

Romans 6:1 - 23 Freedom from Sin and the Law

Text

¹What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase? ²May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it? ³Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? ⁴Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. ⁵For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection, ⁶knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin; ⁷for he who has died is freed from sin.

⁸Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, ⁹knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, is never to die again; death no longer is master over Him. ¹⁰For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God. ¹¹Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.

¹²Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts, ¹³and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. ¹⁴For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law but under grace.

¹⁵What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? May it never be! ¹⁶Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone as slaves for obedience, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness? ¹⁷But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed, ¹⁸and having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness. ¹⁹I am speaking in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness, resulting in further lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness, resulting in sanctification.

²⁰For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. ²¹Therefore what benefit were you then deriving from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the outcome of those things is death. ²²But now having been freed from sin and enslaved to God, you derive your benefit, resulting in sanctification, and the outcome, eternal life. ²³For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Key Points in the text

- Freedom from sin and death is seen differently by saved and unsaved people.
- People who are saved strive for sanctification not to earn salvation but as a result of a change of ownership, and as a response to the grace we have been given.

Text Study

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The Question - Is The Covenant of Grace immoral?

- Verse 5:21 caused people to ask if this whole idea was immoral, v5:21 - The Law came in so that the transgression would increase; but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more
- Paul phrases the question this way: What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase?

The Answer - Short and simple

- May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it?
- "Live in sin" means to lead a life governed by sin.
- Previously we had no power over sin, now the power over us is the power of righteousness.

The Answer - Explained

- We have been baptized in Christ, therefore we receive His death, burial, and resurrection.
 - His death - Because we share in His death our sin is done away with and sin has no more power over us (v6).
 - His burial - Sharing in His burial tells us the reign of sin in our lives is finished.
 - His resurrection - We are made new, we now live for God rather than self.
- Previously we were focused on sin and self, now just as much we are focused on righteousness and God.

The Appeal of Grace

- You now have the ability to choose to use your body for sin or for righteousness. In other words, you now truly have free will as it comes to sin.
- By grace you have been freed from sin, the harshest of task masters.

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Follow-up Question - Without the law there is not safeguard against immorality

- Paul, then presents a follow-up question in verse 15: What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace?

The Answer - Short and simple

- May it never be!
- You can have only one master

The Answer - Explained

- You must have one master, either sin or the obedience of faith.
- Who your master is will be revealed by who you obey.
- Is having no master an option? No!
 - The moment you act according to your own will you are sinning by not obeying God and therefore a slave to sin.
- The message of grace has set you free to serve God
 - Slaves to Sin: Cruel, Closed, Forced, leads to death
 - Slaves to righteousness: Gracious, Open, Free, leads to Life
- You once were unable to pick, now you are free to seek freedom and sanctification.
- Only slavery to God leads to eternal life
- When we were slaves to sin we did not care about righteousness and saw grace as foolish.
- Now we see that the outcome (or fruit) of sin is death and the fruit of unity with God is life. Why would we choose to follow the old path?

Application

- As we have said before Paul has provided responses we can apply not only when others challenge the power of eternal salvation but also that we can apply to ourselves when we doubt these things.
- Remember the fruit of salvation, eternal life in Christ Jesus.

Next Week's Lesson Prep/Preview

Text: Romans 7:1-25

Focus: The Struggle with Sin and the Law

Devotional: Philippians 3:12-16

Preparation: Read Pressing Forward

Pressing Forward [Philippians 3:12–14](#)

“Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus” (vv. 13–14).

Although Paul did not know when he wrote Philippians whether his path to his final resurrection body would go through his death as a martyr, through his natural death, or simply through his being alive at the return of Christ, he was willing to attain this body through any of these means ([Phil. 3:10–11](#)). He knew that his participation in the final glorification of God’s people was sure, whatever the Lord ordained as the physical event that would put him in place for the resurrection of the dead. He had abandoned all of his own efforts at securing a righteous status before the Lord and cast himself entirely on Jesus, the only One in whom sinners can be reckoned righteous and acceptable to God (vv. 2–9).

Some misinterpret the Apostle Paul’s doctrine of justification by faith alone and the certainty it gives Christians about our part in the resurrection of the just as giving us permission to do nothing once we come to faith. But Paul’s teaching and example offer no evidence for a “let go and let God” attitude when it comes to perseverance in faith. Certainly, the Apostle explains that all those who have faith persevere to the end, for nothing can separate God’s elect from His love in Christ Jesus our Lord ([Rom. 8:38–39](#)). Still, only those who persevere to the end have true faith, for we must work out our salvation with fear and trembling, even if our work results from God’s own work in us ([Phil. 2:12–13](#)).

So, in [Philippians 3:12–14](#), Paul is only repeating his teaching on our role in perseverance that he introduced earlier in this epistle. Knowing that he had not yet reached the consummation of his redemption in his glorification, Paul told the Philippians that he was pressing on in service to Christ until that final day. Understanding that God would not fail to complete the good work of salvation begun in him (1:6) encouraged the Apostle to seek to know Jesus in every way possible. The security of being declared righteous in the Savior moved him to pay diligent attention to the Holy Spirit’s work, through sacred Scripture, to convict him of sin, bring him to repentance, and warn him to stay active as a runner in the race of faith ([Heb. 4:11–13; 12](#)). All those who rightly understand what it means to be declared righteous in Christ heed the Spirit’s work in these ways as well.

Coram Deo

John Chrysostom, the noted ancient church preacher, says that the pursuer of a goal “sees nothing, he thrusts away all who impede him with great force, he cherishes his mind, his eye, his strength, his soul and his body, looking at nothing other than the crown” (Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture, NT vol. 8, p. 259; hereafter, ACCNT). We should embrace our pursuit of Christ in this way, that we might stay in faith until the ends of our lives.