

## *Saturday "Sermon"*

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October 2, 2010

## **Addiction & Hope**

The news these days is filled with reports of our country's unrelenting addiction to drugs both legal and illegal. Ciudad Juarez, just across the river from El Paso, Texas, is one of the world's deadliest cities, thanks to the cartels that supply drugs to the U.S.

The Associated Press recently reported that after forty years and a trillion dollars—450 billion for federal prisons alone—"the U.S. drug war has met none of its goals." U.S. drug czar Gil Kerlikowske noted that "Our problem is, if anything, magnified, intensified. . . . We arrest the drug dealer, but we leave the addiction."

Even so, Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano argues that "This is something that is worth fighting for because drug addiction is about fighting for someone's life . . . their ability to be a successful and productive adult . . . the stakes are too high to let go."

While I agree with Secretary Napolitano, our problem is bigger than drug addiction. Our problem includes addictions to alcohol, gambling, pornography, and even food (Tennessee is tied with Alabama for the second highest rate of obesity in the nation). The list really is endless.

When we drill down sufficiently, what we discover is that all of these life-controlling problems have their root within our own spirits. As Paul put it, "I want to do what is right, but I can't. I want to do what is good, but I don't. I don't want to do what is wrong, but I do it anyway. . . . I love God's law with all my heart. But there is another power within me that is at war with my mind. This power makes me a slave to the sin that is still within me" (Romans 7:18-23).

Our desire to run our own lives goes all the way back to Eden, and whenever we run our own lives, we run them aground. That's why the solution to "the drug problem" and all these other troubles begins in the confession that I am captive to Sin and in the decision to turn my will and my life over to God's transforming power.

As Paul went on to say, "God declared an end to sin's control over us by giving his Son as a sacrifice for our sins," and "the power of the life-giving Spirit has freed [us] from the power of sin that leads to death" (Romans 8:1-3). In Jesus, and in Him alone, is deliverance from the many addictions that plague our lives. In Him alone will drug wars be ended. We are wise when we look to Him for help.