

THE SEASON OF LIVING POSITIVELY
Romans 8

Growing in the Seasons of Life Series
November 24, 2013
Pastor Nathan J. Thompson

This morning we continue the series, “Growing in the Seasons of Life,” by focusing on “The Season of Living Positively.” My friends, most people really don’t know how to live. I believe it’s for that reason Jesus proclaimed this truth in John 10:10, *“I came that you might have life, and have it abundantly.”*

Jesus did not say I came that you might have religion or that you might have rules, regulations and rituals. Rather he said, *“I came that you might have life, and have it abundantly.”* Therefore it is true...most people just don’t know how to live. As a result they miss out on the season of living positively.

There are a number of studies that have concluded that people who are optimistic and positive often live longer. They also often have better health, are happier and accomplish more than people who are not optimistic. One study actually stated that salespeople who are optimistic often have 37% more sales than those who are not.

People like to be around positive people. I believe that is why people like to be here at Messiah. This is a very positive church. We emphasize the good news of Jesus. The last thing I’m sure you want to do is come to church and hear lots of bad news; you get enough of that during the week. We focus in this church on good news because our God has a lot of good news to tell us.

I firmly believe that Christians, of all people, should be the most positive, optimistic people living today. We have so much to live and hope for. I believe a pessimistic Christian can sometimes be an insult to God. I say this because of the verses we are going to look at from Romans 8; this passage gives us seven reasons why our season in life can be positive.

As one who is “in Christ” I can first of all live a life without condemnation. Romans 1:1 states, *“There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.”* This certainly is a difficult truth for many of us to grasp; it seems too good to be true. Yet the truth is that no matter what I do God doesn’t get mad at me or reject me.

As a Christian when you blow it God doesn’t disown you; he doesn’t kick you out of his family. When you’re inconsistent he doesn’t get impatient and scold you. When you sin he doesn’t stop loving you. Why; because your sins have already been paid for by Jesus on the cross.

There is only one condition--being “in Christ.” Paul says that for those who are in Christ Jesus there is “no condemnation.” It’s already been done for you. You can’t earn it; you just receive it. God has made it possible for us to live a life without condemnation.

Now that does not mean we don't sin or make mistakes. Christians are not perfect. Therefore to know this truth is a great reason for each of us to be positive and hopeful. Say this verse with me, *"There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus."* (Repeat)

As one who is in Christ I can secondly live a life without domination. Romans 8:2 states, *"For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ has set you free from the law of sin and death."* The good news in this verse is that I am free and don't need to be controlled anymore by other things.

A common complaint of course we hear today is, "My life is out of control; I know what I want to be doing yet I can't seem to change." It is perhaps a way of thinking or acting. Maybe it's a habit—drinking, smoking, taking drugs, avoiding exercise, whatever. The good news is that in Christ you are set free.

Friend, what is controlling you today? All of us are controlled by something. Maybe it's our own defiant nature, the chaos of the world, my need to be liked or whatever. Yet the amazing thing is that the more I allow God to control my life the more freedom I experience. When I give God my life through faith I then truly gain control of it.

As one who is in Christ I can thirdly live a life without desperation. Henry David Thoreau once said, "Most people live lives of quiet desperation." Many today are overwhelmed, discouraged. Life is not easy; it can be tough. God has not promised a problem-free life for believers.

Romans 8:18 states, *"I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us."* Paul reminds us we know how the story is going to end; there are going to be rewards. Even when times are tough; things go wrong; everything seems to fall apart, the promise is that in the end I will win. Unbelievers, unfortunately, don't share in that same hope.

As one who is in Christ I can fourthly live a life without despair. Romans 8:28 states, *"We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purposes."* The good news is that good things can come out of bad.

When we look at the big picture, God can bring good things out of whatever we go through. No, it doesn't mean that these problems go away or that we will live happily ever after; yet it gives us confidence and courage to face them with hope. A Christian does not need to despair but can trust God's power and love.

As one who is in Christ I can fifth live a life without intimidation. Romans 8:31 states, *"What are we to say about these things? If God is for us who is against us?"* Have you my friend discovered this wonderful truth that God is for you? God is not trying to trap you, make your life miserable or a mess. He is for you; he wants you to succeed.

Therefore Christians of all people should be the most confident people in the world. Yet so many today live their lives in fear. What do you fear the most? Some of you may fear failure; the future; perhaps dying; rejection; criticism. *"We are more than conquerors."*

My friend, what have you been telling yourself you could never do? What God-given gift or talent have you been denying? Philippians 4:13 says, *"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."* That is definitely a life without intimidation; to have confidence that comes from God.

As one who is in Christ I can sixth live a life without limitations. Romans 8:32 states, *"He who did not withhold his own Son, but gave him up for us all, will he not with him also give us everything else?"* If God loves you enough to send Jesus to die for you don't you think he loves you enough to help you in whatever circumstance you are facing.

The truth is that God can meet all my needs. Now I know we often have a hard time believing this. Yet whether these needs be emotional, social, financial, spiritual or physical God wants to meet your needs. He promises it over and over again in his Word.

Philippians 4:13 says, *"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."* Psalm 84:11 says, *"No good thing does the Lord withhold from those who walk uprightly."* Matthew 6:33 says, *"Seek first the kingdom of God, and all these things will be yours as well."* God wants to give us a life without limitations.

As one who is in Christ I can seventh live a life without separation. Romans 8:35 states, *"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?"* He goes on to say in verse 37, *"No, in all these things we are more than conquerors...for nothing will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord."*

If you can grasp this truth, my friends, it will revolutionize your life. The good news is that God will never leave you or forsake you. The good news is that nothing will ever make God stop loving you. The good news is that in Christ, through faith in him our salvation and life in heaven are God's responsibility; nothing can separate us from his love.

Now sometimes we may come to God and say, "God, I don't want to believe in you right now. I don't want to go to church anymore. I don't want to do what is right. I don't want to act like a Christian." Yet God says, "You may try to run away from me, but I won't run away from you. I love you. I call and welcome back in my loving arms all who stray and all who will return to me."

So these are seven wonderful privileges and promises that God makes available to us in Jesus Christ. If you, my friend, have never opened your life up to Christ I encourage you to do so today. Don't wait or put it off. Say today, "Jesus, I commit my life to you; Jesus, I promise to follow you; Jesus, I love you."

Are you facing a situation today you think is hopeless? Are you afraid of failure, dying or the future? Remember, my friend, God loves you so much; he is totally on your side. Trust in him so your seasons of life can be positive, and so that you can live a life filled with the abundance of hope and love.