



Sermon – December 31, 2017

5 Pillars of Central Baptist Church

Romans 1:18 – 20 – Our God is Sovereign

2 Peter 1:20 – 21 – The Bible is Supernaturally Written by God

Ephesians 1:7 – The blood of Jesus Christ is the ransom payment for our sin

Matthew 16:15 – 18 – The church will not be defeated

Revelation 20:11 – 15 – Jesus Christ is coming back

So we're going to start with Romans 1 today. My, I have grand-twins, two eight-year olds, a boy and a girl. Always amazed me when people say, "Are they identical?" No. So the other day, and their mother Courtney, my daughter-in-law, said, "OK, y'all need to go get ready for bed and brush your teeth. So they came out. Charis looked at Drew and she said, "You didn't brush your teeth." He said, "Yes, I did." She said, "No, you didn't." He said, "How do you know I didn't?" She said, "Because your toothbrush is not wet." To which Drew replied, "Look, Charis, it's like God. You can't see Him, but He's there. You can't see the water on the brush, but I brushed my teeth." So to make sure we don't warp the scripture like apparently my eight-year-old is gifted at doing, we're going to take every new year's, we're going to walk through this, not the same sermon, I'm going to vary it, but we're going to walk through really what are the five pillars we're going to build always, we've always built the church around these five and we're going to continue to build it around basically five things that I want us to lock down on.

Number one, I want you to look at Romans 1 because this is the first place we're locking down. In, beginning in verse 18. Listen to what the text says.

<sup>18</sup>For the wrath of God is being revealed from heaven upon all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who hold the truth down in unrighteousness, <sup>19</sup>because the knowledge of God is clear in them for God made it clear to them. <sup>20</sup>For His invisible attributes from the creation of the world have been perceived by what is seen as created, that is, His eternal power and divine nature, so that these people are without excuse.

Now there are a couple things that He says here. Number one, our first pillar that we're going to base this church around is that our God is in fact sovereign. He created the world. He created us. And what He did, according to this text, He took the truth about Himself and shoved it down in our life. He shoved it there. We didn't have a choice. You don't come out and kind of wonder if there's a God. He has created us and in His sovereignty has shoved down in us the truth that He is there. It's why, for example, you enjoy the sunsets. No other animal does. Cows don't. Dogs

don't. Cats, well.... You do, because you've been created with this ability to grasp the beauty of the universe. Second thing he says is, that, and this is the interesting thing, he says there is a reimbursement coming for those who take that truth and hold it down with unrighteousness. In His sovereignty, He's given us free will. So that He creates us, He places His knowledge of Himself in us, and then with that He says, "Look here you go. I have forced my knowledge in you. But that's as far as I'm shoving anything down your throat. You have the right to choose whether or not you want to yield to that or not." Someone says to you, "Well look." And I get it. You say, "Well I'm an atheist because I really don't scientifically see anything in the scripture. We need to be clear. That's not true. That is your choice. You made that choice. It's not because the world doesn't make sense. I guarantee when people die and stand before God, that had made that statement, and I get it and I'm not trying to belittle you, but I want you to understand that if that's your statement, when you stand before God, He will do one simple thing. He will pull up Mt. Rushmore and He will say, "Is this luck and time or did somebody design and do this?" And then He's going to look at your hand and He's going to talk about the complexity of that and your body and this universe and say, "How in the world you could look at that and say it's not time and luck, but you look at everything else and say it is?" No. He has created this universe in His sovereignty. He has made it complex. You see design everywhere. And in that design He has shoved a knowledge of Himself in us, but He has given us the free will to decide whether or not we're going to yield to that. Now here's the problem. His sovereignty isn't removed. He's still sovereign. Even though in His sovereignty, He's given us free will, He says we're without excuse. In other words, there's coming a day when, we'll look at it in the fifth pillar, there's coming a day when in fact we will face Him and we will have to give Him an answer for why we chose Atheism or Agnosticism or Deism. We're going to have to give an answer for that because His sovereignty is never lost. He's still head. Shoved His truth down in us. Has given us free will. But there's coming a day when His sovereignty will be completely reasserted at which point we will give an answer for why we looked at a knowledge that is clear to us and said, "I don't want it." Our first understanding is that He's sovereign.

