

The Reality of a Change of Realms for the Pursuit of Holiness–Part 1**Review:**

Sanctification is both a past reality and an on-going pursuit in the everyday life of the follower of Jesus Christ. Those who have believed on Christ have been sanctified, are currently sanctified, and yet are still being sanctified. This is because they have not yet been glorified. The believer's pursuit of day-in and day-out holiness is secured by a number of aspects of God's work in Christ. One of these aspects is the believer's union with Christ. In union with Christ, I have everything I need. My union with Christ is the basis for my communion with him which fuels me for the pursuit. Being united with Christ, I am secure. The assurance that he will hold me fast urges me to get up again even after I have failed. Tonight we are looking at actually another aspect of our union with Christ, but it is of such importance that we are considering it on its own, and we will do it in two parts.

1. Let's begin with Romans 6:12-13 —

v. 12 – Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions.

v. 13 – Do not present your members to sin as instruments of unrighteousness, but present yourselves . . . and your members to God as instruments for righteousness.

What action is called for by this command?

Who is called upon to perform the action?

So whose effort is being called for here? (Human or divine?)

Is the action that is called for dependent upon oneself?

This command, basically a call to pursue holiness, is evidence again that human effort is called for in pursuing holiness, but it is not human effort in a vacuum. It is not baseless. It is not pure human accomplishment but human effort applied in view of something else. In this session we will be giving one answer in particular to the question "What is that something else?"

2. Let's next explore Romans 6:1-10 — Dead to Sin, Alive to God

a. vv. 1-2.

Looking back to 5:21, we see that Paul declared that "where sin increased, grace abounded all the more." Does this mean we should intentionally persist in sin? Paul asks

and answers this question in verses 1-2. Why not?

b. vv. 3-4.

These two verses explain who has died with Christ and how.

Who?

How?

The Result?

c. vv. 5-

i. As a result of being united with Christ in a death like his . . .

1. Old self was _____.
2. Body of sin is _____.
3. The result is _____.

How does this happen?

Death means what? Being set free.

If you die to something, you are no longer under its sway or in its realm.

So when, in Christ, a person dies to sin, sin's authority is powerless over him.

Consider, Christ. He died a death to death and sin. There is no more dominion of either of these things over him. He entered into this realm and willingly made himself subject to them. Sin not his own was placed upon him and he died. BUT He has risen triumphantly over sin and death. He is now dead as far as sin and death are concerned. And in Christ the same has happened to believers. We are dead to sin. We do not live under its dominion. We are not beholden to the power of sin and death. We are free.

ii. As a result of being united with Christ in a resurrection like his . . .

Persons in Christ have undergone the same dominion switch. Dead now to sin, they are alive to God. Again, we see it in Christ. Having died to sin, he lives to God. He is alive in the sphere of relating to God.

The practical ramification is set forth in 6:14. "For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace." The fact is that BEFORE a person is united with Christ, SIN possesses DOMINION/MASTERY over him/her.

Acts 26:18 – Paul was sent to Gentiles that they might "turn from darkness to light and from the POWER of Satan to God."

Colossians 1:13 – He delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the

kingdom of his beloved Son.

Romans 6:17 – you were once slaves of sin

Titus 3:3 – we were once . . . slaves to various passions and pleasures

Ephesians 2:1-3 – dead in trespasses and sins . . . following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air . . . by nature children of wrath

Ephesians 2:12 – having no hope and without God . . . far off

Commentary from John Murray: “If we view sin as a realm or sphere, then the believer no longer lives in that realm or sphere. And just as it is true with reference to life in the sphere of this world that the person who has died ‘passed away,’ . . . So it is with the sphere of sin; the believer is no longer there because he has died to sin . . . the believer died to sin once and he has been translated to another realm.” (Epistle to the Romans, NICNT, 1968, p. 213)

3. Exercise Your Death and Life/Release and Your Transfer (Romans 6:11-14).

a. CONSIDER yourselves dead to sin and alive to God. This is the first of four commands that are issued in view of the above facts. The first action Paul is commanding is that they affirm, adopt, and own as true what he has been saying. Recognize the truth. Think in accordance with the truth. Their minds need to preach to their hearts that these things are true.

b. Let not sin reign, to make you obey its passions. REFUSE to allow sin to have sway. This refusal is evidence that you believe you have died to sin and are alive to God. To the natural person this command is completely nonsensical. But to the one who is united with Christ, obedience to the command is fully possible. Indeed, it is inevitable, but obedience occurs in light of understanding and owning the truth. This is living by faith in the power of God. The act of refusing to let sin reign involves a sub-action.

c. Do not present your members to sin. Refuse to allow any component of your being to sin against God. Refuse to allow yourself to be used to sin. God has provided a way of escape (1 Corinthians 10:13). Take it. Say, “No.” Run. Flee.

d. Present yourselves to God. God reigns over you. You are alive to him. Know him and seek what he loves. Submit yourself to him as a living sacrifice. Determine to live to worship him. The sub-action to presenting yourself to God also involves a sub-action.

e. Present your members to God as instruments of righteousness. One-by-one and

moment by moment, every circumstance will call for a choice that reflects the overall presentation of yourself to God.

Conclusion

What God has done for everyone in Christ renders what possible what otherwise would be impossible. The pursuit of holiness would be impossible if sin and death were still in charge of us. But if we are in Christ, we have been removed from sin's dominion just as surely as the Israelites were removed from the tyranny of Pharaoh. He could pursue the escapees but he could not overtake them. Temptation will still come after you. Yet, what God has done in Christ for those who are in union with him by faith is to make us die to Pharaoh. Death and sin have no power hold on us. We must own this fact as true and proclaim it to ourselves and rejoice in it and live in light of it. And that means saying resisting and refusing the overtures of sin and death and submitting ourselves and every part of us to live obediently unto God. We CAN because of what HE has done!