

Freedom From Sin

The English cuckoo bird never builds her own nest. Instead, she lays her egg in a different mother bird's nest when that bird is away. That mother bird—we might call her Mrs. Thrush—is not very good at math. So when she returns to sit on her eggs, she doesn't notice there is an extra large egg in the nest.

Eventually her four little eggs and the big cuckoo egg all hatch. When Mrs. Thrush leaves the nest to get a worm and comes back to feed her young, there are four little thrush mouths and one huge cuckoo mouth. Who gets the worm? The big mouth! The cuckoo grows rapidly and then throws the little thrushes out of the nest! Guess who then gets all the food from Mrs. Thrush? The cuckoo has taken over, and its appetite is insatiable!

When we are saved by grace and start to live a life of grace, we soon discover strong opposition. Sin, like the cuckoo bird, has an insatiable appetite, and it tries to take over our lives. How do we get victory over sin? By living a life of grace. In Romans 6:1-19, Paul presents three steps to living a life of grace.

First, there is something to know (Romans 6:3, 9). Through salvation by grace, we as believers are united with Christ in His death and resurrection (Romans 6:1-6). This union with Christ is the foundational concept of the life of grace.

Union with Christ means that when Christ died, I died with Him. When Christ was buried, I was buried with Him. When Christ was raised from the dead, I was raised with Him. Now I live "in newness of life." The life of Christ is the life of grace. Being a Christian is not just believing about Christ or trying to imitate Him or follow His teaching. It is a vital, dynamic, living relationship with the living Christ.

So our faith is not just faith about Christ, but rather faith into Christ. We believe into Christ: that is, we are united with Christ. Christ died for me: my justification. I died with Christ: my sanctification. Everything I need to live a victorious life of grace is found in Christ—and I am united with Him.

Second, there is something to consider. We consider—which means we reckon or count—ourselves dead to sin (Romans 6:11). Originally the word consider was used in bookkeeping. It is a term used to record and to regard something as true which is in fact true. Christ's resurrection demonstrated His victory over sin. Now that you are united with Christ in His resurrection, you have the victory over sin. Consider this as true! Believe it! You are saved by God's grace and you are on the victory side!

Most of us are familiar with the concept of Christ dying for our sins. He was our substitute on the cross. But Christ not only died for sin, He also died to sin (Romans 6:10). Christ died for sin—that's freedom from sin's guilt. Christ died to sin—that's freedom from sin's power. He died to sin in the sense that He conquered sin and was victorious over it.

Here is the point you must consider as true: Because Christ died to sin and you are united with Christ, you, too, have died to sin (Romans 6:2) —and you have the victory over its tyranny and dominion. You still feel the pressure of sin, but its power over you is broken.

When sin, like that cuckoo, tries to take over your life and demands that you come back to its rule, say: "Praise God, you are no longer my master. Now that I am united with Christ, it is inconceivable that I would go back to your tyranny."

Third, there is something to present (Romans 6:13, 16, 19). We are to present—to yield or offer—our bodies to God.

First, the negative: don't go on presenting the members of your body to sin. The picture is of a soldier presenting his weapons to his commander and awaiting his instructions. Sin uses the members of your body to wage war against you.

For example, your tongue can be used to lie. Your hands can be used to hurt someone. Your mind can be used to lust. This presenting is a deliberate and conscious decision. Do not present your members to sin!

Now the positive: the members of our bodies are to be presented to God. This is a radical and decisive break from your past and a deliberate presenting of yourself as a living sacrifice to God. Sin is no longer our master. We are now under the reign of grace. God in His grace enables us to have the victory through His indwelling Spirit (Galatians 5:16).

So stop seeing yourself as someone who has to sin. Stop choosing sin. Stop obeying sin. "For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace" (Romans 6:14). Sin is a harsh tyrant in your life. But Christ not only died for our sins, He died to sin. He has conquered sin and the devil and gives His people who are united with Him a victorious life of grace. Freedom is found in being a slave of our Lord Jesus (Romans 6:15-23)!

This is true freedom. This is living the life of grace.

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