Number two. Go to 2 Peter chapter 1. I want you to listen to what the scripture says. 2 Peter chapter 1. Look in verse 20.

<sup>20</sup>Knowing first this, that no prophecy has come of one's own private interpretation, <sup>21</sup>for it is not through the will of a man that prophecy has come, but men carried along by the Holy Spirit have spoken from God.

So here's the second thing. You see this book? This is the binding book on us. He has sovereignly placed in us an understanding of who He is and then He's taken this book and given us objectively written materials so we can be clear with who He is and what He believes and what we need to do in response to that. That's in here. This is the binding book on us here. It's not about business principles. It's about this. It's about what this says. It's not about what our culture believes or what people think about marriage or what people think about same-sex, or what people think about abortion; doesn't matter. We're going to stand on what this says about every single one of those issues including everything. It doesn't matter what the world says about love. We're going to understand what the Bible says about love. So we're going to lock into this book. I know. We live in an intellectual culture here at A&M. I get that. And so there's a tendency to go, "Well, you know, Bible, it's not really supernatural." Absolutely it's supernatural.

There was a guy, Peter Stoner, who took 600 college students and had them look at 47 prophecies in the Old Testament about Jesus. There are over 300. But they studied 47 for the mathematical probability of those 47 being fulfilled. It was one in ten to the 157<sup>th</sup> power. In other words, it's impossible. It took a divine orchestration for the truth in this book to be fulfilled in Jesus Christ. Now because of that truth, the liberals came along and said, "Well, come on, man. That Old Testament stuff; it's interpolation. It was written after Jesus so it would look like it was prophetic." God always validates who He is. Little Bedouin boy, right. Twelve. He's walking in the southern part of Judea. He's looking for his sheep. He's bored. Picks up a rock, chunks it in a cave, hears something break, and thinks, "There's a lawsuit." So he's nervous, goes home, gets his dad, they come back, they discover, right, all the Dead Sea Scrolls. The only complete book discovered in those scrolls is a book that the liberals particularly attack, the book of Isaiah. Particularly because of Isaiah 53 and the enumerable prophecy statements inside Isaiah 53; virgin birth, dying between two thieves, buried with a rich man in His death, His stripes were healed. All these incredible statements and they discover this copy, had to be a copy, the copy is 230 years before the arrival of Jesus Christ. God always validates this book and it is, without equivocation, supernaturally written by Him. Therefore, since He wrote it, we're living it. So that's the second pillar. OK.

Third pillar. I want you to look at Ephesians chapter 1, verse 7. This the simplest statement in the New Testament about what we believe about Jesus. Listen to what he says.

[<sup>7</sup>In Him we have the redemption,](#)

It's a Greek word, *apolutrósis*, which literally means to make a payment for a ransom. In other words, your caught in a position you can't get out of, somebody makes a ransom payment for you, and here's the ransom payment:

[through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace](#)

That's our third pillar. That based on this book, we understand that it is the blood of Jesus Christ that is the ransom payment for our sin. We couldn't get out. You say, "Well God paid it to Satan." He didn't pay anything to Satan. He paid it to Himself. He's holy and He just can't ignore who and what we've become in our rebellion against Him based on Romans 1. But amazingly loved us enough not to just discard us, but to send His Son and let His blood pour out so that He could bring us back to Him without violating His own holiness. What an incredible act of love. So His grace and mercy are wrapped in the blood of Jesus Christ and that's our understanding. It doesn't matter how many times you go to church. It doesn't matter how much you read this Bible. It doesn't matter how much you pray. You say, "Well I'm ahead. I did four bad things yesterday and I think I did six good. So I'm ahead." Here's the problem with the scale. If you have one thing over here, you're dead. You have to be as holy as He is. You say, "That's crazy. Nobody can be as holy as He is." Bingo! No you can't. Jesus was. And so His death on the cross makes the payment. You know what salvation really is? It's a trade. I give God my filth; He gives me His holiness. So that when I die and I stand before God and He looks at me, He's not going to see any sin because the blood of His Son has washed it away. And what He will see is not my righteousness, but the righteousness of His Son in my place. That's what I get. I get the righteousness of Jesus. I get rid of my sin and I am as holy as God because He made me so through

