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| **SERMON NOTES Sunday 28th June 2020** |
| **SunnySide** |

**Theme: Taking sides**

Main passage: **Romans 6.12-23**

**Some of the main themes from the sermon**

**Who are we?**

All of us are many things, of course. A muddled mix influenced by our genes, our upbringing, our social circle, the society into which we were born and the choices we have made. Earlier this year we looked together at what God says about who we are and what that means; God’s beloved children, disciples, witnesses, servants and members of God’s family. In today’s bible reading from Romans, Paul looks at what being God’s beloved children means for the way we choose to live our lives.

**Playing for a new team**

Paul’s overarching theme in this bit of his letter to the Roman Christians is that in our baptism as Christians we have ‘changed sides’. We are no longer playing for ‘Team Sin’, instead we are playing for a new team: ‘Team Jesus’. So we wear a different ‘team strip’ and our fortunes and ambitions are those of our new team.

Some of Paul’s imagery would have been clear to his first readers but may be less clear to us. He is echoing back to the stories of Moses and the Exodus and to Jesus’s own baptism and crucifixion. Christians are members of ‘Team Jesus’. The transfer fee was his own self giving love on the cross and that fulfilled God’s long term desire to set his people free, from all that enslaved them.

**Making the right choices**

‘Team Jesus’ has its own code of behaviour and like all team members we follow it. We need to examine our behaviour and attitudes to make sure that they are in tune with Jesus. (v12-14)

Because we are playing for ‘Team Jesus’, we may play badly (or even score the odd own goal) but we are still playing in the same direction as the rest of the team. So the whole idea that we may suddenly start playing for the other side is laughable. (v15-18)

**Becoming who we were made to be**

In v19 23, Paul confronts the possibility that his readers may choose to try and go back to their pre-Christian lifestyle. For them and us, it may seem attractive to let our standards slip and choose to do things which we know we will, in future be ashamed of (v21). The trouble is that we risk being ensnared into a lifestyle we can’t escape – a lifestyle that will diminish us (v23) and rob us of the eternal life that Jesus promised us and called us to.

**The challenge of now**

We are living in unusual times with unusual pressures on us. The steady rhythm of our lives has been shattered. This gives us an opportunity to re-examine our lives and those assumptions we have taken for granted before God.

* How might being in ‘Team Jesus’ affect our response to the easing of lockdown and the new world that lies beyond?
* How might being in ‘Team Jesus’ affect our response to the inequalities in our world, highlighted in the Black Lives Matter movement but actually much wider than that?

***Some questions for thought and discussion this week***

**❶ What might we want to differently as individual members of Team Jesus once lockdown is over and life becomes more like it used to be. Have our priorities changed. Do we still have the same perceived ‘needs’?**

**❷ What might we want to do differently as a church once lockdown is over? Should we re-order our priorities? Have we learned lessons about what ‘being church’ means that we can take forward?**

**❸ The world is full of injustice. The Kingdom of God is a place of justice. What might we (as members of Team Jesus) be being called to do about the injustices we are aware of (particularly those we benefit from)?**

**We might think of:**

* **The sexism and racism in our society**
* **Modern slavery**
* **The fact that climate change disproportionately affects those in poor countries**

**❹ Does it matter when we score ‘own goals’ as members of Team Jesus?**

**❺ Are there any other issues that the sermon has raised for you?**