

Romans – Session 15

We turn today to ch. 6:15 – 7:6 (read)

Vs. 15 – Paul asks what appears to be a foolish question: “are we to sin because we are no longer under the law, but now under God’s grace? This questions sounds like Paul is repeating verse 1 of chapter 6. The argument may have been being made that the more sinning we do, the more God’s grace would be made manifest. So lets go sin a lot and help manifest God’s grace.

The real point is this: It is grace that saves us – not how we live. Because we can never be “good enough” to merit salvation. The theologian Emil Brunner put it this way: “Freedom from the law does not mean freedom from God, but freedom FOR GOD.” Sin always matters to God and he never is pleased by our sins. Sin is never OK.

Vs. 16 – Paul says that we really have two choices in life – we can be slaves to sin, or slaves to God. It is whom we yield our loyalty and actions to that defines us. If we are slaves to sin, we are choosing death. IF we are obedient to Christ, we are choosing life. “no man can serve two masters” A slave is completely at the disposal of his master. The master we obey shows just whose slaves we belong to.

Vs. 17 – Paul says: “Thanks be to God” that you Romans have chosen obedience, not to sin, but to Christ’s teachings, to which you are committed. Sin alienates us from God, faith draws us closer to God. It is that simple in Paul’s eyes.

Vs. 18 - “You have been set free from sins hold over you and allowed the righteousness of God to take hold of you.” **We are free from both the condemnation of sin and from the enslaving power of sin.** Sin no longer has dominion over us and how we live our lives. We have freedom! But liberty is not license! We trade slavery to sin, to becoming slaves to righteousness. We choose to live differently, to live to please God and not ourselves. We become part of His team to do His will.

Vs. 19 – Paul says “I am speaking to you in human terms” – using slavery as the metaphor, something the Romans would really understand from their cultural situation. We are free in life to choose to whom we are loyal, is it sin, or is it God?. And our choice has grave consequences (pun intended). Choosing sin leads to death – choosing Christ leads to life.

Vs. 20 – Paul says: “before you became Christians, you were slaves to sin and free from the demands and responsibilities that come with righteousness”.

Vs. 21 – What was your reward in your previous – pre Christ state? The things you are now, as believers, ashamed of. That is the change that Christ brings to us – we want to and strive to start living differently. And we become ashamed of our former way of living, which brought us death.

Vs. 22 – But now – you have been set free from that which enslaved you. You are now slaves of God and His ways. You strive for sanctification now and it ends in the gift of eternal life.

VS. 23 – One of Paul’s most famous verses of the New Testament: “ For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord”.

One of the things that Paul’s teaching seems to be indicating is that there is a clear and swift difference, a black and white difference between our life and way of living before we came to faith, and the way we live following our coming to faith. Do you find that to be your experience, or is living the new life in Christ more difficult than Paul seems to be saying? Do you still have to fight against “the old Adam”? What did Paul think about his own struggles with sin, post conversion?

Chapter 7: Vs. 1-3 - Paul says – the Law is only binding on a man while he is alive. So a wife is only obligated to a husband while he is alive. If he dies, she is free to remarry. But if she lives with another man while her husband is still

alive, she is an adulteress. Paul has just argued in chapter 6 that the believer is no longer under the law of sin. In chapter 7 – Paul will argue that the believer is no longer under the rule of Law.

Vs. 1 – Paul says death frees a person from their obligations. When life ceases, the law ceases to have authority over the dead person.

Vs. 2 & 3 – Paul uses the example of marriage to make his point. When a spouse dies – the surviving spouse is free from the legal hold marriage has on them.

Vs. 3 - the widow is free to remarry.

Vs. 4-6 – Paul uses this metaphor to say: “because you now believe in Christ” you have died to the law. The law no longer has dominion over your life. There has been a death to the law. The law is no longer an option as a path to salvation. The law used to be the only path for a person to be saved. But the clear problem was nobody could ever be saved because nobody could live in accordance with all the law. You could never realize salvation by virtue of your behavior. Therefore Paul is saying - the Law is dead, with the coming of Jesus Christ, it is no longer the vehicle of salvation. Paul is using death as a metaphor to say, **the path to God is completely different now, rendering the law as a path to salvation as DEAD.** Jesus death and resurrection are the only means to righteousness. Salvation is a gift of sheer gift and sheer grace. So we say goodbye to the law as a measure of your inclusion into heaven. **The Law itself does not die, the law is still good and holy and to be obeyed and followed. It is the believer who has died to the dominion of the law over them!** We are free to live not to earn God’s favor and love, but to receive it as a gift. Legalism to the law has died, grace lives! And as with the metaphor of the widow whose husband has died, we have died to the law so we might live for another, Jesus Christ. We died to the law so that we can live for the one who died on the cross for us. Why? Paul says: Vs. 4 – “In order that we might bear fruit for Him.” God wants to use our lives to change the world. WOW!

Vs. 5-6 – Paul contrasts the new life of “fruit bearing”. We used to live “in the flesh” Our sinful passions were aroused by the law. The law in a peculiar way, aroused our sinful and dark side. The very law which inhibited the fleshly desires, actually encourages them. If you do not believe this, put a child in a room where there is a new lamp. Tell the child you can play with anything, but do not go near or touch that new lamp. Then leave the room and watch what happens. Many kids will immediately be pulled to want to examine that new lamp. And that is part of the problem of the Law. It bore the wrong fruit, that lead to death. We end up desiring that which we are told we cannot have. And if the lamp story does not convince you of this, what is the story of the fall, Adam and Eve in the garden have to say about this peculiar aspect of the law? God gave them one command: “Do not eat of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, or you will surely die” So what do Adam and Eve do, they head straight to the tree and eat of it. The law has the adverse effect of leading us into obedience, temptation and we are weak creatures.

Vs. 6 – **BUT NOW** – In Christ, we are discharged from the law, just as a prisoner being let out of jail. In Christ we have been set free! We are dead to the very thing that held us captive. We no longer are beholden to a code of laws, we are free to be in a new and living relationship to Jesus Christ in the life of the Holy Spirit. **Thanks be to God!**