

Romans 6:12-23

“A Change Of Ownership”

Dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ, that’s the principle that brought our study time together to a close last week. It’s one of the fundamental truths of the Word of God that we need to know and understand as believers, that when the Holy Spirit baptized us into Christ we were baptized into His death. But it doesn’t stop there, not only do we identify with the death of Christ as believers (being loosed from the power of sin over our lives because how can you die to sin and live any longer in it) but we also identify with the resurrection *life* of Christ speaking of the newness of life that we’re to now walk in. No longer are we to be ruled over by the heavy hand of sin upon our lives, but now we’re free to lead a life set apart to the glory of God that accords with the purpose and plans of God for my life. Look at vs 4 of ch 6 (read). Now look at vs 10-11(read).

So we’re seeing here the practical aspects of sanctification, remember *justification* is positional, it’s your legal standing before God in Christ from the moment you surrender your heart to the Lord. You’re justified, I’m justified before God, in Christ He sees me “Just as if I’d” never sinned. But the way that translates into my everyday life is called *sanctification*; it’s that life long process of becoming more and more like Jesus slowly yet steadily all the days of my life, and it culminates when we see Him because then we’ll be like Him. You see the grace of God delivers us from sin in a 3-fold manner, it frees us from the *penalty* of sin, it looses us from the *power* of sin, and ultimately we look forward to the day when we’ll be released from the very *presence* of sin. But ch 6 makes the transition from positional justification, to practical sanctification, the way we’re to lead our lives in the here and now, dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

In the 11th ch of the gospel of John we find that powerful passage of scripture that testifies of the raising of Lazarus from the dead. and In many ways it’s a profound picture of what takes place in/*us* through Christ. Because it’s there that you’ll find Lazarus dead, lying in a tomb, bound up in grave clothes. There’s no life in him, and he’s literally decaying, things aren’t getting better for him, they’re getting progressively worse (as far as his physical shell was concerned). But that’s a picture of us before Christ came into *our* lives, dead in sin, the stench of death and decay surrounding us, we were just polluted. Paul told the Eph that though now we’ve been made alive, we were once dead in trespasses and sins. and That was evidenced by the fact that we walked according to the ways of this world, in disobedience, conducting ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath just as the others. “*But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved),*” Eph 2:4-5

Here's Jesus in Bethany, Lazarus lying dead in a tomb and Jesus says, "Take away the stone." and After He reassures Martha, and utters a quick prayer He cries out with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth!" and We read there, "*And he who had died came out bound hand and foot with graveclothes, and his face was wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, 'Loose him, and let him go.'*" John 11:44 What a vivid picture of our conversion!

Though once spiritually dead, by the power of Christ we're made alive. But here's the deal, as we come forth we're still wrapped (as it were) in the graveclothes of our old sinful life, and where the analogy breaks down is in the fact that Lazarus was immediately loosed from his graveclothes, all of ours don't come off immediately. Oh we're made alive, but some of the nuances of death still linger about us (we spoke about this last week in regards to the flesh).

But through prayer, the power of the Holy Spirit, the Word of God, and the uplifting edifying interaction with godly people, that's what takes place in our lives, the graveclothes are loosed, we're "Let go," or made free. and That process is called *sanctification*, the being set apart to God to lead a holy and righteous life. Sometimes we're tempted to wrap ourselves back up in those graveclothes, but in Christ they're to be shed, because we're dead to *sin*, but alive to *God* in Christ Jesus and our lives are to reflect that accordingly.

Vs12-14

The principle? Vs 11 reckon...(read). How does that become practical? Vs 12 (read). Now this is something that can only be commanded of a believer, only the one who's been truly set free from sin can be exhorted to not *let* sin reign in their mortal body. The individual whose never come to Christ is bound *by* sin, enslaved *to* sin, has no choice *but* to sin, it's only a matter of when, and to what degree. But you (child of God) have been emancipated/liberated from sin. What does the bible say? "*Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.*" 2 Cor 3:17 Not a liberty *to* sin, but you've been set free *from* the *power* of sin, therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body. Don't let sin dictate your actions.

Now you need to see something here, that phrase there in vs 12, "Do not let" implies what? Choice, your will comes into play right here, God freed you from the power of sin, but He did not eradicate your ability to choose. If you want to come under sin's domain, you can do that, you can make that choice, and again we're not talking about the frailty of the human frame that makes an impulsive decision do to an abrupt emotional stirring. We're not talking about stumbling or never making mistakes. We're talking about a pattern of persistent sin, allowing the old ways to perpetually dominate the new life with out regard for God, respect for His Word or anything else. The way the tenses of these verbs line out it would be accurate for us to understand this as saying, "Do not constantly let sin reign in your mortal body so that you are constantly obeying its lusts."

