

Romans

God Sets Us Free

May 03, 2015

- I. Who will set us free from the body of this death? God, through Jesus Christ.
 - A. Romans 7:24-25a . . . Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death? [25] Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!
 - B. In Romans 7:14-25, Paul shows that those who are trusting in the Law to justify them and give them the gift of eternal life are trapped in an unwinnable struggle between their good intentions and the power of sin to lead them astray by means of their sinful passions. Paul's point is that the Law, which is holy and righteous and good and given to us by God, cannot save us from the power and practice of sin. So who or what can save us? God, through Jesus Christ our Lord and by means of the indwelling work of the Holy Spirit.
 - C. This is a great truth which Paul explains in greater detail in Romans 8. However, before looking at what Paul says in Romans 8, I want to take us outside of Romans, for the most part, and look at the various ways and means God uses to saves us from the power and practice of sin so we can be transformed into the likeness of Jesus Christ our Lord.
 - D. Prayer
- II. The promised work of God for growth in godliness
 - A. Romans 8:29a . . . For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son.
 1. Before you and I were born, in fact, before God created the heavens and the earth, He determined that those who come to Him in faith to live a life of faithful obedience to His will, He will transform and conform into the likeness of His son, Jesus Christ.
 2. This forms the foundation for all the rest of God's dealings with us in freeing us from the power of sin and providing everything we need to live a godly life while still in our physical body and this world.
 - B. II Peter 1:3-4 . . . God's divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence. [4] For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust.

1. By definition, divine power exceeds all other power, which means there is nothing that can withstand or stop this power from accomplishing its purposes.
 2. And the word “everything” means just that! God makes available to us everything necessary to go from being a rebellious sinner to a mature, humble, submissive, godly Christian, in spite of living in a sinful world and having to face the temptations of the devil.
- C. Hebrews 2:17-18 . . . Therefore, He had to be made like His brethren in all things, so that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. [18] For since He Himself was tempted in that which He has suffered, He is able to come to the aid of those who are tempted. [4:15] For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin. [16] Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.
1. The scriptures nowhere teach that going from a rebellious, selfish sinner to a submissive, loving saint is quick or easy. Therefore, to prove to us He understands our struggles in the process of change, God, through the person of His son, Jesus Christ, came to earth and lived as one of us – facing what we face in the battle against our flesh, the world, and the devil – yet He did it without sinning.
 2. In other words, He fought and endured to the extent of remaining sinless. So if you think fighting and enduring to the extent of growing toward godliness is hard, imagine how challenging, demanding, and exhausting it would be to say no to sin at every turn, in every temptation, and under every circumstance.
 3. Therefore, God personally understands the weakness of our flesh. He understands the strength of our enemy. He understands the power of society to influence us toward self-interest and sin. And he understands the temptations related to unjust suffering. Therefore, He knows how to help us in our time of temptation. All we have to do is trust Him enough to use the help He gives.
- D. 1 Corinthians 10:13 . . . No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it.

1. God promises that He will not allow us to be tempted with any temptation that is stronger than our current spiritual ability to resist. Therefore, we can, if we will, resist every temptation.
 2. And God promises to provide a way to escape temptation's seductively captivating allure. In other words, we not only have the capacity to resist, but God provides a way to escape each temptation so we can get away from its oppressive power to pull us into sin.
- E. 1 Peter 5:8-9 . . . Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. [9] But resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world. (NOTE: James 4:7; Luke 4:1-13; II Peter 2:9)
1. I urge you to remember that resisting the devil is accomplished by God's power, not yours. Beware of taking an arrogant or superior stance against the devil. We are like David going against Goliath with stones whose power to defeat came from God, not David. Therefore, like David, resisting is your work, victory is God's. So confidently, yet humbly resist the devil.
 2. However, victory is for the moment. The devil and his cohorts will return with more temptations – especially if you are at the front end of fighting a particular sin or sinful habit. Don't get discouraged. Continue resisting, and eventually you will see ongoing victory.
- F. 1 John 1:9 . . . If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.
1. God will forgive us for having sinned if we come to Him and confess our sin.
 2. To confess our sin includes four things. First, we must acknowledge that what we have done is wrong, and that we have no excuse for having done it. Second, we must make things right with God and whomever else we wronged by our sin. Third, we must humbly accept the consequences, whether from God or man. Fourth, we must take serious, and when necessary, prolonged action to put an end to that specific sinful behavior. If we do not intend to forsake our sin, we ought not expect to be forgiven our sin.
- G. I John 2:1 . . . My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.

1. God not only forgives us for having sinned, He established a place and way for Jesus to be our advocate so that we do not lose our good standing with God as a result of sinning.
- H. Romans 5:3-5 . . . And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; [4] and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope; [5] and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.
1. James 1:2-4 . . . Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, [3] knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. [4] And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. (NOTE: 1 Peter 1:6-7, Romans 8:28)
 2. God uses persecution, difficult times, disappointments, sorrows, irritating people, and undesirable circumstances to further transform our character and strengthen our commitment to do what we know is right. The beauty of this method is that when we remain faithful and righteous in difficult times, we grow in faith and righteousness so as to be better prepared for future difficult times.
 3. So do not become discouraged, bitter, depressed, or angry at God when people, relationships, or circumstances go sour. Instead, rejoice that you have an opportunity to become more Christ-like, and in so doing, improve your worthiness to love and serve God and others.
- I. Matthew 7:7-11 . . . Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. [8] For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. [9] Or what man is there among you who, when his son asks for a loaf, will give him a stone? [10] Or if he asks for a fish, he will not give him a snake, will he? [11] If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give what is good to those who ask Him! (NOTE: 1 John 5:14-15; Luke 18:1-8)
1. God urges us to pray with confidence and persistence, and He promises to hear and answer.
 2. Therefore, pray wisely, sincerely, and persistently about your spiritual development until you receive the answer(s). Ask for those things that you believe you need for true spiritual growth.
 3. However, do not waste prayers on asking God to do for you what He has given you to do.

