

Lesson 5

Freedom from Sin

Set Free from Satan's Bondage; Living for a Glorious Future

Read: Colossians 2:11-14; Romans 6:1-12.

Pray for God's help in embracing your freedom in Christ and for more strength living out your calling in day-to-day life.

Set Your Intentions: What do you hope to achieve from this lesson?

Journal Your Thoughts. Journaling can be a valuable tool for spiritual reflection and growth.

Introduction

I love Paul's writing in Colossians 2:11-14:

You were also circumcised in him with a circumcision not done with hands, by putting off the body of flesh, in the circumcision of Christ, when you were buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead. And when you were dead in trespasses and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, he made you alive with him and forgave us all our trespasses. He erased the certificate of debt, with its obligations, that was against us and opposed to us, and has taken it away by nailing it to the cross.

Before God adopted you, you were dead in your sins and trespasses and separated from him. Your sins had piled up before him, and there was no way you could repay the debt you owed – except by eternal death. When you chose to call upon his name by responding to the gospel invitation, God *made you alive with him and forgave (you) all (your) trespasses*. At the moment of your baptism, the debt you owed was canceled. You are no longer obligated to pay it – because Jesus took your debt of sin away, nailing it to the cross. Oh, how precious is our adoption! Without Him, we would be hopelessly lost, under sin, and eternally doomed.

Satan's primary objective is to lie. He is the father of lies (John 8:44). Every day, through every means possible, he works to convince us that sin is not serious. He tells us it has no consequence and won't hurt anyone else that no one else will ever find out. *You deserve it. It's OK to do it just once and then never again. You only live once. You need to have fun and not be so boring.* On and on his lies go.

Yet, the Bible warns that sin is a direct offense against God's holiness and righteousness, and it carries devastating consequences. Its catastrophic impact affects our present existence and eternal destiny. Sin creates an impassable divide between us and God, hindering our relationship with Him. It brings brokenness, pain, and suffering into our lives and those around us.

When we consider the weight of sin and the consequences of eternal separation, our greatest need is redemption. The Bible makes it clear that the soul that sins will die (Ezekiel 18:20) and that sin is of the devil (1 John 3:8). Our redemption requires divine intervention and the destruction of the works of the devil, which Jesus accomplished through His death (Colossians 2:13-15).

The redemption of a person's soul results from God's unparalleled wisdom, immeasurable love, and unrivaled power. There is no more remarkable example of love, mercy, or knowledge than what was demonstrated in the sacrifice made to bring salvation to humanity. Likewise, there is no more fantastic display of power than what the Holy Spirit accomplishes in resurrecting a dead soul to life. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, individuals who were once spiritually dead experience new life and transformation. This divine intervention serves as indisputable evidence of our utmost need for salvation. We can only find proper redemption and restoration through God's wisdom, love, and power. The fact that our rescue required the supreme effort of divinity is indisputable evidence of our utmost need for salvation.

The whole purpose of Christianity is our redemption. Therefore, its mission is ultimately optimistic. *For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him* (John 3:17). Isaiah 35 says:

The wilderness and the dry land will be glad; the desert will rejoice and blossom like a wildflower. It will blossom abundantly and will also rejoice with joy and singing. The glory of Lebanon will be given to it, the splendor of Carmel and Sharon. They will see the glory of the Lord, the splendor of our God. Strengthen the weak hands, steady the shaking knees! Say to the cowardly: "Be strong; do not fear! Here is your God; vengeance is coming. God's retribution is coming; he will save you." Then the eyes of the blind will be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped. Then the lame will leap like a deer, and the tongue of the mute will sing for joy, for water will gush in the wilderness, and streams in the desert; the parched ground will become a pool, and the thirsty land, springs. In the haunt of jackals, in their lairs, there will be grass, reeds, and papyrus. A road will be there and a way; it will be called the Holy Way. The unclean will not travel on it, but it will be for the one who walks the path. Fools will not wander on it. There will be no lion there, and no vicious beast will go up on it; they will not be found there. But the redeemed will walk on it, and the ransomed of the Lord will return and come to Zion with singing, crowned with unending joy. Joy and gladness will overtake them, and sorrow and sighing will flee.

