

The New Freedom In Life

Romans 6:15-23

As we have seen from the first 14 verses of this chapter we, as disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ, are no longer under the rule of sin over our lives.

In Christ we died to sin and were risen to a new life in Him to righteousness.

So Paul correctly confronted us with the fact that we, who have died to sin, should indeed no longer live in sin and make no longer the members of our body available to sin.

As we are in Christ, sin is no longer our master!

Paul finished those 14 verses by stating that we are not under the law, but that we are under grace.

In the verses we will look at today, he continues his argument from that point of view.

Romans 6:15-16

- What then? Are we to sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means! Do 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?
- Wat dan? Zullen wij zondigen omdat wij niet onder de wet maar onder de genade zijn? Volstrekt niet! Weet u niet dat aan wie u uzelf als slaaf ter beschikking stelt tot gehoorzaamheid, u slaaf bent van wie u gehoorzaamt: óf van de zonde, tot de dood, óf van de gehoorzaamheid, tot gerechtigheid?

Some people might say that, because we are not under the law but under grace, we do not have to care about how we live, as the grace of God would be our guarantee for the future.

But that would be a serious mistake.

Not only would we be abusing the grace of God, but through our behavior we would actually show that we did not die to sin.

If we truly died to sin then that should show up in the way we continued our life after we were saved by God. As Paul presents it in these verses that has to do with obedience.

But then we have to ask ourselves: obedience to whom and to what? The whom is easy, that is of course God. But regarding the what we have no other choice but to think of the law.

And then comes the question: but was the law not the actual cause of the problem. Let's look at some specific verses.

Deuteronomy 4:8 / Romans 7:12

- And what great nation is there, that has statutes and rules so righteous as all this law that I set before you today?
- En welk groot volk is er dat *zulke* rechtvaardige verordeningen en bepalingen heeft als heel deze wet, die ik u heden voorhoud?
- So the law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good.
- Zo is dan de wet heilig, en het gebod is heilig en rechtvaardig en goed.

Many of us look down on the law as something that only brings us trouble. But looking at these verses we have to wonder whether the problem is really caused by the law.

Psalm 119:18 says the following:

Open my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of your law.

In fact Psalm 119 is a song of praise regarding the law, the commandments and statutes of God.

And also Psalm 19:7-11 instructs us about all the good things of Gods' Law.

So, let's look at the true source of our problems.

Romans 8:3-4

- For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.
- Want wat voor de wet onmogelijk was, krachteloos als zij was door het vlees, *dat* heeft God *gedaan*: Hij heeft Zijn eigen Zoon gezonden in een gedaante gelijk aan het zondige vlees en *dat* omwille van de zonde, en de zonde veroordeeld in het vlees, opdat de rechtvaardige eis van de wet vervuld zou worden in ons, die niet naar het vlees wandelen, maar naar de Geest.

I have to jump a bit ahead in the book of Romans.

The real problem is actually not in the law, it is in our flesh, in our sinful nature that we received because of the sin of Adam.

Our sinful nature does not accept Gods laws and can and will never fulfill its requirements.

Therefore we can only be very grateful that we're not saved by works, by fulfilling the requirements of the law, but by grace through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Let's go back to Romans chapter 6.

Romans 6:17-18

- But 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, and, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness.
- Maar God zij dank: u was *wel* slaaf van de zonde, maar *nu* bent u van harte gehoorzaam geworden aan het voorbeeld van de leer waaraan u overgegeven bent. En, vrijgemaakt van de zonde, bent u dienstbaar gemaakt aan de gerechtigheid.

All of us have been enslaved by sin in the past and the only reason we are no longer slaves of sin is the fact that God, as part of our salvation, has set us free from the power of sin over our lives.

In Christ and in Christ alone are we able to become servants of righteousness.

That why in John 15:1-5 our Lord Jesus Christ tells us that we have to abide in Him, as we are not able to do anything apart from Him. And Paul did that, because in Galatians 2:20 he writes that it is no longer he who lives his life, but Christ in him. And so it should be for us also.

Let's continue.

Romans 6:19

- I 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.
- Ik spreek op menselijke wijze vanwege de zwakheid van uw vlees. Want zoals u uw leden beschikbaar gesteld hebt ten dienste van de onreinheid en van de *ene* wetteloosheid tot de *andere* wetteloosheid, stel zo nu uw leden beschikbaar ten dienste van de gerechtigheid, tot heiliging.

Again Paul points out that true repentance and salvation should lead to a clearly visible change in our lives.

Before our salvation we all were inclined to sin and impurity, but being saved by God we are inclined to righteousness, and that should become more and more visible as we are growing toward maturity in Christ, leading us to true holiness.

Romans 6:20-21

- For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. But 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.
- Want toen u slaaf van de zonde was, was u vrij ten aanzien van de gerechtigheid. Wat voor vrucht dan had u toen van de dingen waarover u zich nu schaamt? Immers, het einde daarvan is de dood.

Before we are saved by the grace of God we may not have made too much of the sins we were committing.

Most likely we were absolutely not aware of the destiny to which they were bringing us.

But as disciples of Christ we should have a completely different view on those things. That change should make us feel foolish and ashamed about the things we have done in the past.

But now we know better as we will see in the last verses of Romans chapter 6.

Romans 6:22-23

- But 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.
- For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.
- Maar nu, van de zonde vrijgemaakt en aan God dienstbaar gemaakt, hebt u uw vrucht, *die* tot heiliging *leidt*, met als einde eeuwig leven.
- Want het loon van de zonde is *de* dood, maar de genadegave van God is eeuwig leven, door Jezus Christus, onze Heere.