You see the person who's been made new in Christ, though sometimes overwhelmed by the flesh, willfully subjecting himself to the flesh, yet there's that intrinsic innate desire deep down in there that wants to follow *after* the Lord, and be obedient *to* the Lord. and The grace of God by the power of the Holy Spirit allows you to do just that, remember why the Holy Spirit was given? Jesus said, "...*you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me*" Acts 1:8 The presence of the person of the Holy Spirit in your life is to give you the ability to be a proper witness to/of the Lord. and Part of that witness is in the enabling you, or empowering you to lead a righteous life, free from the power of sin *over* your life. So don't let sin reign over your mortal body (which is where sin manifests itself outwardly), that you should obey it in its lusts.

Let's get even more practical, what do I mean by not letting sin reign in my mortal body, that I should obey it in its lusts?

Vs 13

2 fold practical application right here, 1 negative, the other positive. To the negative, "Do *not* present (or yield) you members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin." "Members" being the various parts of your body, be it your hands, or your feet, or your eyes, mouth, ears, you get the idea. The NLT puts it like this, "*Do not let any part of your body become a tool of wickedness, to be used for sinning.*" Rom 6:13 This is just incredibly practical information, when you walk into the supermarket don't let your hands reach for the 12 pack; when you're online, don't let your eyes search for inappropriate things to gaze at. Don't allow your feet to carry you into ungodly environments, or your ears to entertain carnal conversations, don't use your mouth for tearing people down.

Don't engage the members of your body in sinful activity, the bible teaches that our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit, we are the body of Christ, and even as our body has members, so to with the body of Christ, we individually make up the members of the body of Christ. We read in 1st Cor 6, "*Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them members of a harlot? Certainly not! Or do you not know that he who is joined to a harlot is one body with her? For 'the two,' He says, 'shall become one flesh.'*" 1 Cor 6:15-16 The idea there is that whatever we engage in, we bring Christ into because Christ is in us. So we're not to present our members, (the various parts of our bodies) as instruments, or more literally as "weapons" of unrighteousness to sin

But to the positive we're to yield ourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and the various parts of our bodies as instruments, or weapons of righteousness to God. You have to remember that as believers we're engaged in warfare, and we're either accomplishing the enemies objective, or God's objective, your body (physically) can be used as a weapon of unrighteousness unto sin, or a weapon of righteousness unto God advancing the objectives of the Kingdom. and What this is telling us is that it's not enough to merely *not* give your body over to sin (as great as that is), but that's still not doing anything to advance the Kingdom, that's not rendering yourself as an instrument of righteousness.

We need to allow God to use our physical beings for the purposes of righteousness. It's neat if you refuse to let your hand latch on to a beer, but what are you going to do with your hand instead of that? Nothing? No, place it into Kingdom service, cause your feet to carry you into active duty, engage your mouth in edifying conversation, sharing the gospel, be apart of body life, find an area to serve *in* and give the members of your body over to God *through*. You're no longer dead in sin, so don't lead a life that goes with the flow of the dead, just powerless to do anything else, but you have new life in Christ, let Him use your body for His glory. We quoted this vs last week, "...do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's." 1 Cor 6:19-20 You see, sanctification isn't simply something that happens *in* me, but it's something that flows out *through* me and is apart of me. and If God has *given* you life, than the life He's given you should be used for Him.

The verb tenses here are important as well, causing the essence of this vs to read like this, "and Do not constantly yield your members as weapons of unrighteousness to sin, but once and for all yield yourselves to God." and That "Once and for all" surrender is described in detail in Ch 12:1 Again it doesn't mean that once you've surrendered to God that all your struggles with sin will be over, but with out a surrender to God there can be no growth, no further intimacy, make no mistake surrender is a daily process. But with out that initial surrender to Him, fully and completely, there's no subsequent steps, we've hit a spiritual wall and can go no further.

So don't give yourselves over to sin, but over to God, don't buy the lie that you can't get out from under the dominion of sin, notice vs 14 (read).

It's like this, the Law is an *informer*, but grace is an *enabler*, law imposes and enforces standards upon you with out giving you any ability to obey them. But God's grace grants the power to lead a righteous life. Remember the person that thinks God's grace gives them an excuse to sin doesn't understand grace at all, because grace (Ch 5:21) reigns through righteousness, (Titus 2:12) teaches us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age. Grace doesn't give us an excuse to sin, but rather an ability to obey. You're not under law, but under grace. The bible teaches us that the strength of sin is the law, but you're not under law therefore the strength of sin no longer grips you.