Christianity is centered on the good news of salvation and offers hope and deliverance from the bondage of sin. In carrying out the mission, God calls upon us to trumpet the greatest blessing, freedom from sin's enslavement, leading to unadulterated joy. This lesson will explore the freedom from sin that your spiritual adoption provides. This is one of the most critical lessons in this book.

Your Past: Enslaved to Sin

Perhaps the best passage that explains our former condition and compares it with our new status in Christ is Romans 7:11:

For sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, deceived me, and through it killed me.

Notice how Paul personifies sin as a powerful enemy that attacks and kills us. Satan uses God's law as his tool of deceit. He lies to us, saying that God's law is a restraint to what we deserve and hides its life-giving purposes from us. He stirs resentment toward God, making us question His motives for prohibiting certain things as we seek self-fulfillment.

Another good passage to consider is found in Paul's writing in the previous chapter:

For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body ruled by sin might be rendered powerless so that we may no longer be enslaved to sin, (Romans 6:6).

When controlled by sin's potent grip, our flesh is known as the “body ruled by sin.” This term signifies a body overwhelmed and maneuvered by sin, serving as a launching pad for various temptations and unbridled desires. Under such influence, an individual finds themselves steered by carnality, allowing these base instincts to override moral discernment and to be pursued without restraint. Paul calls it “the body of death” in Romans 7:24 to refer to the physical body not merely in terms of mortal death but as an entity trapped in spiritual demise. How he describes it in Ephesians 2:1-3 also sheds light on our former condition:

And you were dead in your trespasses and sins in which you previously walked according to the ways of this world, according to the ruler of the power of the air, the spirit now working in the disobedient. We too all previously lived among them in our fleshly desires, carrying out the inclinations of our flesh and thoughts, and we were by nature children under wrath as the others were also.

Your Present: Free from Sin

Before you were saved, you were subject to the *law of sin and death*. Sin was the dominant power over your life, and death was its outcome. Wherever sin rules, death always comes (Romans 6:23). The two are inseparable and inescapable by human power. But now, because of your adoption in Christ, you have been set free! Paul says it so well in Romans 8:1-4:

Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus, because the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do since it was weakened by the flesh, God did. He condemned sin in the flesh by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh as a sin offering, in order that the law's requirement would be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

Despite the presence of sin in our lives leading us to commit actions we regret, we have the assurance that these sins won't lead to condemnation because of Christ's sacrifice. We are justified through Christ's death, freeing us from any punishment. Life's hardships are not divine penalties, and we face no eternal damnation post-death, with the promise of resurrection mitigating the fear of death itself. Through Jesus Christ, the influence of the Spirit of life has replaced the dominance of sin and death over our lives. The key message in this context is that Christ's atoning sacrifice has broken the rule that sin leads to death, justifying those who have fallen short. As we contend with sin's relentless challenges, it's crucial to remember that Christ has severed the link between sin and death, liberating us from condemnation. In our pursuit of sanctification, we should maintain focus and be supported by doubts concerning our initial salvation.

Now, Free from Anxiety and Confusion – You Live for Christ

Since we are sons and daughters, we must always pay attention to the responsibility that comes with our new status. God has recreated you *to be holy and blameless in love before him (1:4)*. *This is our daily pursuit for the rest of our lives here on earth.*

Let's look at 2 Corinthians 7:1. First, Paul says we have been given promises. Go back to 6:16.

And what agreement does the temple of God have with idols? For we are the temple of the living God, as God said: I will dwell and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people.

Here, we have the promise of a close and meaningful relationship with God and status. The Christian belongs to God. We are his *people*. This is an act of grace. In response, we are called to *come out from among them and be separate* (6:17). Our work (obedient response) should always be seen in response to what has or continues to do for us by grace. Since we belong to Him, we must draw a line with the world and no longer participate in its deeds.

