

**Writeup for Website****Series: The Roman Road****Title: We Are What We Eat**

???

**Color Changes in text indicate slide changes**

Last week Paul reminded us of our DNA connection to Adam & Eve in the Garden of Eden as we went back to the Fall when sin & death were birthed into the world. When strife, shame, death & hiding from God became our existence. We looked at Amos 3:3 which says, *"How can two walk together unless they agree?"* We asked, "How do we walk hand in hand with Christ not only as Savior, but also as Lord?" We said it takes agreement with Him, which is played out in lifestyle, choices & behavior. That others will know us by our fruit, and fruit grows on the outside, for all to see hanging off the branches of our lives. Agreement is the first step of obedience, and love & devotion are expressed through obedience to Jesus. We continue these thoughts today at the end of Romans 5...but before we go there, let's start with a few stories...

In the 14th century, in what we now call Belgium, lived duke Raynald III. A morbidly obese man, who had a violent quarrel with his younger brother Edward. Edward was so angry he led a successful revolt against Raynald, but didn't kill his brother. Instead, he built a room around Raynald in the castle promising he could regain his title & property as soon as he was able to leave the room. This shouldn't have been difficult, since the room had several windows & a door, none of which were locked or barred. Raynald just had to lose weight. But Edward knew his brother, and each day he sent a variety of delicious foods. Instead of dieting his way out of prison, Raynald grew more obese. Duke Edward, accused of cruelty, said, "My brother isn't a prisoner. He may leave when he so wills." Raynald stayed in that room for 10 years & wasn't released until Edward died in battle. By then his health was so ruined he died within a year. A prisoner of his appetite.<sup>1</sup>

Food can have a devastating, or beneficial effect on our bodies. According to Popular Science, in November 2006, a study led by oncologist David Martin tested whether a mouse's diet alone can affect its descendants. They took pregnant mice, which had a gene that increased the likelihood they'd grow obese & develop diabetes & cancer, and fed them meals high in minerals & vitamins. On the new diet, the mice produced offspring less vulnerable to disease."<sup>2</sup> In other words, what the mice ate effected their genetic tendency toward disease. You are what you eat, mouse or Raynald III...

What Romans 5 is telling us is, what Adam ate effected our genetic tendency toward the disease of sin. When Adam ate the fruit in the Garden, he birthed death into the world &

---

<sup>1</sup> (Thomas Costain's history, "The Three Edwards," cited in Leadership, Spring 84, p. 44)

<sup>2</sup> Popular Science, March 07, p. 82 by Abby Seiff

gave us an appetite for sin. Images of Paul's words. Prisoners of our own sin, inherited from Adam. We are what Adam ate.

Billy Graham once said, "The strongest principle of life & blessings lies in our choice. Our life is the sum result of all the choices we make, both consciously & unconsciously. If we can control the process of choosing, we can take control of all aspects of our life. We can find the freedom that comes from being in charge of our life. So Start with what is right rather than what is acceptable. "If you don't make a decision then time will make it for you & time will always side against you!"

As a result of Adam's choice to eat the forbidden fruit, Hebrews 2:15 tells us, "*all their lives (mankind has been) held in slavery by their fear of death.*" In the 70's, rock star Randy Newman was interviewed by a magazine. He said, "I think religion is a tremendously powerful force. How else is someone going to face the horror of everything ending?" Knowing Newman to be an atheist, the reporter asked, "So how do you face it?" Newman replied: "I don't. I joke around it..."

Church life is the one place where we honestly explore the most frightening of issues - mortality. We may, like Randy Newman, joke around about pain, sin & death, but we face it. We're surrounded by it. Just this past week we saw people senselessly murdered in Orlando as a result of one man's sinful nature run amok. That man may be culpable for that one act of violence, but it's birthed from the same sin nature we all possess. He's responsible for that one choice, but we're all responsible for our self-centered sin nature.

What we as Christians know is, more legislation, tougher laws, political wrangling, false promises, and the like, won't stave off the wave of sinful choices, death, poverty, racism, the raping of our environment, or anything else which is antithetical to God's life-giving desires for humankind. We've brought these things upon ourselves, stemming from Adam & extending throughout history. The answer is in Romans 5...

*15 But the gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died by the trespass of the one man, how much more did God's grace and the gift that came by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, overflow to the many! 16 Nor can the gift of God be compared with the result of one man's sin: The judgment followed one sin and brought condemnation, but the gift followed many trespasses and brought justification. 17 For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ!*

*18 Consequently, just as one trespass resulted in condemnation for all people, so also one righteous act resulted in justification and life for all people. 19 For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous.*

*20 The law was brought in so that the trespass might increase. But where sin increased, grace increased all the more, 21 so that, just as sin reigned in death, so also*

*grace might reign through righteousness to bring eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

Paul's speaking of the hope of the Gospel; death doesn't win, grace does! But to know & experience that, we must first be honest about our sin. G.K. Chesterton (1874-1936) was one of the most influential theologians of the 20th century. **The London Times once asked a number of authors to write on the topic: "What's wrong with the world?" Chesterton's answer was the shortest – he wrote... Dear London Times, I am. Sincerely Yours, G. K. Chesterton.** He wasn't being coy, or flippant. He was a Christian who knew what the inherent problem with the world is - his sin, which is our sin. He knew himself, his own propensity for evil & sin, and was honest about it. The most important aspect of sin which every Christian must understand & acknowledge is it's universal nature.

