

Slave to Righteousness

Romans 6:12—23

Paul continues to describe the person we should be in Christ and how that should play out in the real world on a day-to-day basis. If we are truly saved we are free from being controlled by the old nature. We should now be completely controlled by the Holy Spirit to be an instrument of righteousness.

Verse 12

Since we are dead to sin and alive to God in Christ (verse 11) we are now not to let sin reign in our physical bodies. To let sin reign is to allow it to rule, control and act as king over what my body does. The verse literally says: “Therefore do not let *the* sin reign...”. I believe this is referencing the old nature that will be a part of us until we lose it at death or the rapture. We are able to make a conscious decision as to whether or not we allow sin to take control. We were once slaves to sin but have been set free when we gave ourselves over to Christ. Now we have the new nature and the indwelling Holy Spirit who is giving us the power to overcome the old sinful nature. Since we are now free from the bondage of sin we are now told to act like it. We no longer are to live within the realm of sin.

Verse 13

Instead of being an instrument of sin by allowing the old nature to control your body, we are to let Christ rule and control your body. This, again, is a conscious decision. We need to allow Him to take control of us to use us in any way He sees fit. We need to live a life yielded to His will. This is the life Jesus lived while on earth. He was in complete submission to the will of the Father. He became our example by completely humbling himself so He had no will of His own.

Verse 14

Before we were saved we were still under the control of the Law. There are many who do not understand this and think that when Christ died that the Law was done away with or abolished. Christ is the fulfillment of the Law but He did not do away with the Law. He was the only one able to completely obey every aspect of the Law and thus fulfill the Law. The rest of the human race escapes the grip of the Law only through death. Fortunately, we do not need to literally die a physical death to escape get out from under the Law because anyone baptized into Christ has died with Christ and therefore no longer held by or judged by the Law.

Matthew 5:17 "Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill.

1 Timothy 1:9 realizing the fact that law is not made for a righteous person, but for those who are lawless and rebellious, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers

Romans 7:1 Or do you not know, brethren...that the law has jurisdiction over a person as long as he lives?

Galatians 3:13 Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us...

Romans 10:4 For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.

Galatians 5:18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law.

Since we are no longer under Law, sin has no more hold on us. It is no longer in control of our lives.

Verses 15—18

God has given the believer much freedom. He has saved us by faith and not works and sealed us with the Holy Spirit so we will be held securely until the day of redemption. There is nothing that I can do to remove myself from my eternal destination with Christ. Many will deny this freedom given to us by God and insist that I am still under the confines of the Law. They feel we need to have an external force to keep us on the straight and narrow.

Paul addresses these people in verse 15. Since I am no longer under the constraints of the Law, can I now live my life in any way I want to? Of course Paul answers in the negative by saying: “By no means”! Being under Grace instead of Law does not give the believer a license to sin. Instead of being under the rule of Law, we are now under the law of the Spirit and are to be in subjection to the law of Christ. The Law was good but did not have the power to help people to obey it. The Holy Spirit has taken over the role of the Law. He helps us know right from wrong and gives us the power to obey Him.

Romans 8:2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death.

Galatians 6:2 Bear one another's burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ.

Before we were saved we could only offer ourselves to sin. We were slaves to sin unable to break free from its power. As believers, we are now slaves of righteousness. This change in masters occurred at the point of our salvation when we “obeyed the form of teaching” as presented by the Apostle Paul. This teaching is the Gospel of the Grace of God, a part of the Mystery revealed to Paul by Jesus Christ.

Romans 16:25 Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which has been kept secret for long ages past,

Ephesians 1:13 In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation--having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise,

As believers we have been freed from sin (aorist tense; passive voice) and enslaved to righteousness (aorist tense; passive voice). The aorist tense indicates that these things happened at a point in time (when we believed) and the passive voice shows the believer is being acted upon and not doing the action. Our salvation is an event that is done to us by God.

According to the Greek language they were previously *slaves owned by sin*, but now they are slaves *to do righteousness*.

In this new slave relationship they have a dual obligation: (1) *to know* what the Lord requires of them as members of the Body of Christ; (2) *to do* what the Lord requires of them by the empowering of the Holy Spirit (8:12-14; Gal. 5:16).

Ernest R. Campbell “A Commentary on Romans Chapters 1—8”

Verses 19—20

In case what Paul said in the previous verses is hard to understand he now says the same thing in the plainest way possible. Just as they use to use their bodies to do ever increasingly evil things now they are to be used increasingly for righteousness with the end result of holiness. To be holy does not mean sinless perfection but to be fully set aside for God’s use. When items in the Temple were made holy, they were used only in service to God and never used for anything common.

Exodus 40:9—10 ⁹“Then you shall take the anointing oil and anoint the tabernacle and all that is in it, and shall consecrate it and all its furnishings; and it shall be holy. ¹⁰“You shall anoint the altar of burnt offering and all its utensils, and consecrate the altar, and the altar shall be most holy.

Verses 21—23

While they were under the power of the old nature they produced nothing that had any value. This is because there is absolutely no good in the old nature and nothing that the old nature can be called good. This is of course from God’s perspective. We may interpret kind acts by others as being good but not if they are judged according to God’s standard. Only those things done through the power of God is good, anything else would be done by the power of the old nature and is not counted as good or fruitful. (Romans 3:10—12; Ephesians 2:1—3)

The *but now* in verse 22 indicates a change. But now under grace instead of under Law you are free from sin and now are a slave to God. Instead of death, we receive life.

Past: We have been saved from the penalty of sin

Present: We are being saved from the power of sin.

Future: We will be saved from the presence of sin.

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