

Romans 6:18-19

18 *Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.*

19 *I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness.*

In the last lesson we discussed how the believers in Romans had *obeyed from the heart* the doctrine which was delivered unto them, and how this was to first bring *their faith itself* into obedience, as, *with the heart man believeth unto righteousness*.

That is, the doctrine we've found detailed in Romans chapters 1-5 was believed, and they were justified, and the subsequent doctrine of Romans 6:1-11 was communicated to them, and became effectual in their lives. They both became positionally and practically free from sin.

What we've learned so far from Romans 6:

- We were baptized into Christ's death, that like as Christ was raised from the dead, we also should walk in newness of life (v3-4). If we are unified and identified with Christ, then this means we also died with Him, and if we died with Him, we also are partakers of the resurrection life He eternally possesses.

- Our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed; that henceforth we should not serve sin, for he that is dead is freed from sin (v6-7). If our *old man*, with its “in Adam” nature and status, was truly crucified with Christ, then we have been freed from the nature that held us in bondage to sin.
- That, knowing Christ having been raised from the dead *dieth no more*, death hath no more dominion over him; for in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God (v9-10). If He died to sin once, and our old man was crucified with Him, then this means our old man also died unto sin *only once*. This means the work has already been accomplished. Since we have died unto sin, we are now able to liveth unto God.
- Having fully known these truths, we must then *reckon* them to be so. “Reckoning” is not something one can force. Just as *knowing* is something that takes time and diligence, reckoning these truths to be so is something that requires first a thorough knowledge of the facts, implicit child-like faith in them, and an ongoing meditation upon them so that they go beyond mere knowledge.

Romans 6:18

Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.

In verse 18 Paul says *ye became* (past tense) *the servants of righteousness*. Certainly he is addressing the Romans here, but the Scripture here is also telling us that if we have made it to verse 18, and the doctrine we have received thus far is working in us, then we also have been made free from sin and become the servants of righteousness.

We should, by now, have a clear understanding of what being made free from sin means—that the gospel has provided everything we need to be spiritually fit, to not only be a part of the

family of God, but also to labor with God in His purpose. This includes the issue of sin. When He says He did it—He actually did.

Romans 6:19

I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness.

Paul is saying here *I speak after the manner of men*, that is, he is using the analogy of slavery and servanthood *after the manner and customs of mankind*, because of the very nature of their flesh, because of its *infirmity*.

An infirmity is essentially something that makes one *not* firm, thus it's an instability, a defect, an imperfection—and so we consider it a weakness. Thus we have historically had what are called *infirmaries*, where people who have injuries or who are sick go to be treated.

Paul is making the point that because of the very infirmity of their flesh, the slave/master relationship is the perfect illustration.

Crabb's English Synonyms makes this interesting distinction between infirmity and weakness:

...we may be weak in body or mind; but we are commonly feeble and infirm only in the body: we may be weak from disease or weak by nature; it equally conveys the gross idea of a defect: but the terms feeble and infirm are qualified expressions for weakness: a child is feeble from its infancy; an old man is feeble from age; the latter may likewise be infirm in consequence of sickness. We pity the weak, but their weakness often gives us pain; we assist the feeble when they attempt to walk; we support the infirm when they are unable to stand.

The same distinction exists between weak and feeble in the moral use of the words: a weak attempt to excuse a person conveys a reproachful meaning; but the feeble efforts which we make to defend another may be praiseworthy, although feeble.

It is interesting that he says here we are commonly feeble and infirm only in the body, because what does Paul say is infirm? It is the flesh. Crabb's says here we may be infirm because of sickness. And while we like to think that sickness and sin are two separate issues, they are not. Sin is much the same as a sickness, and the natural consequence of it is death, which Paul will say outright at the end of this chapter.

We support the infirm, Crabb's says, when they are not able to stand. If someone is infirm in some way, if someone has a disease, we don't just tell them, "get over it," or "try harder," or "just get better." How ridiculous would that be? In the same way with sin, you cannot simply preach at a sinner "stop sinning." *If* they even wanted to try, their own effort would hardly be the answer anyways. God Himself has found a way to "support the infirm," when we were not able to stand. He's offered a solution to the disease of sin.

This should call to mind Romans 5:6,

For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.

Christ Himself bore and will bear our infirmity.

Paul cannot be saying here in Romans 6:19 "I am speaking to you this way because you are carnally minded, and this is the only way I can get you to understand these truths," because they have *already* been freed from sin and become servants of righteousness, as verse 18 says. This

means they have already attained some spiritual discernment about these matters. What Paul is saying here is *such was the nature of your relationship with sin, because of the defect or imperfection of your flesh, because of the weakness of your flesh.*

In this we see that the flesh itself, Paul is saying, is weak. Isn't this exactly what Jesus says in Matthew 26:41 when He instructs the disciples to watch and pray in the garden of Gethsemane?

Matthew 26:40-41

40 *And he cometh unto the disciples, and findeth them asleep, and saith unto Peter, What, could ye not watch with me one hour?*

41 *Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.*

Romans 6:19

I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness.

