

Romans Session 82

Free from Sin 3

Romans 6:18-22 (NASB)

¹⁸ *and having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.*

¹⁹ *I 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.*

²⁰ *For when you were slaves of sin, you were free about righteousness.*

²¹ *Therefore what benefit were you then deriving from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the outcome of those things is death.*

²² *But now having been freed from sin and enslaved to God, you derive your benefit, resulting in sanctification, and the outcome, eternal life.*

The principle that what we obey to that master we are slaves. Is applied by Paul to the Church at Rome.

He gives thanks for their obedience to the gospel that has led them from slavery to sin to slavery to righteousness.

The fact that Paul is not speaking of pure actions, our outward righteousness, **but of the obedience that comes from the heart.**

Romans 6:17 (NASB)

¹⁷ *But 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,*

We are looking at three aspects of the new life in which we live

- 1. The position*
- 2. The practice*
- 3. The promise*

THE POSITION (Cont'd)

We already started on the position of the believer.

A person whose heart has not been changed has not been saved.

God works His salvation in a person's innermost being. Through the grace provided by the Son, God changes men's, vary, natures when they trust in Him.

Righteous living, that issues from an obedient heart is habitual.

And just as God's grace operates only through a trusting heart, His righteousness operates only through an obedient heart.

Faith and obedience are inescapably related. There is no saving faith in God apart from obedience to God, and there can be no godly obedience without godly faith.

As the old hymn says, "Trust and obey, for there is no other way."

Our Lord gave Himself for us, Paul says, not only to save us from hell and take us to heaven, but;

Titus 2:14b (NASB)

¹⁴ **"to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds.**

Peter wrote that Salvation comes;

² **according 1 Peter 1:2a (NASB)**

to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit

And then later he said;

1 Peter 1:22-23 (NASB)

²² **Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart,**

²³ **for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and enduring word of God.**

Obedience to Christ and obedience to His Word are totally synonymous, and His truth is the **"living and abiding word of God"**

Obedience neither produces nor maintains salvation, but it is an inevitable characteristic of those who are saved. Belief itself is an act of obedience, made possible and prompted by God's sovereign grace, yet always involving the uncoerced will of the believer.

A person is not transported passively from slavery in Satan's kingdom of darkness to slavery in God's kingdom of light. Salvation does not occur apart from an act of commitment on the believer's part.

The life changing work of salvation is by God's power alone, but it does not work apart from man's will.

God has no unwilling children in His family, no unwilling citizens in His kingdom.

Genuine faith not only is in God's Son but in God's truth.

John 14:6 (NASB)

⁶ **Jesus *said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.**

Paul had confidence in the salvation of his readers in the church at Rome because they obeyed **to that form of teaching to which they were committed.**

No believer, of course, comprehends all of God's truth.

Even the most mature and faithful Christian only begins to fathom the riches of God's Word in this present life.

But the desire to know and obey God's truth is one of the surest marks of genuine salvation.

From its inception, the early church was characterized by its devotion, **"to the apostles teaching" (acts 2:42)**

And Jesus made it clear that those who obeyed His word were the true believers.

John 8:31 (NASB)

³¹ **So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, "If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine;**

John 14:21 (NASB)

²¹ *"He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will disclose Myself to him."*

John 14:23-24 (NASB)

²³ *Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him."*

²⁴ *"He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine, but the Fathers who sent Me."*

John 15:10 (NASB)

¹⁰ *"If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love."*

That form, **form** here translates *tupos*, which was used of the molds into which molten metal for castings was poured. **Committed** translates the aorist passive of *paradidomi* which carries the basic meaning of deliver over to.

And because, *eis* (**to**) can also be translated into, it seems that a more precise rendering of this phrase is **"that form of teaching into which you were delivered."**

It is true, of course, that, through its reading and preaching, God's Word is delivered to believers.

But Paul's point here seems to be that the true believer is also delivered into god's Word, His divine teaching.

The idea here is that when God makes a new spiritual creation of a believer, He casts him into the mold of divine truth.

The J. B. Phillips rendering of Romans 12:1 uses the same figure:

Romans 12:1b (Phillips NT)

¹ *Don't let the world around you squeeze you into its own mould, but let God re-mould your minds from within,*

In other words, don't let Satan's forces try to fit you back into the old sinful mold from which God delivered you. Let God continue to fashion you into the perfect image of His Son."

Throughout his epistles, Paul emphasizes the crucial relationship of God's truth to faithful Christian living.

In his second letter to Timothy, he advised his young protégé in ministry to **retain the standard of sound words with you have heard from me, in the faith and love which are in Christ Jesus!**

He later warned Timothy that the time will come when men will not endure sound doctrine, but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires.

He also spoke to the Elders and leaders in the church;

Titus 1:7-9 (NASB)

⁷ *For the overseer must be above reproach as God's steward, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not addicted to wine, not pugnacious, not fond of sordid gain,*

⁸ *but hospitable, loving what is good, sensible, just, devout, self-controlled,*

⁹ *holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, so that he will be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict.*

To Titus he said;

Titus 2:1 (NASB)

¹ But as for you, speak the things which are fitting for sound doctrine.

The Christian who faithfully obeys God's Word becomes conformed to the truth of that word, a living model of that Gospel.

The divine teaching to which a believer submits himself in Jesus Christ stamps him with the authentic image of his Savior and Lord.

A person does not become a Christian by claiming the name of Christ and then believing and doing, whatever he himself wants.

You cannot become a Christian by merely saying or doing certain things even the godly things extolled in Scripture. But after genuine salvation a person will have the innate, Spirit-led desire to know and to obey God's truth.

A business man once said this to a well know pastor after a luncheon. He said, "I have been in this group for a long time, and I'll tell you how I think you can get to God. You see, there is this long stairway, and at the top there is a door and behind it is this guy Jesus. What you really want to do is try to make it up the stairs and get through the door and then hope Jesus lets you in. As you are on your way up the stairs you've got all these preachers and movements cheering you on, but you just continue going up the stairs your own way. He said, I call it the stair way of hope. That is what I think the gospel is."

With a heavy heart the pastor said to the man, Sir you cannot be Christian. What you just said has nothing to do with the gospel, and your stairway to heaven is hopeless. You need to depend on Jesus Christ alone for your salvation. You have no idea of what it means to be saved, and you cannot be on your way to heaven."

A person cannot invent his own way to God, no matter how sincere his efforts might be. God has established the only way to come to Him, and that is the way of faith in His Son, Jesus Christ.

And saving faith in Jesus Christ is built on God's revelation about Him, not on men's ideas about Him.

There is divinely-revealed content to the gospel, and the person who rejects or circumvents that content gives unmistakable evidence that he is not truly seeking God's kingdom and His righteousness.

Witness Lee, founder of the local Church movement, wrote a book entitled Christ Verses Doctrine, the main thesis of which is that it is a personal relationship to Christ that matters and that doctrine, actually, interferes with that relationship.

The book is not only unbiblical but as one might guess from the title is also self-contradictory. Doctrine is simply another word for teaching, and the purpose of Lee's book, of course, was to teach his own doctrine.

Now that gives us a view of the Christian's position in Christ, and relating to obedience to the word, and to one's past relationship with sin. We are free from sin, slaves to Christ, obedient to His Word, and hungry and thirsty for righteousness. Because we have new life that needs to grow and flourish. So, we need food, spiritual food, to grow and become like the Lord Jesus. We are no longer to fit the mold of the world, or the flesh, or the devil. But the new mold, that of Christ Likeness.

Next time together after I am back from my vacation, we will speak of the practice and the promise of the believer's life.