

## THE BODY OF SIN

Notes on Romans 6:9-18 (quotations from R.V.)

Many Christians struggle through life with a guilt complex about their sinning. They commit sin, then confess, only to find this a recurring pattern of life. They seem to be unable, as the hymn says *'to break the power of cancelled sin'*. They are prisoners and long to be set free. The following short explanation of part of Romans chapter 6, I hope, will help to break the cycle.

We learn from verse 6 of this chapter that SIN is the violation of God's law. Also, 1 John 3:4 confirms that sin is *"the transgression (lawlessness) of the law"*. If there is no law to break there is no sin to commit.

But Romans 3:23 also tells us that we *"ALL have sinned"*, missed the mark! In Adam, the root of the generations has become corrupted. The tree, its trunk, its branches, its leaves and fruit are all affected by that disease which spells DEATH!

Henry Law, the Puritan writer, said that *'when Adam fell all generations were in his loins'*. So mankind, in God's sight, needs more than MERCY and FORGIVENESS, he needs the dealing with the sin principle and clearance before the holiness of God.

That's what the death of Christ has accomplished: *"For the death that Christ died, he died unto sin once, but the life that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Even so ye also reckon yourselves dead unto sin, but alive unto God" - v 10-11.*

Sinning, the ACT, is caused by inner corruptness, i.e. our sinful Adamic nature.

Verse 12 sees SIN as a RULING POWER PERSONIFIED, one who seeks dominion over the believer. In our unconverted state, SIN was the MASTER that controlled us, he entered the citadel of our being and established his rule there, controlling every part of our being, our thinking, motives, desires and actions.

We have become slaves to sin from the moment of birth - verse 6 - *"the body belonging to sin"*.

PRAISE God this Scripture outlines how we can escape from this awful tyranny! The cross of Christ has completely changed everything, it has changed our relationship to the sin principle. Christ's death has separated us from the authority of sin as a MASTER. Christ's death has freed us from the domination of sin. Verse 14 - *"sin shall not have dominion over you"*.

Dominance, NOT eradication, is the key thought in Romans 6.

NOTE: This is not sinless perfection, that is, not able to sin, rather it is, ABLE NOT TO SIN!

So when we trust Christ we are seen as DEAD to sin and ALIVE to God. Whereas SIN was once the MASTER that controlled us, we now have a NEW master - CHRIST - living in us. He is now our LORD, and that from the moment of conversion.

There is a false teaching going about that we receive Jesus first as Saviour and then through endeavour make Him our Lord! From the time of our conversion He is our NEW Master, King, LORD. If He is not, then I am not saved. The old saying is true:

IF HE IS NOT LORD OF ALL, HE IS NOT  
LORD AT ALL.

Now, we must not get upset by this, though He now occupies the throne of our life, sin, in practice, has not gone away.

Verse 12 - *"Let not sin, therefore reign in your mortal body that you should obey the lusts thereof..."*. 'Let not' is in the imperative mood, suggesting that it is still possible.

Before looking at verse 13, we could see verse 18 as the summing up, *"being made free from sin ye became the servants of righteousness"*. This is the meaning and secret of true SANCTIFICATION - set apart to holiness! The believer, truly submitted to the Lordship of Christ, does not break with sin gradually, he breaks with it decisively in Christ by His power.

Chapter 8:1 underscores this principle: *"the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus made me free from the law of sin and of death"*.

This truth when apprehended is LIFE CHANGING.

The LAW of LIFE and the LAW of DEATH are two opposing forces. We could illustrate this by referring to the design and structure of a ship. An ocean going liner with its ten decks, 3000+ passengers and crew with all the warehousing of supplies! Why doesn't it sink? The answer lies in the fact that the law which governs floating bodies was greater than the law of gravity that would have affected any single piece of the steel structure if it had fallen from a deck.

It has often been said that once an alcoholic, always one. Not so as 2 Corinthians 5:17 bears witness *"If any man be in Christ he (there is) a new creation, the old has gone the new has come"*. What is NEW? Christ in him! The change is instantaneous.

J. Oswald Saunders in his little book on the Holy Spirit, preached a strong sermon on the possibility on the deliverance from the power of sin, after the meeting he was confronted by a lady who strongly disagreed:

**Lady:** I cannot see God's truth in your message.

**Preacher:** What do you think is God's truth?

**Lady:** It seems to me that over my life God will gradually deliver me from my sins by doing my best to be better and sin less, my bad habits will become less and my sins less numerous.

**Preacher:** Is that your theory about picking pockets?

**Lady:** About what?

**Preacher:** About picking pockets; a pick pocket is converted to God on Sunday night in a London Mission. After a weeks new life's experience on the following Saturday night he kneels down and prays, 'Oh God I thank you for the great and glorious change in my life, last week before I was converted I stole twenty watches and two dozen pens, this week with your help I stole only six watches!

The lady looked confused

**Preacher:** The Bible says "*let him that steal, steal no more*"!

If this is true at the initial act of deliverance it is true in the ongoing life.