Then Paul repeats the pattern. Verse 18: *I will be a father to you, and you will be sons and daughters to me*. God did this for you. You did not save yourself. Since *you are saved, you cleanse yourself from every impurity of the flesh and spirit, bringing holiness to completion in the fear of God* (7:1b). Fear here means reverence and respect. You don't cower in fear because your status (adopted, forgiven, and holy) is uncertain or tenuous; you demonstrate tremendous respect (and love) for God by living inside the new responsibilities you've been given. Remember, you work *from* salvation — not *for* it.

You are his workmanship (Ephesians 2:10). You are his *masterpiece*. God wants to be glorified through you. He is glorified when we live for him. As you walk with him daily, the spirit bears with your spirit that you are a child of God. We should all be humbled by what God has done. Because of his work, let us lift Jesus up every day in every way we can. God is incredible and amazing. Praise Him for his marvelous grace!

What's in this for Us?

Embrace Your New Identity in Christ: Recognize and live out the truth that, through faith and baptism, you have been given a new identity. This means leaving behind the past dominated by sin and embracing the freedom Christ's sacrifice offers. Just as Paul highlights in Colossians 2:11-14, your old self, enslaved to sin, has been replaced with a new self, alive in Christ and freed from sin's penalty. This calls for a daily commitment to reject sin's lies and embrace the holiness and righteousness you are called as a child of God.

Understand the Process of Sanctification: The lesson from Colossians and the subsequent teachings make clear that salvation is both an event and a process—justification being the event and sanctification the ongoing process. Sanctification requires diligent effort, cooperating with the Holy Spirit's work within you to grow in holiness and resist sin's temptations. This journey of sanctification is lifelong, requiring patience, perseverance, and a continual reliance on God's grace. Engage actively in practices that build spiritual growth, such as prayer, studying Scripture, and participating in the life of your local congregation, recognizing that freedom from sin's power is progressively realized as you walk in obedience to God.

Proclaim the Message of Redemption and Hope: The ultimate purpose of Christianity, as the lesson illustrates, is redemption and the restoration of all creation. This hopeful message is not just for personal comfort but is to be shared with the world. You are called to share this good news with others because you have been freed from sin's enslavement and granted eternal life through Christ. This involves verbal proclamation and living out the gospel in your daily life, demonstrating the transformative power of Christ's love through your actions, relationships, and service to others. By doing so, you participate in God's redemptive mission, bringing hope and light to those still walking in darkness.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Paul's Colossian writings are a powerful reminder of our transformation from sin to salvation through Christ. As sons and daughters of God, we are called to embrace our new identity, deeply rooted in the freedom Christ secured for us on the cross. This involves recognizing our liberation from sin's penalty and actively engaging in the process of sanctification—whereby we grow in holiness and resist the deceptive allure of sin under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Moreover, our redemption compels us to be ambassadors of hope, sharing God's love and the promise of eternal life with a world in desperate need of salvation. By living out our faith authentically and proclaiming the gospel through our words and deeds, we bring glory to God.

We have been called to live lives marked by grace, transformation, and a steadfast commitment to the gospel. Freedom in Christ is not an end but a means through which we are empowered to serve, love, and lead others to the same hope we have found.

For Discussion

1. How does understanding the distinction between justification, sanctification, and glorification change one's view of one's spiritual life?
2. In what ways have you experienced the reality of being freed from the penalty of sin through Christ's sacrifice?
3. How can sanctification be seen in your daily life, and what practices help you grow in holiness?
4. Reflect on when you felt the power of sin weakened in your life. What role did faith and the Holy Spirit play in that transformation?
5. What does living out your new identity in Christ mean to you personally in a world that often contradicts Christian values?
6. How can the hope of glorification and eternal life with God motivate you to persevere through trials and temptations?
7. How can you more effectively share the message of redemption and hope with those around you?

8. Consider the impact of viewing Christianity as a set of beliefs and a mission of redemption. How does this perspective influence your purpose and daily actions?

9. Reflect on the statement, "We work from salvation, not for it." How does this truth affect your understanding of grace and efforts to live a holy life?

10. How does the promise of no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus provide comfort and confidence in your spiritual walk, especially during times of struggle or doubt?