

18. Learning Why We Are Free from the Control of Sin

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children understand the blessing of yielding or presenting our lives to the Lord so that the Holy Spirit can cause our lives to bear the fruit of the Spirit. We saw that once we become Christians, we can either present ourselves to sin and experience an emotional and possibly a physical death or we can present ourselves to God and He will give us the power to practice righteousness. In our topic today, we are going to learn why we are free from the control of sin and can yield to God so that we practice righteousness.

Romans 6:17-18 says, “But God be thanked that *though* you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered. And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.” In these verses, we are reminded of our former condition before we placed our faith in Christ. We see that we were slaves to sin. Because we were controlled by a sin nature, we had no desire to do the things that pleased God. We were in bondage to sin and could not escape that bondage.

However, when we repented of our sin and placed our faith in Christ, we made a decision that changed our heart. Romans 10:9-10 says, “That if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.” At the moment we made that decision, the Holy Spirit came into our human spirit and gave us spiritual life. As a result, we were given a new nature with new desires. We see that one of those new desires was to obey from the heart that form of doctrine to which we were delivered. The word that is translated “form” speaks of a pattern or example. We see that we have a desire from the heart to follow the example or pattern that was given to us by the life and the teachings of Christ. Those teachings of Christ have been passed on to us in the New Testament.

Since the decision in our heart to place our faith in Christ changed our hearts, we were instantly set free from our slavery to sin. We made the choice that we wanted to be the slaves of righteousness instead of the slaves of sin. That is why we suddenly had new desires. However, we also need the power to carry out those new desires. Christ told the disciples in Luke 24:49, “Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high.” Now, we receive the Holy Spirit at the moment of our salvation so that we have the power to carry out those new desires. Romans 8:9 says, “But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His.” At the moment of salvation, we are no longer in the flesh but in the Spirit because the Holy Spirit has been given to us as the down payment and guarantee of our salvation according to Ephesians 1:13-14.

Paul goes on in Romans 6:19-20 to say, “I speak in human *terms* because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members *as* slaves of uncleanness, and of lawlessness *leading* to *more* lawlessness, so now present your members *as* slaves *of* righteousness for holiness. For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness.” Here, we see that Paul

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chose to explain the new life that we have in Christ in human terms due to the weakness in our flesh. The word that is translated “weakness” means *lack of strength*. That word is used in Romans 8:26 where we read, “Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.” Before we placed our faith in Christ, we did not have the Holy Spirit making intercession for us.

As a result, we had no power to change. Instead, we presented the parts of our physical body as slaves to uncleanness or lustful and sinful living. This only caused us to become more and more sinful as we continued to break the law. Romans 7:7-8 says, “What shall we say then? *Is* the law sin? Certainly not! On the contrary, I would not have known sin except through the law. For I would not have known covetousness unless the law had said, ‘You shall not covet.’ But sin, taking opportunity by the commandment, produced in me all *manner of evil* desire. For apart from the law sin *was* dead.” Without Christ, the law only stirs up more sinful desires and causes a person to commit more sin.

In contrast, we are now free to present ourselves as slaves of righteousness for holiness. This means that we now have the power to live a changed life as we learn to yield our human spirit to the Holy Spirit. When we were slaves to sin, we had no power in our lives to practice righteousness. Now, with a new nature that desires righteousness, we have the power to practice that righteousness during every moment we are yielding our human spirit to the Holy Spirit. Ephesians 5:18 says, “And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit.” At all of those times when we are yielding to the Holy Spirit, we are filled with the Holy Spirit. This is why it is important for us to help our children understand what it means to yield to the Holy Spirit moment-by-moment.

We go on to read in Romans 6:21-22, “What fruit did you have then in the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things *is* death. But now having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life.” Before we placed our faith in Christ, our lives did produce fruit. However, that fruit was the works of the flesh. Galatians 5:19-21 says, “Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told *you* in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.” As we think about our past before we placed our faith in Christ, we are ashamed of the works that our lives produced. That is why we are so thankful that the Lord blotted out our sins of the past at the moment that we placed our faith in Him. We also see that the works of the flesh produced death.

In contrast, at the moment that we placed our faith in Christ, we see that we were set free from the control of sin. Romans 6:2 says, “Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?” In this verse, we see that we became dead to sin. We see that at the moment we placed our faith in Christ, we died to sin. Christ died in our place and for our sin. As a result, we are counted dead to sin in the sight of God because we are in Christ. That is why we are able to practice

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righteousness at every moment that we are yielding our human spirit to the Holy Spirit.

When we were set free from sin, we became the slaves of God. A slave is one who carries out the will of his or her master. Once we become a Christian, we have a desire to do the things that are right and pleasing to God. The fact that we have become slaves of God means that we now have the power to carry out the will of God in our lives at every moment that we are yielding to Him. That is why Romans 13:14 says, “But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to *fulfill its* lusts.” Here, we are reminded that Christ gives us His power so that we do not have to let sinful thoughts and ideas stay in our minds. Christ will give us His power to replace those sinful thoughts with His thoughts as we pray and ask Him to help us meditate on His Word instead.

Philippians 4:6-9 tells us how that helps us to replace sinful thoughts with His thoughts as we yield to Him. Those verses say, “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things *are* noble, whatever things *are* just, whatever things *are* pure, whatever things *are* lovely, whatever things *are* of good report, if *there is* any virtue and if *there is* anything praiseworthy--meditate on these things. The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you.” Here, we see that we bring our own thoughts to the Lord. We request Him to take those thoughts. Then, we ask Him to help us meditate on His thoughts. As a result, we experience the peace of God in our lives instead of continuing to think about sinful thoughts and ideas. This makes it possible for our lives to bear the fruit of holiness and eternal life.

Once we become Christians, Romans 6:23 reminds us, “For the wages of sin *is* death, but the gift of God *is* eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Here, we see that as Christians we do not need to worry about receiving the wages of sin any longer. Romans 8:1 says, “*There is* therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.” Instead, we can look forward to the gift of God which is eternal life.

That gift of God is described in 1 John 5:11-13 where we read, “And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may *continue to* believe in the name of the Son of God.” We want to help both our physical and our spiritual children know that they have eternal life. That equips them to share with other Christians how they can know that they have eternal life also. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children understand why it is so important that we have been set free from the control of sin.