

Romans Session 78

Alive to God 2

Romans 6:11-13 (NASB77)

¹¹ *Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.*

¹² *Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body that you should obey its lusts,*

¹³ *and 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.*

¹⁴ *For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law, but under grace.*

Last time we were together, we talked about the fact that we have died with Christ, and therefore we also have been raised with Christ to a new life. His Resurrection life. And now we are to live to God!!!

But in the living, I find that there is a pull in me that would take me in the wrong direction even though I would desire to live for the Lord. I end up at times doing the wrong thing, not the think I wished to do.

So, the question is If I am truly freed from sin by Christ, why does it still give us so much trouble?

If we are now holy before God, why are our lives so often unholy?

If we are truly righteous, how can our lives better manifest that righteousness?

Well Paul gives us three words, that summarize the answers as presented in Verses 11-14

They are:

1. Know
2. Consider
3. Yield

KNOW

So, he starts out by saying, **Even so (6:11a)**

These words, are referring back to what Paul has already taught them. And are crucial to giving them answers.

Here is the idea, "*you must know and fully believe what I have just said or else what I am about to say will make no sense.*"

The truth that you are spiritually dead to sin, and the reality that you are spiritually alive to Christ are not abstract concepts for your finite minds to attempt to verify.

They are divinely-revealed, foundational axioms behind Christian living, apart from which you can never hope to live the holy lives your new Lord demands.

Realizing the importance of the truths he presents in verses 1-10, Paul uses forms of know and believe some four times (vv3,6,8,9) and in other places he implies that his readers know about certain other truths. (vv2, 5, 7).

Scriptural exhortation is always built on spiritual knowledge.

Although God would have been perfectly justified simply to have given men a list of unexplained do's and don'ts, in His grace and compassion He did not choose to be autocratic.

The basic reason as to why men are to live according to His standards was summarized in His declaration to ancient Israel:

Leviticus 11:44 (NASB77)

⁴⁴ *'For I am the LORD your God. Consecrate yourselves therefore, and be holy; for I am holy. And you shall not make yourselves unclean with any of the swarming things that swarm on the earth.*

Quoting that very command Peter admonishes Christians:

1 Peter 1:15-16 (NASB77)

¹⁵ *but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior;*

¹⁶ *because it is written, " YOU SHALL BE HOLY, FOR I AM HOLY."*

Scripture is replete with specific commands and standards for conduct, and behind all of them are divine truths explicit or implicit upon which those commands and standard are founded.

Paul has just declared that, as believers, we are united with Jesus Christ in His death and have through Him had the penalty paid for our sin.

We have risen with our Lord Jesus in His resurrection and therefore are able to walk in newness of life.

Because Christ will never die again to sin, we will never die again to sin.

For a Christian to live out the fullness of his new life in Christ, for him to truly live as the new creation that he is, he must know and believe that he is not what he used to be.

He must understand that he is not a remodeled sinner but a remade saint.

He must understand that, despite his present conflict with sin, he is no longer under sin's tyranny and will never be again.

The true understanding of his identity is essential.

Through Hosea the Lord lamented;

Hosea 4:6 (NASB77)

⁶ *My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I also will reject you from being My priest. Since you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children.*

Isaiah said;

Isaiah 1:2-3 (NASB77)

² *Listen, O heavens, and hear, O earth; For the LORD speaks, " Sons I have reared and brought up, But they have revolted against Me.*

³ *"An ox knows its owner, And a donkey its master's manger, But Israel does not know, My people do not understand."*

Paul admonishes believers in Philippi;

Philippians 4:8 (NASB77)

⁸ *Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely,*

whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, let your mind dwell on these things.

He reminded the Colossian believers that they;

Colossians 3:10 (NASB77)

¹⁰ have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him

Faithful divine living without divine knowledge is impossible. So, there must be a knowing.

CONSIDER

²¹ Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.

This word *consider* has more to do with what we would call the heart.

In its literal sense, *logizomai* means simply to count or number something.

Jesus used it of Himself during the last supper when He disclosed to the disciples that He was the One "*numbered with the transgressors*" of whom Isaiah prophesied;

Luke 22:37 (NASB77)

³⁷ "For I tell you, that this which is written must be fulfilled in Me, ' AND HE WAS NUMBERED WITH TRANSGRESSORS'; for that which refers to Me has its fulfillment."