*He breaks the power of cancelled sin,  
He sets the prisoner free,  
His blood can make the foulest clean,  
His blood avails for me.*

In one sense sanctification in a believer's life is immediate at conversion. An immediate break from the past. This poses a problem particularly in those that trust Christ in early years. They cannot relate to this clean break. They trusted Him as Saviour but nobody told them about the implications of His being Lord! Nobody told them that sinning was still a possibility and there would be an on going battle between the flesh and the spirit. They were not taught that the moment temptation led to sin that they must confess it to the Lord with contriteness and shame and seek His forgiveness (1 John 1: 9). Confession of this kind is a painful experience and is a strong deterrent to recommitting it. And because they were not told these things they live in defeat and misery and even doubt their salvation.

What is the solution?

## DOCTRINAL SOLUTION

There is only one source of cleansing, that is the CROSS and the blood of Christ.. How did we get initial cleansing? – by FAITH.

How do we get on-going cleansing? - by FAITH. Forgiveness is found at the Cross. It is only in the Cross that power to overcome can be obtained - the Holy Spirit's indwelling, providing the energy. We are not only Forgiven at the Cross, but we are Regenerated AND Renewed by the Holy Spirit - Titus 3:16.

The same epistle, chapter 2:14, is doctrinally very reassuring: *"He gave himself for us that he might redeem us from ALL iniquity and purify unto himself a peculiar (special) people zealous of good works"*.

#### PRACTICAL SOLUTION.

*"Cleansing with water through the word"*.

There is an old and well tried saying, 'Sin keeps us from this Book and this Book keeps us from sin!

The Word of God is not the fountain of our cleansing, but it brings us to the fountain. *"The blood of Jesus Christ CLEANSETH us from ALL sin - 1 John 1:7.* (note the present continuous tense). *"Wherewith all shall a young man cleanse his way by taking heed according to thy word" - Psalm 119:9.*

Returning to Romans 6:13 - *"Neither present your members (this could have a sexual connotation) as instruments (weapons) of unrighteousness, but present yourselves unto God, as alive from the dead and your members as instruments (weapons) of righteousness"*. Verse 16, *"Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves as servants (slaves) unto obedience his servants (slaves) to whom you obey"*.

The idea of 'presentation' here is to give as a gift. If our lives are not controlled in a practical way by the Word of God then we become sitting targets, or offering ourselves on a plate to Sin & Satan.

Verses 20- 22 summarises the drift of the Apostles argument.

*"For when you were servants (slaves) of sin, you were free in regard of righteousness.... But now being made free from sin and become servants (slaves) of God, you have your fruit unto sanctification and the end eternal life!"*

What a prize to be sought after. And the good news is that it IS possible. In fact it is what the late Watchman Nee called 'The NORMAL CHRISTIAN LIFE'. Tragically for many of us being the slaves of righteousness is more ABNORMAL than NORMAL!

Let me refer to two of the Lord's miracles as illustrations of what we have been thinking about:

The Paralytic : Matthew 8:6.

Sin is like paralysis. There is life but no movement, no vigour, losing the power of muscular motion, but very much alive! Sin impairs spiritual movement. Sin reduces moral energy. Sin deadens sensitivity to sin.

The RESULT? There is life but spiritually powerless, and an inability to function as a follower of Christ should. The new birth may have taken place. The initial change, perhaps, was unmistakable, but giving the body over to sin has neutered all ability to function as a Christian should.

The Deaf Mute: Mark 7:31.

The inability to hear or speak properly. The physical organs were there but they were practically useless.

How did the Lord effect a cure, what was the order of deliverance, with which organ did He begin?

He opened the ear, the organ of reception. Sin robs the believer of the power of hearing God's voice. The door that opens to the life of FAITH begins with HEARING - "He that heareth my word AND believeth.....has everlasting life". Then the Lord Jesus loosed the tongue. This man could not communicate his thoughts. He couldn't speak or even sing! that wonderful spiritual exercise. Sin can rob us of giving praise to God and rob us of the ability to publicly testify.

"Ephphatha" - BE OPENED! Both organs were set free.

The Lord Jesus, in the power of the Holy Spirit, came not only to redeem us and make us His own, but to liberate every power and faculty we possess which God originally created for His glory. Occasional sin, unchecked, will become habitual. Habit is an acquired power perfected by repeated action.

Can sin and holiness dwell together in the same heart? How can some one be sick and well at the same time? We live in bodies of imperfection, but life goes on. Remedies can tip the balance towards cure.

So it is in the spiritual realm, the heart's appreciation of Christ and His Cross are a powerful antidote to sin.

*The balm of life, the cure of woe,*

*The measure and the pledge of love,*

*The sinner's refuge here below*

*The endless theme of heaven above.*

The soul's atmosphere in this world is the daily, trials, temptations and testings. The fact that the law of the Spirit is still in force is proof that the law of sin and death is not extinct. Never in this life will we be free from the temptation to sin, it ever remains a possibility.

Let us ponder carefully the truth that apart from the indwelling Christ the most mature believer would relapse into a state of spiritual decay.

DREW CRAIG