We've heard Paul say, *...all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. (Romans 3:23) "There is none righteous, not even one" (Romans 3:9-10).* We find the same in **1 John 1:8-10, "If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us."** These verses don't convey every person's living in constant gross sinful acts, rather all have a sin nature, we struggle with it. But they also convey that although the power of death has been broken in the cross, we will also struggle with temptation as we walk out our faith.

Sin involves our legal standing before God, we've looked at this, and I don't want to belabor the point any longer. But sin also effects our moral character as we walk life out with Jesus. We've listened to the seductive lie Satan has whispered into our ears since the Fall, **"You're the center of life. This is your world, everything relates to you. What you like is right; what you don't like is wrong. You're the center of all things."** The prophet Jeremiah said, *"The heart is more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick; Who can understand it?" (17:9).* Christians are realistic about their deceitful hearts, they know they can be led astray even by their own desires. Yet, as we walk out our faith, we've been empowered by the Holy Spirit to live a life worthy of our calling - which addresses the choices with which we're constantly faced. Whatever is holy, pure, good, or best, think on these things, Scripture teaches.

Although our human logic is troubling. We fill ourselves with junk food, then think we can solve our issues with Prilosec. **The commercials say it all, Larry the Cable Guy, the poster boy for ill health. Overweight. Eating anything put in front of him. Filling himself with fat, sugar & the like. Heartburn. Distended belly. Gastrointestinal issues. And the answer he gives us...Prilosec! Not better choices! Not healthy living! But a drug to mask the effects of our bad choices allowing us to continue in our gluttony.**

Going back a few sermons, remember we explored **Modernism**, which said reason is king & everything can be proved; presumptuous! We've put our hope in the wrong place - in our ability to legislate, educate, or in science & technology, in ourselves, and certainly not in Christ to solve our problems. **Science** promised us a world free of

disease. Just give it time & even death would be conquered, but the greater the progress, the greater the destruction. What we find is that the deceitful human heart just abuses science to continue its sin & find new ways to practice it.

**Technology** assumed any problem could be resolved if the right tool, method, or technology could be found. No need for God. No need for revelation. Man's problems are man-sized problems. He can handle them. All he needs is a little more time to find the right stuff to fix them. Technology's great, but the downside could be greater. Again, it just affords us new ways to indulge ourselves.

**Education** saw the most basic problem in society as ignorance, not sin. "If we can just get people to think right, they'll live right." Anyone working in a third world culture trying to better health practices knows this isn't true, ancient ingrained beliefs & practices override logic & education all the time. Like technology & science, we've found education lacking; we can't even agree on what to teach - since we're unwilling to unify under God's direction. And we all know **legislation** does little, it may serve to inhibit behavior in some instances, but not fully, and it has no power to change a heart.

These have been our gods - our sources of false hope in a modern world; presumptuous gods promoted by deceiving prophets. Larry the Cable Guy, Politicians, Movie Stars, Musicians, and whoever else has the microphone at any given time in history. We continue to live in a world where there's no escape from our prisons. We sit in our cells growing more obese while the door is wide open in Jesus. **And we see what needs to be embraced isn't what's popular in culture, but what's true in Scripture.**

**The negative gene, our sinful nature, inherent within us, is at times manifested through our actions. But we're not without choice. We're not JUST saved from death in Jesus, we're empowered to make better choices & have life now! Jesus is a doorway which leads to life & wholeness, away from entrapment, not just ultimate death... As we said last week, we're not hypocrites if we agree with God, but don't always act in accordance with Him - we're just honest about who we are, sinners saved, knowing we need a savior. A savior in everyday choices. If we struggle, remember someone once said, "Before I came to Christ, I practiced sin & committed occasional acts of righteousness. Now, I practice righteousness & commit occasional acts of sin." We won't be perfect, but Jesus has won the war, He's transforming you even now. We're people empowered to live making better choices to which Billy Graham eluded. We need always to own our sinful nature, but we're also not hopeless in the gaining of holiness, purity & life in our choices.**

**For instance, the average American watches more than five hours of television every day. TV viewing time increases steadily as we get older (according to the March 2014 "Cross-Platform Report" released by the Nielsen media ratings company). Once we pass 65, we watch more than seven hours a day. The average American then spends another 32 minutes a day on time-shifted television, an hour using the Internet on a computer, an hour & seven minutes on a smartphone & two hours, 46 minutes listening to the radio. Work, sleep, meals, family, WORSHIP, WORD, JESUS - eh, who needs 'em, right?**

