

# Ship Shape

## Setting Ourselves for Smooth Sailing

November 6, 2022

Today we're talking about sailing into sanctification. But first ...



**Ever heard of cluster flies?** Often called *attic flies*; cuz they *hide* in *attics*. And they *hibernate* in a *huge cluster*. I know this, because, a couple years ago, I was in our *little attic*, where I keep our *family mementos*. And I saw a couple *flies* walk up the *wall* and go into a *vent grill*. So I *banged* on it with my *fist* to get 'em to come *out*. And *out they came!* *Thousands*. The *entire attic* was a *fog of flies*. So I put on a *sweatshirt* and a *hat*, and took up a *shop vac* filled with *fly spray*, and *sucked* 'em out of the *air*, and *everywhere* they tried to *hide*, till I'd *abolished* every *last one*. I was the *lord* of those *flies*, and I wasn't *pleased!*

Last Sunday, Noah said, every moment you let the *old you live*, you're *aiding* an *enemy* who's using *you* to gather *strength* to take *you out*. Which means ***sin is a hired killer that we pay, for our own assassination.*** And I loved His point that ***Jesus is living in part of our heart, as He's moving into the whole.*** And so, to make more room for *Him*, ***you gotta exterminate the swarm of the old you crew.*** Now, hiding a Jew during the *holocaust* was *right and good and heroic*; but try to ***imagine being a Jew and hiding a Nazi bent on killing you.*** That'd be *insane*. And yet, ***that's us when we allow sin to hide within.*** We're *nuts! Nutzis!* For a couple years now, when I pray for God's *power* to do the very *thing* I want to do, but *don't* – or to *stop* doing the very thing I want to *stop* doing, but *can't* – I ***ask the Lord to heal me of my insanity.*** Seriously. ***Using the correct term makes an incredible difference.*** Try it. And watch how it *steadily* changes your *thoughts*. Which *gradually* changes your *actions*. James calls this *madness: double-mindedness*. And says it's ...

... like a *wave of the sea* driven and tossed by the *wind*. – James 1:6 NKJ

I firmly believe that ***we need a wartime mindset toward sin.*** *Aware. Prepared. Alert.* A *twig snaps* and *adrenalin rushes in!* Because ***truly loving God means truly loathing sin.*** As Noah said, we're under *no obligation* to join *forces* with that *sinful assassin* to *assist* with our *own destruction*.

We ***[do]*** have an *obligation* ***[don't get me wrong]***—but it is *not* to the *sinful nature* ... For if you *live* ***[and I use the term loosely]*** according to the *sinful nature*, you *will die*; ***[though you'll call it living]*** but if ***by the Spirit*** you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will *live*, because those who are led ***by the Spirit of God*** ***[to put those misdeeds to death]*** are *sons of God*. ***[Even the ladies? YES! Because]*** ... you received ***the Spirit of Sonship.*** ***[So we're the body of God's Son; "There is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus." (Gal 3:28)]*** And ***by Him*** we cry, "Abba, Father." – Romans 8:12-15 NIV

And *that's* the *obligation* we have: *crying out for help*. Because *eliminating, exterminating, and eradicating* “the misdeeds” is only *doable* “by Him” who is “the Spirit of Sonship”. Because *misdeeds* are just the *visible sin* of a deeper cluster hiding *within*. And **the old self doesn't trust that God truly is an all-loving, all-powerful Abba-Father**, who *always only allows* what is *absolutely, purposefully, unfathomably, necessary* for our eternal *best*. And so, *deep inside*, **it's angry at what it selfishly, ignorantly, perceives to be the Lord's deficiency**. And *that's* why:

The sinful mind is [actually] *hostile* to God. [And *that's* why] It does not submit to *God's* law, nor *can it* do so. [How *could* it? And *that's* why] Those controlled by the sinful nature *cannot* please God. [How *could* they?] – Romans 8:7-8 NIV



That *creepy cluster* can only be *cut down* by *knowing* and *trusting* Jesus' *love*, over whatever *lusting* of *Beelzebub's peddling*. Cuz **religion's rules and restrictions by willpower won't cut it**. Noah compared it to the contrast between a rowboat, which **we control by ourselves by our own power** (just the way the sinful nature *likes* it), and a sailboat, which **we co-control by setting the sail, catching the wind, and then steering the rudder**. But we're fully aware that **we're utterly dependent on the wind for power**. Kind of like Jesus' disciples on the Day of Pentecost.



Suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a *rushing mighty wind*, and it *filled the whole house* ... and they were all *filled* with the Holy Spirit – Acts 2:2-4 NKJ

Because, just like a *motorboat*, **rowboats eventually run out of gas**. Whereas, **a sailboat's power source is inexhaustible**. So, if you're *straining* at the *oars* in your walk with the Lord, you should check your *source* ... and *choose*: set your sail to be filled with His Spirit, or be driven and tossed with double-minded madness: **killing off many of the cluster flies ... but ... willingly allowing some to survive, and hide, to breed again within**. Now *that's* nutzi! So, *stop* the *insanity*!

We gotta go *medieval* on *evil* with “the *full armor* of God”. *This* sermon isn't about *putting down* the *cluster flies*, as much as *putting on* the *sweatshirt* and the *hat*, and *taking up* that *shop vac*! The “*breastplate*”, “*helmet*”, and “*shield*”. Last week, we talked about “the *Sword of the Spirit*, which is the *Word of God*”, and before that, “*girding the loins* [of our mind (1 Pet 1:13)] with *truth*”, and “[fitting] our *feet* with the [*lamp of the prophets who light a path to*] the *Gospel*”. Now let's look at “the *helmet of salvation*”. See if you can *wrap* your *mind* around *this*:

For if, *while* we were God's *enemies*, we were *reconciled* [cleared of debts] to Him [and not only that, but] through the death of [us murdering] His Son, how much *more*, [then] having *been* reconciled, shall we be saved through His *life*! – Romans 5:10 NIV

He set us up, so our *redemption* would come through our *evilest* possible *act of sin* against *Him*, to *demonstrate* a *love* we can't *begin* to *comprehend*, which means it's *inexhaustible*, which means we *can* and *must* “take up the *shield of faith*”, and *trust* it *completely*, which gives us the *power* to *suck up* whatever *lies fly* in our *face*. But it's not *just* His *inconceivable love* we must *trust*. *Equally* astounding is His *righteousness* that we “put on like a *breastplate*”. Because ...



Those who *receive* God's *abundant* provision of *grace* and of the gift of righteousness [will] *reign* in *life* through [Jesus Christ]. – Romans 5:17 NIV

A righteousness from God, apart from law, [of righteousness] has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets *testify*. – Romans 3:21 NIV

[David] speaks of the *blessedness* of the man to whom God credits righteousness apart from works [of the law of righteousness] – Romans 4:6 NIV

But *Israel*, who pursued a law of righteousness, has not attained it. – Romans 9:31 NIV

Since they did not know the righteousness that comes from God and *sought to establish their own*, they did not *submit to God's* righteousness. [But you see] Christ is the end of the law [of righteousness] so that there may be righteousness [apart from works of the law of righteousness] for everyone who *believes*. – Romans 10:3-4 NIV

This righteousness from God comes through *faith* in Jesus Christ to *all* who believe. – Romans 3:22 NIV

Jesus turns the *law of religious rules and restrictions* on its head. Don't miss this: **to be righteous, you had to do the deeds of the law.** And then **Jesus makes it a sin to even try to add to the righteousness we've been given.** And that's because, **the only sin I'm more powerful than, is forgiven sin.** This *gift* that *guards* our *heart* like a *breastplate*, *empowers* us to *face* our *failings* while *fearlessly assailing* and *sucking out* whatever *sin* still *flies* in the *space* we've *reserved* for the *One* we've *received* in our *heart*. Because **being right with God must precede doing right with God.**

Think about a sailboat *race*. Same *wind*. Yet different *speeds* and *directions*. Why? Cuz our *course* and *pace* are determined by our *rudder* and the set of our *sail*.

Those who live *according to* the *sinful nature* have their *minds set* on what that [sinful] nature *desires*; but those who live *in accordance* with the *Spirit* have their *minds set* on what the *Spirit desires*. [Thus] The mind of *sinful man* is [set on] *death*, [wise ol' Solomon calls it "*vanity tossed to and fro of them that seek death.*" (Pr 21:6)] but the mind controlled by [what] the *Spirit* [desires] is [set on] *life* and *peace*; – Romans 8:5-6 NIV

Our mindset *determines* our *direction* and *steers* our *heart accordingly*. **The way we think determines the way we feel.** And **the way we feel determines the way we act.** And that *rushing mighty wind* of **God's Word determines the way we think ... if it's treasured** within.

