

“You shall go out leaping like calves from the stall.”

- Malachi 4:2

THE LESSON: ROMANS 6

The Apostle Paul’s epistle to the Romans gives a wonderful summary of what Christians believe. Paul wanted his readers to understand clearly that salvation is 100% God’s gift – received by faith, not through our own efforts; that Jesus’ death on the cross has made us *free*. But what does that mean?

When we think about freedom in general, we see that there are actually two parts to it. The first aspect of freedom involves a release from something that was keeping us trapped. And the second aspect is a new ability to act in a way that we couldn’t before. So when we talk about the *spiritual* freedom we have in Christ, what we mean is that we have been released from the power of sin, and are newly able to live a life that is oriented towards God in the power of his Spirit.

Does freedom mean that we should just keep living the same way as we did before? Or perhaps we should actually sin *more* so that God has the opportunity to show more grace and forgiveness? These may seem like odd questions to you, but they are real issues that Paul wanted to respond to fully and clearly. Take a look at how he tackles the topic in Romans 6.

AT-HOME CHALLENGE

Each morning and evening, follow the rule of prayer that you created for yourself.

(If you didn’t make one, try saying the morning and evening prayers from the “Forms of Prayer to be used in Families,” which begins on page 728 of the BCP. If you don’t have a copy, you can look it up here: <http://prayerbook.ca/resources/bcponline/family-prayer>.)

Spend some time quietly asking God to free you from any sin that may be keeping you from living in “newness of life”. End with this prayer from Psalm 116:16-17: **“O Lord, I am your servant... You have loosed my bonds. I will offer to you the sacrifice of thanksgiving...”**

- AND/OR -

Take some time to pray through this prayer, pausing to reflect after each phrase.

O God, whose nature and property is ever to have mercy and to forgive: Receive our humble petitions; and though we be tied and bound with the chains of our sins, yet let the pitifulness of thy great mercy loose us; for the honour of Jesus Christ, our Mediator and Advocate. Amen. (BCP PAGE 58)

ROMANS 6: **TRUE FREEDOM LEADS TO TRUE LIFE**

¹What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? ²By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? ³Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? ⁴We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.

⁵For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. ⁶We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. ⁷For one who has died has been set free from sin. ⁸Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. ⁹We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. ¹⁰For the death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God. ¹¹So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

¹²Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions. ¹³Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness. ¹⁴For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace.

¹⁵What then? Are we to sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means! ¹⁶Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness? ¹⁷But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed, ¹⁸and, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness. ¹⁹I am speaking in human terms, because of your natural limitations. For just as you once presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness leading to sanctification.

²⁰For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. ²¹But what fruit were you getting at that time from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death. ²²But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the fruit you get leads to sanctification and its end, eternal life. ²³For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.