Here's a lame example, the law is a sign that says, "Speed limit 55mph" now we've all seen that sign, but we've not always been compelled to keep the standard, though it's there for us all to see. Grace is about 10 cop cars with their motors running lined up down the road you're traveling, now which of the 2 is more compelling, or enabling for you to be mindful and subservient to the standard? Now there's buckshot blown all through that illustration, but you get the idea, the Law informs, grace enables. God's grace makes a change in your life, and if the grace of God isn't powerful enough to change your life, than its not powerful enough to save your soul. Soul saving grace is life-changing grace.

Vs15

Now this really isn't a repeat of vs 1, vs 1 has the idea of a continual, habitual personal pattern of practicing sin. This question backs off just a bit, this phrase, "Shall we sin" isn't in the present tense and active voice as in vs 1 speaking of a continual, pattern of ongoing activity. It's in the aorist tense and it's in the subjunctive mood, now all that sounds real fancy, but all it means is that rather than sinning continually, what if I simply sin *occasionally*, aorist tense speaking of a particular action happening at a specific point in time (in this case sin) and the subjunctive mood speaking of an action that's likely to occur but isn't actually happening. It's a hypothetical question, "Let's say I just sin now and then?" We're still seeing the idea of purposely pursuing sin, but I'm really just dabbling in it here and there, not going altogether off the deep end. Since I'm under grace, surely a sip of sin here and there is ok, it's not like I'm swimming in it? What does he say, "Certainly not!" "You've lost your mind!" "You can't be serious!"

Vs16

Put simply we're all going to serve somebody, and none of us can serve 2 masters. Jesus said, "*No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.*" Matt 6:24 Now mammon is a reference to money, but the point is well taken you can't serve both God and any *thing* or any *one* else. Peter said this, "*...for by whom a person is overcome, by him also he is brought into bondage.*" 2 Peter 2:19 So if you subject yourself *to* sin, you'll be brought into bondage *by* sin. One thing we need to understand and get a grip on is that living life apart from servitude is a non-option, "Well, I don't want to serve anything!" That's too bad, you're going to serve somebody, and it's ultimately either going to be the devil (in sin leading to death) or it's going to be the Lord (in obedience leading to righteousness).

This is another one of those things we're to *know* as believers, service isn't a choice, but to whom or what we bow is. Do you choose sin, or do you choose obedience, not from the mouth, but from the heart, notice.

Vs17

Underline that center segment there, "*...you obeyed from the heart.*" Because you guys this is what it's all about, obedience, not out of *legalism*, but out of *love*, from the heart. The bible says, "*Behold, You desire truth in the inward parts,*" Ps 51:6 from the heart. and This tells us a couple of things about the nature of faith, #1 That it stems not only from the mind but from the heart and #2 It results in obedience, because if I truly believe something I'm going to act according to it.

What was it that they obeyed from the heart? “That form of doctrine to which you were delivered.” and Of course the word “doctrine” simply means teaching and so the reference here is to the Word of God. He’s saying that the evidence of the new life being made manifest in them, that they’re no longer slaves of sin leading to death, but obedience leading to righteousness is found in the fact that they’re obeying (not out of legalism) but out of the overflow of love from the heart the teaching found in the Word of God. Jesus said, “*If you love Me, keep My commandments.*” John 14:15

So you see this is where that love for the Word of God comes in, because how can I love God, and not love God’s Word whereby He reveals Himself, His ways, and His will to me? I’m not saying it’s not a discipline to abide in the Word, because we all wrestle with the flesh, but there should be that inward compulsion and desire of your heart to know God and know God’s Word. You see how can you be obedient to the Word, if you don’t know what it says? It’s how God conforms you into His image. Are you finding yourself looking more and more like a person of the world and less and less like a child of God lately? How much time do you give to the Word *from the heart*?

This phrase here, “...form of doctrine to which you were delivered,” is interesting. Because it’s literally speaking of a casting mold, it’s like melting down metal and pouring it into a mold so that it takes on the image of that into which it’s being cast. and The idea here is that as God breaks you down, and we all know what it feels like to be in the refiners fire, and if you don’t, you’ve only known the Lord a short time and you’ll know soon enough. But what we’re seeing here is that the Lord is melting you down, and pouring you into the cast, into the mold of His Word whereby you’ll begin to take on the shape, or the form of His Son who was the Word made flesh and dwelt among us. He pours us into the mold of truth, that *form* of doctrine, and shapes us into His image.

