

Dead End Thinking

Romans 6

This section of the letter deals with *sanctification* – the change God makes in our life when we grow in our faith

Paul addresses the question ... What happens now? Now that we have grasped this wonderful gift of God called grace?

How do we deal with this awesome freedom now that we have been set free from the power of sin's grasp?

Read text ... Note verses 1 and 16 Theme **No longer under the Law**

Paul explains this struggle of choice we make in daily living

The story recognizes the internal struggle between right and wrong – and the consequence of divorcing oneself from God's moral code

Classical author Robert Louis Stephenson's famous story of Jekyll and Hyde deals with the subject of guilt and pain of conviction from conscience. Dr. Jekyll wanted to isolate the two parts of man that wrestle with right and wrong. He wanted to be free to do whatever he pleased without burden of guilt weighing down on him. So develops a formula to chemically separate and suppress his good side – he turns into the monster, Mr. Hyde with a freedom to rape and kill without remorse or shame. When effects of the formula wore off Dr Jekyll decided he would never go that route again but it was too late he had become a slave to the evil and was finally consumed by it.

Water Baptism – emersion not sprinkling

Water Baptism deals with choice - we choose to be baptized – (verses 5 – 11)

We're not saved by the act of baptism – we choose baptism because we have already passed from death to life accepting by faith Jesus as our savior

The Power of Sin is broken – but it's not by anything we do ... we don't overcome the power of sin by our will power or determination, doggedly refusing to give into temptation.

Our struggle to resist temptation is evidence that the old nature - prone to sin, alive and kicking

If it wasn't you wouldn't need to have the determination – there wouldn't be a battle!!!

So how is the Power of Sin broken?

We have power over sin because Jesus broke its back with His death on the Cross. Jesus took our sin on himself paying the price we were powerless to pay.

What about the Law? What about keeping the Ten Commandments?

Mel Brooks History of the World ... Moses and the 15 commandments

Old Testament picture of Jesus seen in the tabernacle and later temple.

Room called the Holy of Holies, which contained the Ark of the Covenant. (See Picture) What was the Ark of the Covenant? It was a physical representation of God's future promise and provision. It was a wooden chest with a removable top completely overlaid with gold. Inside were the stone tablets of the 10 commandments. The cover was called the mercy seat – place where God sat – between the angelic cherubim.

On The Day of Atonement –High Priest, enters with blood of a sacrificed lamb –Using a hyssop branch the priest would the blood on the mercy seat

Think about this picture, and clues God gave about Jesus ... God who looked down from the mercy seat would see the blood of the lamb and forgive the sins of the people.

The 10 commandments, the Law was still there, but the blood covered them - satisfied God's Holy requirement!

We don't disregard the old law ... we live above it in a new and living way ...

We've tasted the Living Water of God's Spirit, we know the difference between life and death
Living religiously out of obligation will no longer cut it for us!

God's love comes with freedom of choice.

There are two choices:

- The first is an eternal one – Jesus died for all people (John 3:16) but not all people will choose God's gift –for those who do the power of sin (eternal death) is broken; you are no longer its slave. You are a new spiritual person in Christ. this is *justification*
- The second choice is our struggle our old nature. The daily wrestling match we face to live a life that is pleasing to God – in facing down temptation – this is *sanctification*

Peterson writes "Sin for the believer involves personal injury, not judicial penalty. It affects our everyday life but not our eternal life. All sin against God was dealt with on the cross. ... My sins from now on are failures to live out my new life."

We are in a daily wrestling match – but we are no longer slaves to sin.

Our problem is **dead end thinking**

Our thinking is narrow minded and short sighted, and we're frustrated because we don't understand what God is up to in our lives. We see our struggle as unsolvable – no way out no win scenarios dead end thinking.

That happens when our focus is on ourselves and our ability

God has a better way – a larger focus

A young man recently said that he was sure God no longer cared about him or his wife – because his most important prayer has gone unanswered – then was spared from a multiple car crash on the LIE in which every car around him crashed except his.

God's ways are usually long in developing, life changing and definitely challenging –

they require sacrifice and sometimes suffering but they are never result in a dead end – they always produce new growth and understanding.

Read Romans 6: 20 – 23 (The Message)

²⁰⁻²¹ As long as you did what you felt like doing, ignoring God, you didn't have to bother with right thinking or right living, or right *anything* for that matter. But do you call that a free life? What did you get out of it? Nothing you're proud of now. Where did it get you? A dead end.²²⁻

²³ But now that you've found you don't have to listen to sin tell you what to do, and have discovered the delight of listening to God telling you, what a surprise! A whole, healed, put-together life right now, with more and more of life on the way! Work hard for sin your whole life and your pension is death. But God's gift is *real life*, eternal life, delivered by Jesus, our Master.

Maybe – what we need is to look away from our old conventional thinking and let God open our eyes to see things that our narrow thinking has never considered

You are more than you think you are. You are better than your sinful nature; you are God's child with a unique destiny and purpose