the blood of His Son and the ransom payment on the cross. That's our third, prime, centered believe.

Number four is Matthew 16. Christ gets them out.

<sup>15</sup>Who do men say I am? <sup>16</sup>Peter says, "You are the Christ, you're the Messiah, the Son of the living God." <sup>17</sup>And Jesus answered and said to him, (Matthew 16:17) "Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father in heaven. <sup>18</sup>And I'm telling you, you're Peter and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of hell will not prevail against it."

What a staggering statement. He made that in front of a giant rock at the opening mouth waters of the Jordan River in Caesarea Philippi. There's this massive rock about the size of the back of the stage and right here's the Jordan River. And under this rock is this opening that was called by them the Gates of Hell. And they would throw a sacrifice in there, a human sacrifice, as it was laid to rest, if blood came up the sacrifice was not accepted. If no blood came up, it was accepted, and you went into the Gates of Hell right here and it's in front of this little monument that Jesus Christ said, "The Gates of Hell will not prevail against what you know about me." Our sacrifice required blood. But that blood is a holy blood that secures our redemption. The church is built on that and according to Jesus Christ, now listen to me carefully, you can't be saved because you believe what I say. You can only be saved when the Holy Spirit reveals to you. That's what Jesus said, "Blessed are you, Simon, flesh and blood has not revealed this to you." But when the Holy Spirit tells you about who you are and who Jesus is, and you surrender your faith to that, at that point, you become part of the church. And listen, the church is not defeatable. Everything else is. The church is not. That is exactly what Jesus Christ said. Even these gates of hell cannot prevail against the church. It doesn't matter what Satan does. He will not win against the church. And I've got to be honest here, I'm just telling you my heart, I'm not an underdog kind of guy. I love winners. Always have. When I was a kid, even growing up in the South, I was born in Tennessee. I didn't root for Tennessee because, how can I say this gently, they stunk. But Alabama, which I wound up in as a state, had Bear Bryant, we won all the time. And then the professional team I loved was the Dallas Cowboys because they used to win all the time. Everybody loves winners. Why do you think A&M just paid \$75 million to a guy that's never coached a day here? Because you believe he can turn your football team into a winner. We'll pay whatever it costs. Because we're desperate for winners. But let me be clear about something. It's been fun the last few years when Alabama won a national championship. It'll be fun if A&M wins a national championship. That'd be great. But here's the problem. You win it in January and when June comes, you don't have it anymore because you're starting to get ready for August college football. There isn't anything you win in this world that lasts. But the church, it does last. And that victory is eternal. It is not short lived. So if we're going to really get on the bandwagon of somebody that wins, you get part of the church. And why does that happen? Because of the fifth thing which is the return of Christ.

I want you to look at Revelation 20. Now we're going to read a few verses here. And again I realize these are anti-intellectual verses. We don't like these. We don't talk about these. We don't read these because after all we're smart, kind of a fairy tale thing. Let me be clear. If John 3:16

is true, you have to accept this as well. Look at Revelation 20:11 and listen to why what happens to your free will and what you do with it is critical. He said,

<sup>11</sup>I saw a great white throne and the One sitting upon it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled, and there was no place found for them. (That is, no place to hide) <sup>12</sup>I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged out of what is written in the books, according to their works. <sup>13</sup>The sea gave up its dead which was in it, and death and hell gave up the dead in them; and they were each judged according to their works. <sup>14</sup>And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. <sup>15</sup>And if anybody was not found written in the book of life, he was cast into the lake of fire.

