

Romans 6 1-14

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Lesson: Freedom

The quarterly shares this conversation starter...

"The words 'debt free' make a happy sound in our hearts. So do the words 'cancer free'. Each of these terms brings up different realities. However, they share one word in common: free. For a person drowning in debt, being liberated from it would be a game changer. Anyone who's dealing with cancer would be ecstatic to be told it was gone. Of course, being freed from sin's power brings the greater joy."

Q: What experience have you had with being free from something like this?

<Pause for responses.>

My cancer is in remission, but we are really looking forward to the results of the next bone marrow biopsy in December to learn if I am still in remission. If that is the case, then they will scale back the drugs that I take every day, and every month. It says a lot about how important it is to us to **know** that I am cancer-free, so important that the terrible pain of a giant needle in my spine and the infection risk is worth it – just to know, just to be free of cancer.

Do you remember the moment you were saved and baptized? I remember it well. In the weeks ahead of my salvation, I grew more and more afraid of going to Hell. I remember that it was fear that drove my decision and that I was also afraid that my family, and especially my brother, would die in some way before he could be saved and that he would spend eternity in Hell.

When I was saved, it was truly as if a great weight was removed and I felt so much joy.

The life of a Roman slave

A Roman slave was property. They could be sold and split from their family, and they could be sexually used. The jobs that slaves performed made significant differences.

Mine slaves: They had the worst conditions. They would be chained, slept in barracks and worked until they were used up.

Farm slaves: They were given grain, cheap wine, olives and a cloak. Seasons cause slow times for farm slaves but they were always owned even when the months were slow.

Household/Skilled slaves: Cooks, tutors and business agents that were slaves could often live better than poor free Romans. They could work their way to freedom but still owed service to their former master.

Have you ever heard of "Tax Freedom Day"? This is the day that an American worker has earned enough money to cover the costs of their taxes. This is currently, ironically, April 16 for the average worker. That means we are financially indebted to the government each year until after April 16. As horrible as this is, it is still not slavery. We are not forced to work a specific job, our family is not split up by the government, and we are not forced into sexual slavery – that was the way people lived in Paul's time. About one quarter of Romans were slaves.

Romans 6, 1-7 (KJV)

1 What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?

2 God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?

3 Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?

4 Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

5 For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection:

6 Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.

7 For he that is dead is freed from sin.

Q: Why would Paul ask this question "Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?"
<Pause for responses>

Paul knows that as he is trying to reach those with an open mind with the gospel, that there are those who are looking for every opportunity to find logical holes that they can

exploit to take his words out of context. He's just told them something in Romans 5:20 that he knows they will surely twist.

Romans 5:20: Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound:

"The law entered, that the offence might abound" does not mean God sent the law to make people sin more. It means the law came where sin was already reigning, and turned that sin into a clear, countable offence.

Before the law was given, death still ruled. People died even when their sin was not the same kind of deliberate break of a known command that Adam's was. Sin was already in the world. It just had not yet been written down as a clear offence.

When the commandment came, sin used that commandment. The rule did not create sin, but it gave sin a line to cross, and it showed the crossing for what it was. What had been a sickness became an open and clear violation. Sin did not shrink under the law. It became obviously, exceedingly sinful.

The law did not cure the reign of sin. **It wrote the offence up so that no one could call it small or unknown.**

An example is **Romans 7:7:** "Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet."

Paul is saying that he did not know coveting as sin until the law named it. A person can want what belongs to someone else and never call it a crime until the commandment says, "Thou shalt not covet." The law did not plant the desire. It identified it.

Once the line was drawn, sin used the line. The command "do not covet" became the occasion for every kind of coveting. Forbidden desire woke up against the prohibition. Without the law, that sin was "dead" in the sense that it was not yet exposed, counted, and armed with a commandment to rebel against. It was not absent.

So, he says he was alive once, apart from the law. When the commandment came home, sin revived, and he died. The commandment had been given unto life, as a holy and just word.

So, **Romans 5:20**, "But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound," is the answer to the offence the law had brought into the open. God's grace did not merely match it. It overflowed it, so that grace would reign through righteousness unto eternal life.

But with every block Paul lays he must plan against the arguments of people that are actively trying to misinterpret his words. They may twist the words into a reason to sin more.

If grace increases where sin increases, keep sinning.

Paul asks that question out loud so he can shut it down. **God forbid**. The people he is speaking to are dead to sin. Grace did not take the throne to sponsor more of the old life.

This is something that still occurs today. When you make a post on social media that is trying to reach people that are on the right side of a debate, or that you might convince – there are people that will take your words out of context or frame a strawman argument that has nothing to do with your words to derail the people you're trying to reach. The people of Paul's time aren't that different from people today – they are both pulling hard against the gospel.

Okay, back to the rest of Romans 6, 1-7.

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4 Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

5 For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection:

6 Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.

7 For he that is dead is freed from sin.

These verses say that those who are baptized into Christ are joined to his death.

We were buried **with him** by baptism into death. The old man was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be put out of power, and so that we should no longer serve sin.

A dead man is freed from sin. As Christ was raised from the dead, we are to walk now in our new lives. If we have been planted with him in the likeness of his death, we shall also be in the likeness of his resurrection. The comparison is not that we stage a second death beside Jesus. It is that his death and burial have become ours, so sin is no longer the master we live under.

The quarterly says...

"When a person accepts Jesus, the sin nature is **destroyed**. The Greek word used here suggests a **loss of dominance**. With sin's power broken believers no longer **serve sin**. Though sin still tempts us, we are **freed**."

Romans 6:8–11 (KJV)

8 Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him:

9 Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him.

10 For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.

11 Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

When you're writing instructions in a program, you use something called an "IF-THEN". An example would be "IF the water level reaches this depth THEN stop the water." We want to turn the water off when it reaches the level we want.

When Paul says "if we be dead with Christ", he doesn't mean that he's unsure of our heart, he is creating a logical statement like an IF-THEN.

IF our old man self dies with Jesus THEN we will live with Him. Jesus died once, and death has no more dominion over Him. The life He lives, He lives unto God. Likewise, reckon yourselves dead indeed unto sin, and alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. We are freed from the dominion of our sin.

Romans 6:12–14 (KJV)

12 Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.

13 Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.

14 For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.

Think about two kings, one king is sin and the other is Jesus. Each king has a camp and those who follow each king live in the king's camps. We spend our days moving between these camps, serving either sin or Jesus. When we are saved, our ultimate king becomes Jesus, but sadly we still spend a lot of our time in the camp of our old sin nature. It is sad to think of Jesus watching us continue to go into the camp of sin every day.

We have a responsibility to wage war on sin in our daily lives. It is a daily struggle against the temptations of sin. Our temptations do not end when we are baptized unto Jesus, and we must pit our willpower against sin. These small victories against temptation strengthen our will and weakens the power sin has over us just as our acceptance of Christ draws power away from sin and makes our daily battles easier.

We don't fight these temptations merely for ourselves or for our own benefit. We are God's instruments of righteousness. We are His tools. Removing the sin from our daily lives is like polishing the rust and pits from a blade. Living righteously in Jesus' camp makes us far more useful instruments for God's work.

Paul's letter to the Romans encourages us to be baptized unto Christ, ensuring our salvation, and then he encourages us to live righteous lives of service to Him, free from the slavery of our old sinful lives. Our debt is paid by Jesus, we can live joyful lives with Jesus with the absolute assurance of a life with Him forever when we die.