Isaiah 53:12 (NASB77)

¹² Therefore, I will allot Him a portion with the great, And He will divide the booty with the strong; Because He poured out Himself to death, And was numbered with the transgressors; Yet He Himself bore the sin of many, And interceded for the transgressors.

The word was commonly used metaphorically in the sense of fully affirming a truth, of having unreserved inner confidence in the reality of what the mind acknowledges.

Though both aspects actually occur in the mind, we think of this matter in the sense of being "heart felt".

In the next chapter of this epistle Paul will illustrate from his own life how difficult it is for a Christian to realize experientially that he is saved and free from bondage.

As we look honestly at our lives after salvation, it is more than obvious that sin's contamination is still very much with us.

No matter how radical our outer transformation at the time of salvation may have been for the better, it is difficult to comprehend that we no longer have the fallen sin nature and that our new nature is actually divine.

It is hard to realize that we are actually indwelt by the Holy Spirit and that God now calls us His children and deems us fit to live eternally with Him in Heaven.

To help us **consider**, it is advantageous to note that there are a number of reasons believers often find it difficult to comprehend that they are now free from sin's bondage.

First, some don't understand this marvelous truth because they have never heard it.

They assume or perhaps have been wrongly taught, that salvation brings only transactional or forensic holiness, that because of their trust in Christ, God now regards them as holy but that their basic relationship to sin is the same as it always was and that it will not be changed until they go to be with the Lord.

That view of salvation often includes the idea that, although trust in Christ brings the believer a new nature, the old nature remains fully operative. And that the Christian life is essentially a battle between his two resident natures. That folks, makes salvation an addition, rather than being transformational.

Secondly, Christians often find it hard to believe they are actually free from the tyranny of sin because Satan does not want them to believe it.

If the enemy of our souls and the accuser of the brethren can make us think he still dominates our earthly lives, he weakens our resolve to live righteously by making it appear hopeless.

Thirdly, Christians often find it difficult to believe they are free from sin's compulsion is that the reality of the new birth in Christ is not experiential, it is not physically observable or verifiable.

Redemption is a divine and spiritual transaction that may or may not be accompanied by physical or emotional experiences. A believer cannot perceive or experience in any humanly verifiable way the moment of his dying and resurrection with Christ.

Fourthly, Christians find it hard to believe they are freed from sin's tyranny while they are still on earth is that their continued battle with sin seems almost constantly to contradict that truth. This is the most common issue and reason that Christians have difficulty believing this truth.

If they have a new and holy disposition and sin's control has truly been broken, they wonder, why are they still so strongly tempted and why do they so often succumb?

Paul's answer follows, ***consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.***

He was not speaking of a psychological mind game, by which we keep affirming something over and over until we are convinced against our better judgment or even against reality that it is true.

We know we are **dead to sin** and **alive to God in Christ Jesus** because God's Word declares it is so. In other words, those are truths of faith and they must be affirmed in faith.

David C Needham wrote, "what could be more frustrating than being a Christian who thinks himself primarily a self-centered sinner, yet whose purpose in life is to produce God-centered holiness? (Birthright: Christian, Do You Know Who You Are? [Portland: Multnomah, 1979], p. 69).

Until a believer accepts the truth that Christ has broken the power of sin over his life, he cannot live victoriously, because in his innermost being he does not think it is possible.

Commentator Donald Grey Barnhouse said:

Years ago, in the midst of a Latin-American revolution, an American citizen was captured and sentenced to death. But an American officer rushed before the firing squad and draped a large American flag entirely around the victim. If you shoot this man, he cried, you will fire through the American flag and incur the wrath of the whole nation! The revolutionary in charge released the prisoner at once. (Romans: God's Freedom [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1961], p, 118)

In a similar way, Christ's righteousness is draped over every believer, protecting him from sin's deadly attacks.

If we believe the word of God, then we believe we are in God's eternal purpose, plan, presence, and power.

Paul assured the Ephesian believer that God chose us;

Ephesians 1:4 (NASB77)

⁴ just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him. In love

He also wrote to the Philippian Church;

Philippians 1:6 (NASB77)

⁶ For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.

Philippians 2:12-13 (NASB77)

¹² So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling;

¹³ for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.

There are many important and practical results of our considering ourselves dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.

We will look at them next time.