Ever been the victim of someone having a "bad day"? It's likely the set of their sail, or reckless rudder. Because whatever we're *open* to, will *drive* us: **open yourself to the sinful self, be driven to sinful deeds;** but, **open your heart to the heart of Christ, be carried to life and peace.**

Those who have 'set their sail' on the *sinful self*, ignore how we've been created to interpret true fulfillment – thinking *happiness* comes by *focusing* on *self* and *powering* through. Which is why **self-focusing ultimately drives us to self-loathing.** Which is why *wise ol' Solomon* said:



<sup>1:13</sup> It is an *unhappy business* that God has given to *human beings* to be *busy* with. ... <sup>1:14</sup> all [*busy business*] is *vanity* and a *chasing after wind*. ... <sup>1:17</sup> I applied my *mind[set]* to know *wisdom* and to know *madness* and *folly* [*the nutzies*] ... this *also* is but a *chasing after wind*. ... <sup>2:17</sup> So I *hated* [*the unhappy busyness of*] *life* ... *all* is *vanity* and a *chasing after wind*. ... <sup>2:26</sup> To the *one* who *pleases* Him God gives *wisdom* and *knowledge* and *joy*; but to the *sinner* He gives the [*busy*] *work* of *gathering* and *heaping* ... this *also* is *vanity* and a *chasing after wind*. ... <sup>4:4</sup> All *toil* and all *skill* in [*busy*] *work* come from one person's *envy* of another. This *also* is *vanity* and a *chasing after wind*. ... <sup>4:6</sup> Better is a *handful* with *quiet* than *two handfuls* with *toil*, and a *chasing after wind*. – Ecclesiastes 1:14-4:6 NRS

Why does Paul say the self-focused mind is *hostile* to God? I know *unbelievers* who talk *favorably* about *God*. But their *thoughts* about *God*, are on *their terms*. They're seeking *the secret* of a *subservient* God. And it's all *vanity* and *chasing after* the wind ... in a *rowboat*. Because, it's ...

“Not by *might* nor by *power*, but by *My Spirit*,” [*of Sonship* (Rom 8:15)] says the Lord Almighty. [*about that rushing mighty wind* (Acts 2:2)] – Zechariah 4:6 NIV

[*So*] [*Until we reach*] the *knowledge* of the *Son of God* and become *mature* ... [we'll be] tossed *back* and *forth* by the *waves*, [*of double-mindedness*] and *blown here* and *there* by every *wind* of *teaching* and by the *cunning* and *craftiness* of *men* – Ephesians 4:13-15 NIV

And when *rowers* run out of *gas*, they're *dead* in the *water*. Cuz, “the *sinful nature* cannot *please* God”. Nor find the *surpassing peace* that *accompanies* our *created purpose*. So **if I live to please me, I can't please God or myself**. Whereas, **if I live to please God, I please my Lord and myself!**

[*Now*] [*Moses*] persevered because he *saw* Him who is *invisible*. – Hebrews 11:27 NIV

[*And*] Under His feet was something ... as bright blue as the sky. – Exodus 24:9-10 NIV

That was the *true Light* which *gives light* to every man – John 1:9 NKJ

As a *fragrant offering* and *sacrifice* to God. – Ephesians 5:2 NIV

[*But as wise ol' Solomon warns*] *Dead flies* give *perfume* a bad *smell* – Ecclesiastes 10:1 NIV

[*So*] Remember *all* the commands of the *Lord*, that you may obey *them* and not *prostitute* yourselves by *chasing after* the *lusts of your own hearts* – Numbers 15:39 NIV

[*And*] <sup>3</sup> *Trust* in the *Lord* ... <sup>4</sup> *Delight* yourself *also* in the *Lord* ... <sup>5</sup> *Commit* your *way* to the *Lord* ... <sup>7</sup> *Rest* in the *Lord*, and wait *patiently* ... <sup>8</sup> *Cease* from *anger*, and *forsake wrath*; do not *fret*—it only causes *harm*. ... <sup>15</sup> [*That*] sword shall enter their *own heart* ... <sup>28</sup> For the *Lord* loves *justice*, and does *not* forsake His *saints* ... <sup>31</sup> The *law* of his *God* [a.k.a. the *Sword of the Spirit*] is in [*their*] heart; ... <sup>39</sup> [*Which is why and how*] He is their *strength* in the time of trouble. – Psalm 37:3-39 NKJ condensed

Which is why, **we won't make peace with God without making war with sin**. Because, this *battle* is how He *builds* our *desire* and *determination*, and ultimately *self-discipline*, to *reject* *wonderfully* packaged *wickedness* in *exchange* for *blue skies*, *open seas*, and a *Light breeze*. All we need to *do* is to *open* our *mind* and our *heart* ... and *read* the *wind*.

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Father God, thank You for loving me in spite of my sin; forgive me and cleanse me by the sacrifice of Your Son, my Savior; and free me and lead me by Your Spirit and Word, as I seek to trust and follow Jesus Christ, as the Lord of my life. Amen.