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Who Owns Your House?

Jenni Breems

Dordt College, jenni.breems@dordt.edu

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Who Owns Your House?

Abstract

"The good news that God triumphs over evil, even over the sin that lives inside us, is a message for people of any and every nation."

Posting about God's holiness and goodness from *In All Things* - an online journal for critical reflection on faith, culture, art, and every ordinary-yet-graced square inch of God's creation.

<http://inallthings.org/who-owns-your-house/>

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Jenni Breems

Daily Scripture Texts

[Psalm 145:8-14](#)

[Zechariah 2:6-13](#)

[Romans 7:7-20](#)

We recently completed an extensive remodel of our home. One evening, my husband and I went in to see how the work was progressing. A contractor's assistant, whom we had not met, asked us pointedly, "Are you the owners?" After we assured him that we were indeed the owners of the house, we proceeded with our inspection. For security reasons, I was glad he asked. But, the interaction gave me pause. I wanted to be clearly identified as the one who owned the house and intended to live there after the remodel was finished.

In today's lectionary passage from Romans, the apostle Paul is experiencing a very real tension. This section of Romans 7 is an extended argument. Paul is trying to explain that God's commandments are holy and good, even though they expose our opportunities for sin. Sin, the personified opportunist, takes the opening that is given by God's laws to produce every kind of evil and death in human beings. Paul laments in verses 19-20, "For I do not do the good I want to do, but the evil I do not want to do – this I keep on doing... It is no longer I who do it, but it is the sin living in me that does it." Perhaps we could paraphrase Paul in more contemporary language, "It's not really me, folks. The true me, redeemed by Christ, is trying to do good. I've just got this evil, ugly housemate named Sin who is taking over my house. He's really the problem. He's the one causing all the ruckus and mayhem." We can all identify with Paul. When sin lives inside us, things are not the way they ought to be.

The New Testament passage from Romans explores the tension of a sinful reality. Sin is living inside and among us. In contrast, the good news of salvation comes from the Old Testament prophet Zechariah. The Almighty God describes his people as the "apple of his eye." He declares with force, "Be glad... I am coming... I will live among you." This Almighty God chooses to live with his people—and after the resurrection, *in* his people. And where God dwells, sin cannot be. He banishes and destroys the sin that plunders his people. The evil housemate will be kicked out.

I find comfort that a holy God will come to live with his people. There will be no more room for sin. Yet, the news gets even better. Zechariah's announcement is not just for a small, specially selected group. Instead, Zechariah foresees that "*Many nations* will be joined with the Lord." He urges *all mankind* to "Be still before the Lord." The good news that God triumphs over evil, even over the sin that lives inside us, is a message for people of any and every nation.

In today's lectionary Psalm, God's people proclaim his goodness. They tell of his trustworthy promises, his gracious compassion, his everlasting faithfulness, his rich love, and his mighty acts of salvation. What is the purpose of this song of praise? Psalm 145:12 explains "that all people may know of your mighty acts." God desires all people to know the trustworthiness of his promise. He will triumph over sin and he intends to live with his people. Take heart in this good news.