

## Sunday July 12, 2020 – Easter Hill United Methodist Church

### Bible Study – Romans 8:1-11

Open with a word of prayer

**Gathering Time** (5-10 minutes). In pairs or groups of three, discuss the following: “Name a time when you felt out of control or with very little control” [Could be during an illness, after a job loss; in a job situation; or as a kid, etc.]

**Romans 8:1-11. Context.** Paul argued that the Law given by God on Sinai, however perfect, was incapable of giving life – not through any fault of its own, but because of human sinfulness. To solve this dilemma God conquered sin once and for all through the death and resurrection of Christ, making the humanity of Jesus the battleground between God and Sin, conceived here by Paul not as individual transgressions or even a collection of individual transgressions, but rather as a powerful cosmic force that only God can vanquish. Living as though our lives and our salvation depend on what we do is living “in the flesh,” displeasing to God. But trusting in God, “submitting to God’s law,” leads to life, life in the Spirit, even when we are otherwise dead. As God raised Christ from the dead, so God will raise us from death – not just at some glorious end of time, but even from the death we experience on a daily basis – sin, our alienation from God.

#### **Read Romans 8:1-11**

What touches your heart, what do you hear in the scripture, what questions do you have, or what doesn’t make sense to you in the story?

Write down your thoughts or share your thoughts with the person or group you are with.

#### **Read Romans 8:1-11 again**

**Some reflection questions – Write down your thoughts or share your thoughts with the person or group you are with.**

- The word “therefore” is important, especially in Paul’s letters. Many preachers have used the line, “If you see a ‘therefore’ in Scripture, you should ask the question ‘What’s the therefore, there for?’” Chapter 8 begins with an emphatic “Therefore.” In chapter 7, Paul, and by extension, Jews (and Jewish Christians) and Gentiles, observes that all people are helpless by their own power to resist sin. All need a Savior and, thankfully, as 7:25 declares, Jesus is our deliverer. In a culture that prizes the “self-made man” or the “autonomous individual,” how is the problem that Paul describes countercultural? [It is not through individual effort that we succeed as Christians. In fact, it begins only through surrender and acknowledging our helplessness and God’s grace that we can begin to experience new life.]

- Break into two groups or if by you self, create two list. Have one group create a list of descriptions of what life looks like for those “in Christ Jesus” — those controlled by the Spirit (Spirit-directed). Have another group create a list of descriptions of what life looks for those controlled by the flesh (not synonymous with bodies), selfishness (or self-directed), or sin. Have the two groups compare their descriptions. Which group of descriptions is more appealing? Why is that the case?
- What might Paul mean in verse 1? What does condemnation mean? What has been condemned? [sin, v. 3.] How is it good news that there is now no longer condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus? [By faith, Christians are freed from the wages of sin and selfishness; and because they are united in Christ and share the Holy Spirit, they are freed to love God and others more fully.] Discuss what the previous statement means.
- The invitation this week is to set your mind on Christ or on the Spirit. Do you find this scary in any way? Why or why not? Do you find this freeing? Why or why not? How is this way of life countercultural?
- How does the concept of being in union with Christ or living by the Spirit bring assurance, peace, and hope? [We are wrapped up in the love of Christ. It is not merely that we “have” Christ in us, but that we are enveloped by the love of Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit. This is true on our best days and on our worst.]

### **Read Galatians Romans 8:1-11 again**

#### **Closing Reflection Question**

How is this scripture calling you to change, to see, to be or what might it be calling you to do?

**Prayer** (10 minutes). Each person prays sharing their answer the following statements:

I ask God for....

I thank God for.....

**Sending Forth** (2 minutes). After all, have shared, pray the closing prayer. Ask for a volunteer to lead the group or read the following prayer in unison:

God of grace and forgiveness, we give you thanks for the gift of Christ and the gift of new life that you are constantly working in us and through us. Empower us to be Spirit-directed in all we do and all we say. **Amen.**

And now we pray The Lord’s Prayer....

Our Father who art in Heaven

hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come, thy will be done,

on earth as it is in Heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses,

as we forgive those who trespass against us.

Lead us not into temptation  
but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom, the power  
and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.