The Book of Romans

Part Three: God’s righteousness is revealed in His free gift of Spirit-life. (Romans 5–8)

***New Life: New Master, New Choices***

***Or, The Myth of Independence***

***Romans 6:15-23***

Whereas before we were slaves of sin and Satan, now we are slaves of righteousness and Christ. Since it is not a matter of WHETHER, but WHOM and WHAT we serve, it’s important to act in obedience to the One who has bought us and paid for our sins with His blood. In contrast to sin, whose ways are hard and whose end is death, Jesus is a kind and gentle Master, whose yoke is easy and whose promise is eternal life. Matthew 11:25-30; 1 John 5:2, 3. Everyone serves someone. Matt. 6:24.

***Does forgiveness (freedom from the Law’s condemnation) mean we are free to sin? No way!*** v. 15

This is another way of asking the question of verse 1. Does grace encourage sin? Again, the answer (although it is counterintuitive to those who desire to earn salvation) is “No!”

***When you believed in Jesus, your allegiance changed from sin to righteousness. To continue in willful sin would be to re-enslave yourself to your old master.*** vv. 16-18

***Though “slavery” is hardly a fitting analogy for our new relationship with God, follow through on your commitment to your new Master.*** v. 19

***For there are only two paths. You received only pain and shame by serving sin on the path to eternal death. Now, you are “enslaved” to God, bound for righteousness and eternal life.*** vv. 20-23

*Discipleship = Justification (one act) + Sanctification (a process)*

***1. Grace-inspired obedience is not optional; it is normal.***

There aren’t two kinds of Christians, the “merely saved,” and then those who follow Jesus. It is a great error to sever justification by faith from the other benefits of salvation. We are made right with God in a moment of time when we believe God’s promise, and we must never think we could earn God’s love (or would need to). But Jesus said that love for Him would show in keeping His commandments (John 14:15; 15:9-11), and that will be the issue in judgment (Matthew 7:21-29). Justification by faith is the ROOT, joyful obedience is the FRUIT. Ephesians 2:8-10. Discipleship is both a Gate AND a Way (Matthew 7:13, 14), and while our obedience will be imperfect, it will be discernable.

There are many other reasons / motivations for Christian obedience. . .

The joy-producing direct commands of God. Psalm 119:73-77

The love of God (love for God). Matthew 22:34-40

The way of wisdom and life. Psalm 1

The shame and destruction of sin. Proverbs 1:20-33

The war against the enemy, Satan. 1 John 3:7, 8

The model of Jesus. 1 John 2:4-6

The desire for our purity as Christ’s Bride. Eph. 5:25-27; Rev. 21

The example of glorifying God for all to see. Matthew 5:14-16

***2. Grace-inspired obedience is not a burden; it is a blessing.***

Many have believed Satan’s great lie that obeying God is restrictive and joyless (Genesis 3:4, 5). Ironically, it is sin which limits us and leads to misery by tempting us to believe and act as if we are gods, not creatures. God is the enemy of suffering and the author of joy. It is the way of the transgressor which is hard. Remember that Jesus lived to please His Father (John 8:28, 29), and God’s plan is to conform us to the image of the eternally happy Son. All that happens to us contributes to this end, so submitting to Him should bring us joy. Romans 8:26-30