

Saved in a World of Sin

Romans 6

Gospel Truths: #1 People Aren't

Righteous (trap); The world is cursed and sin reigns, the evidenced is death.

#2 Jesus Saves Sinners (cross); only one worthy — (righteous atonement, great exchange)

In Rom 5, we received assurance that

God's rescue plan: justification by faith (5:1) will hold in the final

judgement. The benefits begin immediately and reach into eternity.

Last week we looked at eight benefits for believers: (1) peace, (2) access into

God's unmerited favor (3) standing now in the middle of His grace (4)

hope for heaven, participating in

God's glory (5) hope in present

suffering because of God's loving

presence through the Holy Spirit (6)

assurance for being declared

righteous at the judgement because

Christ lives to intercede (7) completely

reconciled with God.

God's rescue from sin's rule is a

transfer from Adam's team (first sinner

infected) to Jesus (8) God transfers us

from the realm of sin (brings death), to

the realm of grace (brings eternal life).

Gospel truth (3): Justified by Faith.

(black to gold jersey)

But in the middle of all this wonderful

assurance, there's a daily splash of

cold water. We still live in this world of

sin. And with mortal, sin-affected

bodies (weak and dying). We aren't home

yet. We still suffer. Our faith must continue (to experience God's benefits), till we go home. Last week, I left you with a reason why we're still here: To share God's reconciliation as Ambassadors (2 Cor 5:17-20).

But some people don't receive the whole message of the Gospel.

Sometimes it's a poor presentation and sometimes it's poor soil

(unrepentant, weak faith, distracted or deceived).

Certainly, the enemy wants to limit

the spread of faith. Studying Romans is a good way to make sure our Gospel

foundation is solid. It's for our

assurance and for passing on, to help

others grow (2 Tim 2:2, 3:16-17, Titus 2:1, 1

Thes 2:19-20). For the next 3 chapters,

Paul will be correcting

misunderstandings about the Gospel

(6-victory, 7-liberty, 8-security). They come

from people who doubt aren't living

for God in this world of sin.

I will warn you already that in ancient

Rome, slavery was as common as

employment is today. Paul uses

common experience (i.e. slaves in the

Roman church) — for an illustration to

shed light on God's truth. He's been using

language from the temple, legal justice, relationship, kingdom

and slavery (redemption) already. God knows we

need a lot of different examples to get

His truths across. Don't let the

examples distract from the focus.

Metaphors, illustrations, contrasts, parables...point to the truths, but they break down if we take them too far. Even up till the last century, people used examples in the Bible of dealing with slavery...to condone it. Even though God is famous for freeing slaves (Exodus 20:2vv). (We must go beyond word studies to catch the meaning of phrases, sentences, paragraphs, chapters and books. That's why some translations in English are better than others.) So, let the illustration point to the truth. Our concern is: how believers live in Christ (saved) - in a world of sin.

Prayer

Paul's next teachings is about understanding that God has set us free from both the penalty of sin AND the power of sin. Teachings about being saved (justified by faith), fall into a category called the doctrine of salvation or justification. But there's more. We're not just saved and zapped out of here. God continues to work in believers till we've 'finished the race' (metaphor) of this life. Teaching about continuing to live in Christ is called the doctrine of sanctification (God producing righteousness in the believer). In sanctification, the Holy Spirit enables the believer (by faith) to exercise a righteous life. Believers are new creatures (2 Cor 5:17), being transformed into the image of His Son (Rom 8:29, 2 Cor 3:18).

We get on the 'highway' of teaching in chapter 6 with an 'on ramp' in 5:20. Paul says the Law of Moses was given to exposed the sin of Adam's team all the more. But those on Jesus' grace team, remain righteous. Grace increases to meet the requirements of the law, guaranteeing eternal life. Paul pauses in his explanation of the Gospel to set the record straight for those who misunderstand how God's grace, sin and the law work.

Rom 6:1 What About Sin?

Some just don't understand the seriousness of sin. It should be obvious already from Paul's letter to the churches in Rome. Sin is what made people an enemy of God (Rom 1:18-3:20)...with a ticket to hell. So why would God want us here, if we're just going to act the same as when we were on Adam's team? Yet it happens. Some fool themselves into thinking they can 'ride the fence' saved from the penalty of sin and still live controlled by sin.

Read 6:2-5 United with Christ

Rule number one for thinking about sin: believers have died to it. Death is strong language. The believer's relationship change with sin is that dramatic. Sin use to control us like we're a marionette on strings. God transferred our sin to Jesus and His righteousness to us. The strings of sin's power to rule us and take us to

hell are gone. Someday sin will be gone. But not in this age. We are still tempted. There are days of evil: trials and temptations (as if under attack). But we don't have to dance to the puppet master sin.

Some claim that believers can receive a second special grace that removes all sinning. According to scriptures, that would be a lie (1 Jn 1:8-10). Living by faith, surrendered to the work of God's in us (the Holy Spirit), is a must. Paul's teaching in Gal 5 is especially helpful for those struggling with turning back to living by the law. Or trying to live by works again.

How can we be dead to sin?

Because we are now united with Christ. And Paul will go back to this fact over and over. This is who we are as believers. In Christ, dead to sin's power to enslave us. It's really the difference between life dismal and life abundant. When Christ paid for sin and conquered death, He rose to a new life. He was given all authority and ascended to rule in heaven. Paul reminds us that believers have been transferred to 'team Jesus'. We get to live a new life. No longer ruled by sin's power.