Vs1

Or to understand this another way, there’s been a change of ownership in your life. You were at one time a slave of sin, but now in Christ you’ve been set free from sin, and you’ve become a slave of righteousness. To place this in terms relevant to our culture, sin isn’t your boss anymore, that contract has been bought out and destroyed by your new employer, “Righteousness.” and Once your contract with one company has been terminated, or once you’ve left one place of employment, you’re not to show up to work for your old boss anymore. It’s just down right disrespectful and disloyal to your new boss who’s providing for you. How many of you have ever left one job, took on a new job, but decided to show up to work for your old boss one day with complete disregard for you new employer who’s benefit package was out of this world? You don’t do that, it’s absurd. Well, Paul is saying, “Sin is you old boss, but that contract has been broken and you’ve been paid for by the blood of Christ. So serve Christ, don’t show up and see if sin needs anything from you because he’ll place you right back to work in complete breach of the contract. You’re to serve Christ, He’s the one that’s paid for you.”

Vs19

He's saying, "I'm just using an analogy you can relate to," because of the 120,000 million people of Rome, about 60 million of them were slaves. So this is something they'd readily be tracking with. and He says, "Just like you presented your members as slaves of uncleanness and of lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, do the same thing with regards to righteousness for holiness," or more literally, "unto sanctification." Don't show up to work for your old boss.

Take note of this progressive pattern, or snowball effect ingrained in human behavior, lawlessness, leads to more lawlessness. One sin leads more easily to the next, and to the next, and to the next, but the opposite is true as well. Righteousness, leads to holiness, and more righteousness leads to more holiness, or practical sanctification. It's a progressive practical growth in Christ, positionally you're there, but practically we've all got a long way to go. But the more you give yourself to one or the other, the more solidified you become in that position and the more difficult it is to be uprooted, one way or the other.

If you have a row 3 trees, one planted a year ago, the other 5yrs ago, the other 10 yrs ago, which is going to be the most difficult to uproot? The one 10yrs old right? It's the most deeply rooted, so to with you and with me, the more deeply rooted I am in righteousness, the more difficult it's going to be for me to be uprooted and given over to sin. But conversely the more I give myself over to sin, the more difficult it's going to be for me uproot that sin pattern and give myself over to holiness. That's why it's so important that if there's sin in my life, I deal with it immediately. That if I hear His voice I respond *today* rather than hardening my heart, the longer it takes me to repent of sin in my life, the more difficult it becomes, do it today, before you leave this place.

Vs20-22

Kept in short, "Maintain the eternal perspective." What's the end result of the on goings of your life? At the end of sin is death, at the end of righteousness, at the end of holiness, at the end of sanctification is everlasting life. Paul wrote in 2 Cor 7:1 "*Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.*" and Again we read in Heb 12:14 "*Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord:*" If we're to walk in victory over sin, proper perspective is imperative; it's a must.

Vs23

Exclusively! When you work for sin, you get paid, sin pays, and the wage it pays is death, eternal separation from God in every form of the word. To be in His presence is light, separated from Him is outer darkness, in His presence is comfort and security, separation from Him is pain and torment, in His presence is peace, and praise as we worship Him throughout eternity, separation from Him is no rest, blasphemies, where the worm never dies and the fire is never quenched, weeping and wailing, gnashing of the teeth and gnawing of the tongue.

That's what the bible teaches, that's the wages of sin. But the gift of God, which is only found in Christ (He is the way the truth, and the life and no one comes to the Father but through Him) is eternal life, you can't work for God's pay, He gives to you freely in Christ. We can't work so that God owes us eternal life, all God owes us is an eternity in hell. But He'll freely give you eternal life if you'll just come to Christ and give your heart to Him, obeying from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered.

Shall we dabble in sin because we're not under law but under grace, God forbid, there's been a change of ownership in your life, don't show up to work for your old boss, stay sold out to Jesus Christ and have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life.

Prayer Points:

God help us to lead our lives set apart to you in practical holiness, not out of legalism, but out of the overflow of our love for you from the heart. Teach us to consider ourselves dead to sin, no longer subject to its rule. That we might learn what it means to acknowledge You in a given situation that we might not present our members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but rather that we would yield ourselves to You as being alive from the dead and our members as instruments of righteousness, that we might fight the good fight. Pursuing holiness in the here and now that we might see You face to face. and We know it's not about what we do, but simply letting You have Your way in us, may we serve You well for Your glory and Your great name's sake.

Perhaps you're here and you've never been set free from the bondage of sin in your life, Jesus wants to break that chain and set you free today. The one whom the Son sets free, shall be free indeed, you can be liberated from sin and begin to lead a life of righteousness right here, right now, by simply placing your faith *in* and giving your heart *to* Jesus Christ God didn't send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that through Him the world might be saved, that is saved from the penalty of sin, the power of sin, and ultimately the presence of sin. If God is calling to you by His grace today, don't harden your heart and *reject* Him, open your heart and *receive* Him.