

SERMON STUDY SUMMARY

Romans Part 14: A New Me – Living in Freedom

INTRODUCTION

Christians desire to have a close relationship with God. Romans 1 through 5 show us how to begin this relationship through justification by faith in God. We are set free from the penalty of sin thus allowing us to have a relationship with God. Romans 6 through 8 focus on how to grow this relationship by being set free from the power of sin through sanctification. However mature we are, each of us struggle with temptation and sin. To grow, or to increasingly find freedom from the power of sin in our lives, we must know the truth of who we are in Christ – and believe it! – and then act on this truth.

When you became a Christian by believing in Jesus, your ‘spiritually dead human spirit’ was made alive to God in Christ Jesus (Romans 6:8, 11). His character permeated your spirit. In the eternal realm you died to sin. Because of this you were freed from being enslaved to sin. Your new you was resurrected with Christ, making you alive in Christ. Now you are no longer identified by your old habits, addictions or behaviors.

Yet your sinful nature did not die. It remains and acts as a distinct person, separate from your new nature in Christ. If allowed, it will continue to poison your character and choices. Old habits remain, like familiar ruts in a road, but remember, you died to being a slave to the influence of ‘Mr. Sin’. With Christ you can drive beyond those old ruts, re-educating your soul and body to do what the ‘new you’ in Christ wants to do. It will be a process. You will fail at times. Trust God to live His life through you.

Mr. Sin crouches at the door wanting to regain dominance and control over your body and soul. But Mr. Sin is no longer in charge. You died to this. Now if you sin, it is because you allowed it to happen. You have the choice (Romans 6:13) to surrender your mind, emotion and will to Jesus to allow Him to live His life through you. As a Christian you want to please God and not sin. The temptation to do wrong is no longer a part of your makeup. It is in reality Mr. Sin tempting you. There are not two ‘you’s’ inside of you – one wanting to do good and the other bad. These tempting thoughts do not belong to you. You are no longer a slave to Mr. Sin. The truth is that there is only you who are in and alive with Christ. Now it is you and God against the tempting voice of Mr. Sin.

Paul uses a metaphor to describe the all-or-nothing nature of slavery. Whether you offer yourself as a slave to Mr. Sin or to Christ you cannot be ‘kind of a slave’ to one or the other. No one is truly free; everyone is a slave to someone or something. You are controlled by what you seek as being the highest good in your life. What controls you is your master. Will it be Mr. Sin, which leads to death (Romans 6:16), or God? You will only be truly free when you offer yourself unreservedly to Jesus Christ. When Mr. Sin whispers to you, tell him that he is no longer your boss. Ultimately it is your choice (Romans 6:23). Your life is a work in progress. But the ultimate question is this: who is at the controls of your life today?

SERMON STUDY GUIDE

IN - PURSUE RELATIONSHIP

1. Describe the characteristics of the best and worst boss you have had.
2. When it comes to the truth about Christ living in me, which do you find most difficult: To ‘know’ it (knowledge); to ‘believe’ it (faith); to ‘live’ it out (action)? Which comes most naturally?

UP - PURSUE GOD

Read Romans 6:12-23

3. Compare and contrast life as a slave to sin and life as a slave to righteousness. Why does no neutral position exist?
4. Why do we succumb to ‘Mr. Sin’ so easily? Based on the truth of these scriptures, discuss how to develop and accept your ability to choose to serve Christ.

OUT - PURSUE MISSION

5. It is important to know, believe and act on the truth of who we are in Christ. Which one of these do you currently struggle with and what steps can you take to grow in this area?
6. Where is Christ inspiring you to ‘re-educate’ your body/mind/soul?

For Personal Reflection/Prayer:

Based on your answers to questions 5 and 6, what is God telling you and what are you going to do about growing in freedom from the power of sin?

THE WORD (NIV)

Romans 6:12-23

12 Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. 13 Do not offer any part of yourself to sin as an instrument of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer every part of yourself to him as an instrument of righteousness. 14 For sin shall no longer be your master, because you are not under the law, but under grace.

15 What then? Shall we sin because we are not under the law but under grace? By no means! 16 Don’t you know that when you offer yourselves to someone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one you obey—whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness? 17 But thanks be to God that, though you used to be slaves to sin, you have come to obey from your heart the pattern of teaching that has now claimed your allegiance. 18 You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness.

19 I am using an example from everyday life because of your human limitations. Just as you used to offer yourselves as slaves to impurity and to ever-increasing wickedness, so now offer yourselves as slaves to righteousness leading to holiness. 20 When you were slaves to sin, you were free from the control of righteousness. 21 What benefit did you reap at that time from the things you are now ashamed of? Those things result in death! 22 But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life. 23 For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.