Verse 19 says *I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: FOR AS...*

Now he is drawing the comparison between the slave/master relationship to sin with something else that is going to work in a like manner, that is what "*For as*" means. And it works in a like manner as we've discussed because the issue is one of identity. The same principle that worked in us *in Adam* that resulted in ongoing sin and condemnation is the same principle that works in us *in Christ*, that results in ongoing sanctification. A dog cannot help that it is a dog. It has the spirit of a dog. If a dog were to appear outwardly a dog, and yet behave as a cat, we might be inclined to think, "That's no real dog," because its behavior would betray its appearance. Identity is not outward, it is inward, and manifests in behavior, and that identity begins from the innermost being of the spirit.

"For as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity," *Even so*, meaning, in an equitable or like manner. If iniquity was unto iniquity, it was a process that naturally escalated or built upon itself. The process we are then engaged in presently, being "even so," that is, comparable in some way, also must then escalate, progress, or build upon itself.

The *uncleanness* is the *state*, the *iniquity unto iniquity* is the process. This is why it says uncleanness *and* iniquity unto iniquity. In an "even so" manner, we are to *yield our members to righteousness unto holiness*. The yielding is the same in both scenarios. But now we are to yield our members to righteousness, which is the process, *unto holiness*, the resulting state.

Paul is not saying here in verse 19 "even so now yield your members servants to righteousness." The verse does not end there. In the very previous verse he says, *Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness*. They had in fact *already* been made free from sin and servants of righteousness *positionally*, and to some extent they must have had this doctrine working in them *practically*. In verse 17 he commended them for obeying from the heart the doctrine. What he is saying is, even so now yield your members servants to righteousness *unto holiness*.

What he says to one he says to all. We tend to think that the things spoken of in the Bible are random, unconnected statements relaying bits and pieces of theological niceties, and they are not. Only once you have progressed through this form of doctrine in Romans 6—only after you have reckoned yourself to be dead indeed unto sin—can you yield your members servants of righteousness *unto holiness*. There is a distinction between righteousness and holiness.

So what is holiness? A good example of how to define the word *holy* is the sabbath day:

Genesis 2:3

And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.

Exodus 20:11

For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.

Exodus 20:8

Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.

We see here that God sanctified the seventh day, that is, set it apart from the other days, that He hallowed it, that is to say, He made it holy, and He instructed the Israelites to keep it holy. And so for something to be holy is for something to be set apart for a purpose.

We see God Himself says His Name is Holy:

Isaiah 57:15

For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.

And why is His Name Holy? Why is His Name set apart? He tells Moses His Name is *I AM* in Exodus 3:14. He *IS* because He is high and lofty above His creation, because He inhabits *eternity*, the high and holy place that is separate and distinct from His creation. God is distinct and set apart from His creation. He is God, and He alone.

Romans 6:19

I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness.

As I mentioned, there is a distinction between righteousness and holiness.

Webster's 1828 American Dictionary of the English Language makes this interesting statement in the first entry under *righteousness*:

Purity of heart and rectitude of life; conformity of heart and life to the divine law. righteousness as used in Scripture and theology, in which it is chiefly used, is nearly equivalent to holiness, comprehending holy principles and affections of heart, and conformity of life to the divine law. It includes all we call justice, honesty and virtue, with holy affections; in short, it is true religion.

Let's consider Webster's definitions for *holiness*:

1. Applied to human beings, holiness is purity of heart or dispositions; sanctified affections; piety; moral goodness, but not perfect.

We see piety and holiness ridiculed as morose singularities.

2. Sacredness; the state of any thing hallowed, or consecrated to God or to his worship; applied to churches or temples.

3. That which is separated to the service of God.

Israel was holiness unto the Lord. Jeremiah 2:3

We see here from considering the above definitions and what we have gleaned from comparing the verse on holiness in the Bible that holiness has more to do with being set apart for God's worship and service. We have previously discussed how *worship* actually implies that which you do from the heart in conjunction with the body itself; the second entry above from Webster's says holiness is anything hallowed or consecrated to God or His *worship*. Our bodies themselves have been consecrated to God for His worship, or service.

To properly be set apart for God's purpose, one has to first yield their members' servants unto righteousness. One cannot appropriately worship God in service to Him and His purpose if they are still bound to sin. The sin issue had to first be resolved. To follow this train of thought through, one can be righteous, and yet not be "holy" in this sense, but one cannot be properly holy if they are not righteous. If holiness has to do with being set apart for God's purpose, then simply being righteous is not enough; you necessarily must come to understand God's purpose so that you can bring your life into conformity with that.

Remember, we are not speaking here of your justified standing before God; Romans 5:1-2 says,

1 Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:

2 By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

Our *standing* before God because of our justification is forgiven, righteous, at peace with God and set apart for His purpose; and in fact He has provided everything we need for our spiritual growth and maturity freely. But our daily practice may not immediately or always reflect our position. What we are looking at here in Romans 6 is our daily, functional walk, not our justified standing in Christ.

Now, Paul does not elaborate here about what God's specific purpose is; that will come with Romans chapter 8. As we begin to conclude chapter 6, hypothetically the contents of chapter 8 are what would logically follow. As we will see however, the Holy Ghost is going to deviate from

the logical progression of doctrine to address the specific issue of *how* we serve God with the contents of chapter 7. Romans chapter 7, much like 1 Corinthians and Galatians, is corrective in nature, and could have hypothetically been avoided altogether. We know of course it could not be. We, individually as humans, and corporately as the church, need these corrective doctrines.

And so to conclude, essentially what Paul is saying here in Romans 6:19 is that, now that we have yielded our members servants unto righteousness, we are now able to properly function in God's plan and purpose. Again, the purpose will be touched on in Romans 8.