Smartphone usage & time-shifted television (ex: Netflix) are growing. The report also confirms we watch a lot of television while we're young & mostly at home. Our viewership drops when we hit our teen years & start to develop more outside interests. After that our viewing rises in a straight line for the rest of our lives. Here's the average weekly usage for ascending age groups a week:

2-11: 24 hours, 16 minutes.  
12-17: 20 hours, 41 minutes.  
18-24: 22 hours, 27 minutes.  
25-34: 27 hours, 36 minutes.  
35-49: 33 hours, 40 minutes.  
50-64: 43 hours, 56 minutes.  
65-plus: 50 hours, 34 minutes.

What we spend our time doing matters. What we eat matters. Choices matter. We've all experienced the growing distrust we feel in the information fed us through media sources & conversations. History's rewritten all the time, who knows if you can even trust these statistics! We sit in our baby chairs, tie on our bibs, and willingly allow culture to spoon feed the junk food of misinformation, violence, sexual depravity, greed, gluttony & all other things unhealthy. All the while our Bible sits on a shelf & we can't remember where.

Here's a few good questions to think about...what if we turned off the TV & radio? What if we didn't look at Facebook 10 times a day? What if we stopped the chatter & allowed the unchanging Truth of God to speak? What if we dusted off our Bible & read, prayed, and meditated on Truth? What if we tipped the scale & God had more input than culture, or even just equal to it? Because all the chatter seems to do nothing but twist us up more. Make us angrier & more confused. We're bloated & sick, and Larry tells us to just take Prilosec. There's a great interview of Morgan Freeman with Mike Wallace, let's take a look (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GeixtYS-P3s>).

"Just stop talking about it!" There's deep wisdom in that statement which can be applied to a plethora of problems. Turn your attention away from the issues, stop trying to solve it with human logic, and as Christians we know, as we turn away, we turn towards Christ. And in turning towards Him, allowing Him to speak, we know that Scripture will fill us with love, honor & respect for all peoples of whatever race. G.K. Chesterton was right, I'm the problem, and I fix that problem by taking all my thoughts captive to Jesus since I know my heart is deceitful. I'm not the center of the universe, what I think is right isn't always right. What I think is wrong isn't always wrong. God gets to define it, but I have to choose to listen! I have to choose to eat well.

The truth is, not everything out there is sinful in essence, but even too much of a good thing is harmful. You can get fat on fruit. Potato chips aren't evil in & of themselves, but my desire to eat a whole bag in one sitting is. Moderation is the key in all these things.

It's not that we have to be a hermit, but we do have to watch our diet of all nourishment be it physical, intellectual, or spiritual.

What if we chose rather than spend those two hours a week sitting at home surfing the internet, or out at a bar drinking yet again 4000 more calories, to actually make our Community Groups a priority? To fellowship & get into the Word alongside other brothers & sisters? To show up & love our neighbors for an hour or two a month through our Community Partnerships? Listening to, serving & praying for them? What if instead of showing up 15 minutes late to church, or running for the door as the pastor starts the benediction, we decided to give Jesus those moments realizing they're important? What if we're honest with ourselves & said we're NOT regular attenders if we go to church once or twice a month, and actually made the effort to be here every Sunday & give Jesus that time? To serve our church community so the kingdom of God can move forward. What if we walked in here 15 minutes early, and left 15 minutes late, stacked some chairs, and helped with kids ministry; worshipped & fellowshiped with each other? What if our faith didn't just fall in line with the rest of our busyness, but everything else fell in line with it? How would that change us?

We don't always do any of this well, but in Christ there's grace for that...remember Paul says here, through the obedience of the one man, Jesus, the many will be made righteous. And, where sin increased, grace increased all the more. But grace doesn't give us the license to sin, even if that sin is just blatant disregard, or indifference.

Professional ice skaters hardly fall, they've spent so much time on the ice. The longer we live in Jesus - the longer His Spirit works within us - the less often we fall. Eventually, as we grow in our faith, we'll hardly stumble at all! As we grow old, we should be growing up in faith - recognizing what's truly important as compared to what's not. The work will still be there tomorrow if you skip out two hours early to see your daughter in her concert to make a much needed community group. You won't die getting up 15 minutes earlier for church. Your kids may be actually better off stretching their bedtime out for your family to be in fellowship with others.

So, if at one time we were what Adam ate, let us remember the Lord's Table this morning. Let's once again, in symbolic fashion representing what's true of us, ingest Jesus flesh & blood to celebrate, we've crossed over from death to life. We've exchanged our prison for freedom. We've walked out of the prison door, no longer obese & sick, but healthy & light. Our choices & lifestyle should reflect our spiritual reality. Let's take stock, and make adjustments where needed to glorify Jesus in all aspects of our lives & live in freedom & victory as we await His return! (Spiritual Goals).