

FREEDOM FROM SIN – PART 1

Romans 8:1-2 ... “There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.”

The promise of “no condemnation” for those who “are in Christ” is very real, but also conditional. When you become born again, the power of sin and death should no longer control you. The sinful life that you once lived, can now be transformed by God’s Holy Spirit. You are guaranteed a place in heaven simply by believing in Jesus (John 3:16). Jesus took the punishment you deserve for your sins and allowed it to kill him on the cross. But, look at the condition of this promise: “who do not walk according to the flesh.”

The condition that makes this promise real, is that you must choose not to “walk according to the flesh.” Becoming a Christian is not a magical event in your life. Every step of the way – believing in Jesus, receiving salvation, getting a title to your residence in heaven, living sin-free, being recognized by God as righteous, and serving him, requires you to make decisions. There are no special rituals or ceremonies you must participate in, no oaths or pledges you must make, and no indulgences to buy. You simply choose Christ over your flesh (your own corrupt mind) and choose Christ over your environment (other people who want to draw you into sin). These two choices, as it turns out, are the hardest part of following Jesus, because your mind and its attraction to sin is very powerful, and satan has already placed his followers in your path to pull you in his direction, away from Jesus.

If you make the right choices (Christ instead of satan), the Holy Spirit living and working in you will free you from the law of sin and its punishment, which is death. This is why the act of becoming a Christian is tied to the act of being born again. You cannot be a follower of Christ AND satan. You cannot serve Christ AND yourself or satan. You give everything to Christ, or nothing.

Jesus does not accept a casual belief in him as a down payment on your salvation. Many people live in such a way that they think they can spend several years – even decades – taking baby steps toward salvation. They agree in Sunday School as a child that Jesus is real, but they put off getting to know him until later. In their early adult years, they might attend church occasionally and claim to be a Christian, while still enjoying the fruits of satan’s world. Later in life, they may feel the guilt of their sins and ask God to forgive them, while still not being willing to actually serve Christ. If they are lucky, they might live to old age and finally turn their life totally over to Christ and become genuinely born again. But there is no guarantee that you will live to be a senior citizen. Plus, the years you live in sin before being born again, are a waste and dangerous.

Becoming born again invokes the second part of today’s passage. When you are truly born again, the Holy Spirit of God enters your life and guides you toward obedience to Christ. That is what frees you “from the law of sin and death.” Make the right choices.

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