

ST. SIMEON ANGLICAN CHURCH, OFF FUTA ROAD, AKURE

BIBLE STUDY, 06/05/2009

STUDY 7

THE DOCTRINE OF MORTIFICATION

Romans 8:13

Our text sets before us life and death, blessing and cursing. To "*live after the flesh*" is to be completely controlled by indwelling sin, to be thoroughly under the dominion of our inbred corruptions. Mortification consists in a course of conduct which is just the reverse. It imports: comply not with the demands of your old nature, but rather subdue them. Serve not, cherish not your lusts, but starve them: "*make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof*" (Romans 13:14). The natural desires and appetites of the physical body require to be disciplined, so that they are our servants and not our masters; it is our responsibility to moderate, regulate and subordinate them unto the higher parts of our being. But the cravings of the body of sin are to be promptly refused and sternly denied. The spiritual life is retarded just in proportion as we yield subservience to our evil passions. The imperative necessity for this work of mortification arises from the continued presence of the evil nature in the Christian. There is a ceaseless conflict in the saint between indwelling sin and inherent grace. Consequently there is a perpetual need for him to mortify or put to death. He is called upon to engage in ceaseless warfare and not suffer temptation to bring him into captivity to his lusts, and this through the Spirit; we cannot do it without the Spirit working it in us, and the Spirit will not do it without our doing our endeavour. The divine prohibition is "*have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness* [enter into no truce, form no alliance with], *but rather reprove them*" (Ephesians 5:11). Say with Ephraim of old, "What have I to do any more with idols?" (Hosea 14:8).

Questions for discussion

1. Does the "ye" in each half of the verse have reference to the same persons, or are there two entirely different classes in view?
2. What is meant by "*live after the flesh*"? Is it possible for a real Christian to do so?
3. Are the terms "*die*" and "*live*" here used figuratively and relatively, or literally and absolutely?
4. What is imported by "*mortify*" and why "*the deeds of the body*" rather than "*the lusts of the flesh*"?
5. If the "ye" perform that task, then how "*through the Spirit*"?
6. In what manner will the promise "*ye shall live*" be made good, seeing they already be alive spiritually?

Conclusion

The whole of Romans 8:13 pertains and belongs to believers, who are "*debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh*" (Romans 8:12); but, instead, debtors to Christ who redeemed them, and therefore to live unto His glory; debtors to the Holy Spirit who regenerated and indwells them, and therefore to live in subjection to His absolute control.