Paul uses Baptism as an illustration to explain that believers have been united with all the major events in Christ's saving work (1 Cor 15:3-4). When He died, we died. When He was

buried, we were buried. When He arose, we arose with Him. Even now we are hidden in Christ (Eph 2:1-10, Col 3:1-3). What a contrast with what we were in Adam.

Baptism is a visible encouragement of God's work to save...and it's also a reminder of God's continuing work to give us life in Christ. So simple yet so powerful. If you believe and have not yet shared your joy of being rescued by God through baptism, I urge you to see me so we can make plans to share this with the church. It's so important to encourage the other believers and declare your loyalty to Christ. Not that you are sinless (not till we rise with our resurrection bodies). It says I believe in Jesus - saved by God's grace. Baptism is not a saving work but it is a deepening work (identity in Christ). It is obeying Jesus (Matt 28:18-20).

Read 6-7 Dying with Christ

If you are a slave to someone for life...the only thing that ends the relationship is death. When Jesus was crucified, by faith, our old self (on Adam's team) was crucified (made powerless). This is the way God sees it. It's something to accept by faith. If sin's power over us has been broken...sin should no longer characterize us.

Read 8-10 Raised with Christ

Even though Jesus subjected himself to a human body with its frailties

(including temptation, Heb 2:14-17), He remained sinless. Death could not hold Jesus...and never will. His sacrifice was once and for all. And what kind of life did He rise to? He lives to God. That is our que too. But we don't have resurrection bodies yet. We need help dealing with sin.

Read 11-14 Choose the Right Master

Offering all of me to God reminds me of the greatest commandment: Love God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength. Our new identity is 'in Christ'. That doesn't mean we are simply 'shells' like an avatar for Jesus (passive, sleep walking). We must willfully turn to God's resources – His word, His Helper, His people. It is an act of **love**, not to let sin reign in us. By faith and will, we must appropriate God's victory into our lives. This is 'our part' in God's sanctifying work.

Paul expands on the metaphor of slavery to help us see that we have a choice about where we offer our service (abilities, capacities). Before, we didn't have a choice. God is the only one worthy of servitude. He has rescued us from death to life eternal. By saying 'no' to sin, we serve to bring about righteousness instead of wickedness. Adam's team is judged 'guilty' under the law. Those who don't seek God's mercy are playing right into sin's rule. Let us believe we are under God's grace and act like it.

That's why James says resist the devil and he will flee (James 4:7).

Read 15-18 Set Free from Master Sin

Being under God's grace does not mean disobeying the law is fine now. The law shows what it takes to be right with God. It points to our need for rescue. Being under God's grace means our beginning point for being right with God is not the law. The beginning point is a faith in Jesus. A faith relationship begins in the heart. And by God's indwelling presence, we want to obey Christ...which fulfills the law (Matt 5:17). All because we love Him. We owe Him everything. Jesus set us free so sin no longer defines us. In Paul's illustration of slavery, we are freed from 'master sin' to obey righteousness (*Matt 28:18-20). To finish off, Paul compares the results of serving master sin (Adam's team) with serving master righteous (Christ's team).

Read 19-23 Comparing Masters

The first master we served 'let us' be free from the control of righteousness. Good morals become 'guidelines' and people begin making exceptions in the name of tolerance. People can suppress their conscience. What happens? Acts of impurity and ever-increasing wickedness. And what is the result? Death in every sense (spiritual and physical). Looking back as a believer, the 'benefits' of the old master are shameful. But in Christ,

we're free to serve God instead. So how about the 2nd master, righteous? The ongoing benefit is 'leading to holiness'. What's the end result? Eternal life with God in heaven. *Hagiasmos* (greek) denotes either a state of holiness or the process of sanctification. As we exercise belief, God empowers us to live for Him. Holiness is the right goal and outcome. Godliness is appropriate for ambassadors of God. But expecting sinless perfection is not a proper interpretation of Scripture. This is no excuse to stop guarding our heart or putting on the armor of God or praying (Eph 6). We are to continue striving for holiness (Heb 12:10). But it's all based on a faith relationship of love - seeking to know God and being responsive to the Holy Spirit's work. Paul urges that our commitment to master righteousness should be at least as strong. We have so many more reasons to be devoted.

Summary: By faith we are united with Christ in his death and resurrection v4,5, 8, 23

- In His death – we are dead to sin (disconnected from Adam) v2, 6, 11
 - In His life – we are alive to God v11
- In Christ, we have been set free v,7,18,22 from slavery to sin v6,14, 17, 19
- So we can obey God from the heart v17 as servants of righteousness v18
- So...how do we live for God, while sin is still present?

Live for the right Master

1. Do not let sin reign in your lives (we are freed from master sin) v12-13
2. Offer yourselves to God (leads to holiness, resulting in eternal life) v13

The Gospel in Romans 6:23

(illustration of the Gospel in one verse – drawing on whiteboard)

Where are you in this picture?

Still paying the wages of sin or believing in God's gift? Perhaps you have moved closer to the bridge of Christ. Perhaps one foot on the bridge...close to trusting.

Pray

This passage ends with 'Christ Jesus our Lord'. Jesus is our savior and LORD-king of heaven.