Now I know we mock that. But that's as accurate from the Holy Spirit as John 3:16 is accurate. He's coming back and the first thing He's going to do is all these people in Romans 1, when He sovereignly showed the truth about Him in us, and then said, "Now you can do what you want with it, but My sovereignty one day will completely reassert itself at which point you will be dealt with and you will be inexcusable for rejecting Me." That point comes when He returns and He reasserts that sovereignty in the fact that it says, everybody fled, there wasn't one place to hid from Almighty Jesus Christ. And so that throne comes and if your name's not in this book and it's only written in the ink of the blood of Jesus Christ on the cross, in that ransom payment, if it's not in there, then you face the second death. For us who decided, "You know, God, I want You. I am bad. I believe Your Son's not. I believe Your Holy Spirit told me that. I'm yielding to that. I'm putting my faith there." When we do that; look in chapter 21.

<sup>1</sup>I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there was no longer any sea.

Now that doesn't mean much to us, but to them, they were terrified of the ocean. Nothing will ever bring terror to God's people again.

<sup>2</sup>The holy city, Jerusalem, I saw new coming down out of heaven from God, prepared like a bride is adorned for her husband. <sup>3</sup>And I heard a great voice out of the throne, which said, "Behold, behold the dwelling of God is with men, He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be their God, <sup>4</sup>He will wipe every tear from their eyes; there will be no longer death, crying, mourning, or pain; for the first things are gone away." <sup>5</sup>And the One sitting on the throne said, "Behold, I make everything new."

That's our destiny. So understand me. This is where we are in this church and where we're going to be as long as I pastor. Here's our first place: He's sovereign. In that sovereignty He's given us free will but we're going to be addressed with what we've done with that free will down the road. Secondly, that book is supernatural. It's not the Qur'an. It's God's word. Number three: we believe in the blood of Jesus Christ as a ransom payment for everybody in the world. Doesn't matter what color you are. Doesn't matter how smart you are. Doesn't matter how dumb you are. His ransom payment is available to every single person. Number four: it puts you in the only entity in the universe that cannot be defeated by Satan because He's coming back for His people.

Everybody else is left, but His people are taken home. You lost somebody you love; when you get home, your real home, you see those people again and you will never lose a single person again. When I go there, every single person I will know, and amazingly we won't be jealous of anybody, we will never be mad at anybody, there's never going to be an issue there. It's eternal. You say, "Well how can it stay that great eternally?" It's my favorite word in the Greek in the entire New Testament. It's in 1 Peter. It talks about it and it uses this word, unfading. In other words, that first day we walk in and we see Him and He pulls us out and we don't face that lake of fire and we're in His presence and we're adorned like a bride for her husband, we go into the marriage supper of the Lamb, that moment for eternity, that joy, that beauty, that holiness will never fade. You know, I want you to go in the new year with the understanding, if you've heard from the Holy Spirit, you've used your free will correctly, His blood's washed away your sin, you've got a book that can keep you from the mess in this world, keep you from your own enemy, and enable you to live out the calling of God in your life, you're part of an entity that wins, and He's coming back. And this time He's the supreme court. That is a great way, that's why the Bible says, *euaggelion*, in the Greek, good news, it's a good news to go into the new year with, if you know Jesus, it's better than a one year national championship, it's an eternal victory in the blood of our Savior.

Let's pray.

Father before this year ends, I ask You if there's anybody here that has never met Your Son, I ask Your Spirit to move among these chairs. Speak so that they can respond and have the victory the rest of us have based on Your Word. Father center us in our homes around Your sovereignty, Your word, Your blood, Your church, and Your return. Center our lives around those pillars so that when we die, our theology is straight, our heart is pure, our lives are directed. Honor us in who You are in our lives. Bless this day and bless the coming year for us. In Jesus Christ name.