avoid web sites that your old nature likes. You avoid people who tend to feed the old nature. You avoid situations that tend to feed the old nature. You do whatever you have to do to starve the old nature and feed the new nature. When drug addicts leave rehab they are repeatedly told to find a new place to live and make new friends. Those that take that advice increase their chances of recovery for their life. While those that return to the old neighborhood and unite once again with their old friends, soon relapse. Why? They fed the old nature and starved

the new one. To get out of Saturday and live in Sunday one has to feed that part of you that you want to win the battle in your life.

A third thing we can do to move from Saturday to Sunday is to take advantage of the clean slate. There is a scene in the old movie Bonnie and Clyde where the couple are holed up in a hideout unable to leave with so many police on their trail. Crime isn't as glamorous as they had once thought. So Bonnie asks Clyde, "What would you do if some miracle occurred and we were able to walk out here clean, with no record and no one after us?" Clyde thinks for a moment and says, "I would do things differently. I wouldn't live in the same state where I pulled my bank jobs. When I wanted to rob a bank I would go into another state." Bonnie turns away in disappointment. That is not the answer she wanted. It is Clyde's of thinking that keeps us in Saturday.

Like Bonnie's dream, we have been given a clean slate. It is wiped clean every morning. 1 John 1:9 says, "If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness." We have been given a clean slate through the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ. By that one can live in victory.

To move from Saturday to Sunday, believe that victory is your birthright; feed the new nature, starve the old one; and take every advantage of your clean slate. By the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ you have been set free from the old nature. Now live as a free person in the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.