- J. John 14:25-26 . . . These things I have spoken to you while abiding with you. [26] But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you. (NOTE: I John 2:27)
1. God will teach us all we need to know about how to live as one of His children. He uses things like circumstances, family members, friends, neighbors, co-workers, church members, ministers, the Bible, good books, the conviction of the Holy Spirit, our ability to reason and think, and our conscience.
 2. However, we must listen, seek to understand, and apply the lessons taught if they are to have their intended effect on us.
- K. James 1:5-8 . . . But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him. [6] But he must ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind. [7] For that man ought not to expect that he will receive anything from the Lord, [8] being a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.
1. God promises to give us wisdom if we ask for it. This means we can have all the wisdom we request, with one condition. We must ask with unwavering faith, that is, fully committed to trusting the Giver of the wisdom and the wisdom given.
 2. I recommend holding the confident belief that God knows more than you, and therefore, the wisdom He gives naturally exceeds any of the world's wisdom or your wisdom.
 3. One final thought. Ask God for wisdom, often, and in extraordinary amounts. You will never regret it.
- L. Hebrews 12:5-11 . . . My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor faint when you are reprov'd by Him; [6] for those whom the Lord loves He disciplines, and he scourges every son whom He receives." [7] It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline? [8] But if you are without discipline, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. [9] Furthermore, we had earthly fathers to discipline us, and we respected them; shall we not much rather be subject to the Father of spirits, and live? [10] For they disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them, but He disciplines us for our good, so that we may share His holiness. [11] All discipline for the moment

seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness.

1. Revelation 3:19 . . . Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline; therefore be zealous and repent.
2. As our loving, all-wise Father, God disciplines us for our good, and the good of everyone affected by our choices and behavior. Because God is good, we can trust Him to do this without fearing His methods.
3. For example, He takes no pleasure in punishing us, He has no desire to harm us, He is not out to get us, nor does He want to get rid of us. He is not double-minded, and He has no double standards. His single motive in disciplining us is to seek our good, and in seeking our good, promote the good of everyone affected by all we say and do.
4. Therefore, see God's love in His discipline, submit to His methods, and apply His lessons so that you grow toward Christian maturity. And be wise, save yourself unneeded troubles, learn the lesson the first or second time it is taught rather than having to be disciplined again and again to learn a single lesson.

M. Philippians 4:6-7 . . . Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. [7] And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. John 14:27 . . . Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful.

1. God gives us inward peace if we will open up and receive it. Of course, opening up takes faith in God's provision and protection.
2. So trust Him, and you can stop wasting mental, emotional, physical, or spiritual strength on fear and anxiety.

N. Matthew 6:33 . . . But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

1. God will make sure our physical needs are cared for if we will focus our primary attention on our spiritual growth, the growth of His kingdom, and the advancement of His will and ways.
2. Therefore, trusting God in this way frees us devote time and resources to spiritual development and growth, Christian service, financial giving, and acts of charity – without fear that our needs will not be met.

- O. Philippians 1:6 . . . For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it (*to carry through until a task is completed – no more needs to be done*) until the day of Christ Jesus.
1. It is God who planned for and then starts the process of spiritual growth and development in us,. It is God who continues that process until the process is complete.
 2. Therefore, however we lived before conversion, however evil we have been, we have not been evil enough to prevent God from making us new creatures. No matter how sinful we've been, God's power to change us is greater than our sinfulness. He will perform His sanctifying work in us until every sinful thought, habit, word, and deed is gone, and righteousness is put in their place.
 3. Does this mean God transforms us without our cooperation and participation in the process? NO! Scriptures tells us that we are to work out our salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure (Philippians 2:12-13). So trust God to complete the process of transformation while fulfilling the part He has given you.
 4. There is one more point I want to make here. God works His methods of transformation until the day of Christ Jesus. Why? For two reasons. First, there are always more people to be transformed. And second, being transformed does not happen in the twinkling of an eye. Spiritual transformation takes time, and in fact, it takes a life-time – which is why it requires perseverance on our part. Yet regardless of how long it takes and how difficult it is, God is in it from start to finish, that is, until the process is complete.
 5. This is our hope, our confidence, our assurance that we can and will, over time, be changed into Christians who are holy in all our behavior, just as God is holy.

III. Conclusion

- A. The scriptures we have examined today are dependable and eternal. As promises from God, they have been given to assure us God has and is doing all that is necessary for us to turn away from sin and pursue righteousness. May we, like so many godly folks before us, use them fully to become fully what Christ saved us to be.
- B. I am confident that you will be blessed if you make proper use of all these scriptures in your pursuit of godliness. But more than being blessed yourself, you will bring honor to God and be a blessing to others.