

Sermon Text for May 13, 2108

By Rev. Robert K. Bronkema

Exodus 2:1-10, Romans 14:7-12

“Am I accountable?”

I want to wish all of you out there a happy Mother’s Day. As I say every year, and I mean it every year, happy Mother’s Day to all you biological Mothers and all you women who serve as mothers in so many different ways, even if you don’t have biological children. If you grew up in a traditional house, like I did, then it was your mother who held you accountable. My father was the enforcer, my mother was the one who held me accountable. She also played a pretty good enforcer. I talk to my brothers about this and they look at me with this blank look, and then I realize that they never had to be punished, they were incredibly perfect kids. They were held accountable and in check with the letter of the law and just the thought of disobeying held them in check. Well, not so much for me. So Mother’s Day is special for me because I know that my mother saved my life, literally, because she held me accountable and did not let up on me and did not let me get away with anything.

It was my mother who made me go to church even when I told her I didn’t believe in God. It was my mother who held me accountable when I came home well past my bedtime and punished me in a way that I would never want to come home late again. My mom also held me accountable by fostering a relationship with me where I felt comfortable talking to her about anything and everything so that as I got into high school and into college some of my best friends were women. By being held accountable I knew that I was loved, and I knew the parameters in which I could work.

Our lives are lives lived in being held accountable by a myriad of different people. If you are a politician then your constituents are going to hold you accountable, if you work, your boss will, if you have a family then your wife or kids or parents will hold you accountable. Most of the time we make decisions based upon what we think these people who surround us, what their desires or reactions are going to be.

Do we not all live with the struggle of mixing up to whom we are accountable? Paul helps us today. I know he helped me today by reminding us that we should live our lives as if we were held accountable only to God. From that, all of your actions should flow.

READ SCRIPTURE

So, months ago as I was preparing the sermon list I did not mark on the list that today was Mother's Day. I'm not sure that in the confines of that plane as I was putting the list together that I knew that it was Mother's Day. But what a great story the story of Moses is for Mother's Day. You understand what happened here right? It is one of the most powerful examples in Scripture that God is in control. Moses is a Hebrew baby boy and they are commanded to be thrown into the river to drown when they are born. Well, momma Moses follows the command and throws him into the river. She does, she follows the letter of the law. She must have been the oldest child. What a mother to bravely set her child in a boat downstream to be followed by her daughter.

Then we have another mother who finds the child, but she is not a biological mother. We don't know if she could have children or not, but I'm guessing no simply because this child would not have been nearly as appealing to her if she had her own. So this mother takes Moses and raises him in the Egyptian household. All of these women and all of these mothers doing the will of God so that eventually the people of God would be freed from Egypt. If you are following along in the 90 Day Purpose you should have already read this story and been amazed by it.

Paul transitions us to another sense of accountability away from that of our Mother's and towards that of the Lord. We are told that the Lord is going to hold us accountable. Did you read that in the last verse. We will be held accountable. If we live, we live to the Lord, if we die, we die to the Lord, so then whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's. People, Paul is saying it is all about Jesus. It is not about us, it is not about our wants or desires, but everything is about Jesus.

I'll never forget one of the most powerful experiences that I had in my life. I was at the Calvary Missionary Baptist Church complex for a reception after on the evening of the elections. A woman that I knew had run for school board, and I had publicly supported her. She got beat, she got beat bad and I knew walking into that reception that evening even before the polls had closed that she was going to get beat. I had never been to a reception where someone lost before so I didn't know what to expect. I brought Rachel with me as my security blanket, she was five.

Well, the results were in and Dothea was about to walk in from the Supervisor of Elections office and as she walked in we all cheered Dothea, Dothea, then from somewhere in the back someone started to sing Victory is mine, Victory is mine. We

broke out singing and for the next 10 minutes I thought we were in church. We forgot about the political race and praised God. It was all about Jesus. God will hold us accountable, God will run our life. It is not our desires, our plans our ups and our downs but God's power that ought to direct and guide us.

Paul here in Romans uses the term live and die 12 times in these 3 verses to show us that our life and our death is not up to us, it does not revolve around us, but as vs. 9 states, Christ is Lord of both the dead and the living through his own death and resurrection.

We live our lives as if the only ones we have to be accountable to is ourselves or those around us and God comes next when in reality it is the exact opposite. We are accountable to God and then our accountability to those around us flows out.

Now do not be mistaken, God does hold us accountable. I can think of no greater tragedy or heinous crime in my lifetime than what is taking place in Syria. Those who are responsible will be held accountable.

Jesus says in Matthew 18:6, if any of you harm these little ones, it would be better for you if a great millstone were fastened around your neck and you were drowned in the depths of the sea. Make no mistake, Almighty God will hold these people accountable. But what is difficult for us is that we are the ones who want to do the accounting. We, well let me say I speak for myself as a pacifist, I would like to hold them accountable personally.

But it is not about me, and my desires, and my anger, and my passion. It is not about us. Our life and our death, our families, our jobs, whatever we do and whatever we hold dear, is not about us, but it is about bringing glory and praise to Jesus Christ. When we are able to understand what Paul is telling us here, shift your eyes away from those around you and lock eyes with Jesus then you will be able to see those around you more clearly. Do you know what will happen when you do that?

Verse 11 will take place. Every knee shall bow and every tongue shall give praise to God. This is what it is all about. Being held accountable to the innocent lamb, the one who lived and died on this earth so that we can live and die for him. Our families will benefit, we will benefit.

Maybe you went through a hard time this past week. I know that First Presbyterian had 6 people in the hospital this week. That's not an easy week for anyone. For some of us it was a matter of realizing how skewed our priorities are and how much

we rely upon the things that surround us. For others it was a matter of life and death, being able to be sure that our loved one would see the next day. What I hope we all learned from this past week, I hope we get the meaning behind the experience was that how important it is to be held accountable to God first, and from that everything flows. If we felt that we were only accountable to ourselves, or even a few select group of people then the experience would have been very different.

But when we look to Christ as the person to whom we are going to be held accountable, all of a sudden, every single person in need becomes our problem because every single person is a child of God. Remember Matthew 25:37 when Jesus says, you fed me, you clothed me, etc. Christ has given us so much, let us hold ourselves accountable to give to others continually, as we have been blessed completely by our Savior. I give thanks that my mom held me accountable, and now I know what it is like for my Savior to hold me accountable. It is for that which I live. Amen.