

“Freedom from the Power of Sin”

Prepared by Patrick J. Griffiths © - pastorpat@waukeshabile.org
November 12, 2006

Romans 6: 7 – “for he who has died is **freed from sin.**”

It is the freedom from the penalty of sin that now affords me freedom from the power of sin. Sin’s authority over a people marked by the cross has been completely removed. Our death to sin has freed us from sin. Sin is no longer to rule over us. Sin once reigned and its reign resulted in death (Rom. 5:21), but sin’s reign has come to an end (Rom. 6:12).

The reign of sin speaks of its authority or power over its subjects. Sin was once king but has since been dethroned. Our Lord Jesus Christ led an insurrection against it and won. Sin no longer has authority over the people of God. It is hard for us to process the idea that sin no longer has authority over us when it would appear that we sin so easily. Yet, sin has no power over us because of Jesus Christ.

Sin pulls relentlessly at the hem of our garments. It leans against us ever so slightly but persistently until we bow under its enduring weight. This is the power of sin. It makes us doubt the goodness of God. It wants us to believe that His love for us is conditional and His acceptance of us is performance based. It delights in keeping us in bondage to its residue. It wants us to believe that God’s forgiveness, although complete, is still qualified. This is the power of sin. And it is this that the power of the cross has destroyed. As His people we have freedom from the power of sin.

Sin is no longer our master. We no longer have to obey its dictates. We can and should and must say no to sin. Its voice has been silenced. What and when we do hear from it, is but a whisper of its former shout.

To submit to sin is like offering to pay the tip when the entire meal was free. It is trying to “do” something . . . anything . . . so that a sense of personal worth and accomplishment can be embraced. But to refuse the rest that is ours in Christ Jesus as it relates to our battle against the power of sin is to refuse rest. It is to work when there is nothing more to do.

But what about the various commands of the New Testament as it relates to our “battle” against sin and the old nature? Would not these commands suggest that the work is far from over? There are various commands throughout the New Testament that speak of our fight against the flesh (Rom. 6:13; 12:1, 2; 13:14; Gal. 5:16, 24; Eph. 4:22; Col. 3:5; 1 Pet. 2:11; 1 John 2:15).

This is only representative of the idea as it exists in the New Testament. Unfortunately for us we have made the commands of the New Testament prescriptive instead of descriptive. We have so individualized the commands of Scripture that we isolate them from the broader idea and in so doing become

Continued on the other side...

enslaved to them. The commands describe for us what freedom from the penalty of sin looks like in the life of God's people. Because we are freed from the penalty of sin we are free from the power of sin. Power over my sin is true because of freedom from the penalty of sin.

- Power over sin presents the members of the body to God.
- Power over sin no longer makes provision for it.
- Power over sin puts off the old nature.
- Power over sin no longer walks according to the flesh.
- Power over sin considers the members of the earthly body as dead.
- Power over sin abstains from fleshly lusts.
- Power over sin is no longer in love with the world or the things of the world.

This is what freedom from the penalty of sin looks like in the people of God. To think you have to access this power in order for it to be true is erroneous. It is true whether or not you access it. This does not mean you will never sin or that you will be able to live in sinless perfection. This does mean you will not be under its authority.

We have died to sin. We are no longer a part of its family. We have no inheritance with it. We are no longer alive to it. With all of this noted John tells us that we are foolish to live in sin denial (1 John 1:6, 8, 10). Sin is real and we are confronted by its reality on a daily basis. And even though this is true I do not have to obey its dictates.

When I find myself having failed in my fight against the flesh, what do I "do?" I would like to note several biblical ideas. But remember these thoughts are descriptive not prescriptive. You could do a number of different things and still be biblical and you could not do several other commands and still be biblical. The listing is descriptive not prescriptive.

- When I find myself having sinned I agree with God concerning its nature and speak to Him about it (1 John 1:9).
- I realize that the sin is not my identity. It is what I once was, but no longer am, although I still have. As such the sin is not my pattern. It does not define who I am (2 Cor. 5:21).
- I ask the Holy Spirit to put sin from me and to work the Spirit of Christ in me and through me (Eph. 4:22-24).
- I also ask the Holy Spirit to make Christ more real to me than my fleshly appetites that war against my soul (2 Pet. 2:10).

I am not giving this to you to tell you what you should do. There are a number of descriptive verses that address the issue of sin and the Christian. These ideas are broad generalizations as to what freedom from the power of sin looks like in those who have been freed from the penalty of sin.

If Jesus were to speak audible to us today He would say, "Go and sin no more" (John 8:11) and "I say these things in order that you sin not, but if you do, you have an advocate before the Father and I am He" (1 John 2:1, 2).