Here we see the great difference in the outcome of a life lived as a slave of sin and the life lived as a slave of God.

Satan wants us to live in a way that will utterly destroy us, while God wants to give us eternal life in Christ Jesus.

Why then would we not turn to God asking Him to have mercy on us sinners?

For the remaining part of the sermon we will look at several other Scriptures that show us that the result of salvation should be a changed life in Christ.

Romans 12:1

- I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.
- Ik roep u er dan toe op, broeders, door de ontfermingen van God, om uw lichamen *aan God* te wijden als een levend offer, heilig en voor God welbehaaglijk: *dat is* uw redelijke godsdienst.

In this verse Paul tells us again that, as disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ, we should live holy lives.

He confirms that in the next verse in this chapter, that we see on the next sheet.

Romans 12:2

- Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.
- En word niet aan deze wereld gelijkvormig, maar word veranderd door de vernieuwing van uw gezindheid om te *kunnen* onderscheiden wat de goede, welbehaglijke en volmaakte wil van God is.

In order to experience this change in our lives we need to be transformed by the renewal of our minds.

This is already one good reason to attend Bible studies.
God wants to use his Word to bring about the renewal of our mind.

In the next verses from Ezekiel we see how God will accomplish that.

Ezekiel 36:26-27

- And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.
- Dan zal Ik u een nieuw hart geven en een nieuwe geest in uw binnenste geven. Ik zal het hart van steen uit uw lichaam wegnemen en u een hart van vlees geven. Ik zal Mijn Geest in uw binnenste geven. Ik zal maken dat u in Mijn verordeningen wandelt en *dat* u Mijn bepalingen in acht neemt en ze houdt.

The verses in 2 Corinthians 5:17-19 tell us that those, who are in Christ Jesus, are a new creation. And verse 19 clearly points out that this is something that is done by God.

As such it confirms these verses from Ezekiel.

Our old heart and our old spirit were so totally perverted by sin that God doesn't even bother to repair them.

He actually gives us a new heart and a new spirit. By doing so He indeed makes us a new creation in Christ Jesus.

Let's look at a number of verses from Colossians 3 where Paul teaches us a number of practical applications of these things.

Colossians 3:1-4

- If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.
- Als u nu met Christus opgewekt bent, zoek *dan* de dingen die boven zijn, waar Christus is, Die aan de rechter*hand* van God zit. Bedenk de dingen die boven zijn *en* niet die op de aarde zijn, want u bent gestorven en uw leven is met Christus verborgen in God. Wanneer Christus geopenbaard zal worden, Die ons leven is, dan zult ook u met Hem geopenbaard worden in heerlijkheid.

Remember what Christ said in Matthew 6:33

But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

God knows what we need in and for our life here on earth and He has promised to give us those things as we faithfully follow Him. He may not give us all we want, but He will give us what we truly need.

Let's continue in this chapter.

Colossians 3:5-7

- Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. On account of these the wrath of God is coming. In these you too once walked, when you were living in them.
- Dood dan uw leden die op de aarde zijn: ontucht, onreinheid, hartstocht, kwade begeerte, en de hebzucht, die afgoderij is. Door deze dingen komt de toorn van God over de ongehoorzamen. In deze dingen hebt ook u voorheen gewandeld, toen u in die dingen leefde.

After his introduction Paul now starts to talk about various things we need to get rid of in our lives as disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And he continues with that in the next verses.

Colossians 3:8-10

- But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth. Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator.
- Maar nu, legt ook u dit alles af, *namelijk* toorn, woede, slechtheid, laster, *en* schandelijke taal uit uw mond. Lieg niet tegen elkaar, aangezien u de oude mens met zijn daden uitgetrokken hebt, en de nieuwe *mens* aangetrokken hebt, die vernieuwd wordt tot kennis, overeenkomstig het beeld van Hem Die hem geschapen heeft.

The reason that Paul gives for getting rid of all those things is the fact that, as disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ, we have put off the old self. That old self has died with Christ and was buried with Him.

And then we were raised into a newness of life, as a new creation in Christ Jesus.

So, our conduct should be in line with these facts.

Therefore Paul continues to give examples of the things we should develop as the new creatures we are in Christ.

Colossians 3:12-13

- Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.
- Kleedt u zich dan, als uitverkorenen van God, heiligen en geliefden, met innige gevoelens van ontferming, vriendelijkheid, nederigheid, zachtmoedigheid, geduld. Verdraag elkaar en vergeef de een de ander, als iemand tegen iemand *anders* een klacht heeft; zoals ook Christus u vergeven heeft, zo *moet* ook u *doen*.

I do not have to say too much about these things, I believe these verses speak for themselves.

And Paul continues about these things in the next verses.

Colossians 3:14-15

- And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful.
- En *kleedt u zich* boven alles met de liefde, die de band van de volmaaktheid is. En laat de vrede van God heersen in uw harten, waartoe u ook in één lichaam geroepen bent; en wees dankbaar.

There are two very important things in these verses, that we really need to remember:

- Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts;
- We are all called into one body, the Body of Christ.

We need to depend on Christ to experience His peace under all circumstances. This is not always easy, but it is very necessary.

And we need to keep in mind that, as disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ, we are all members of one body, the Body of Christ.

Let's look at another very important thing.

Colossians 3:16

- Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God.
- Laat het woord van Christus in rijke mate in u wonen, in alle wijsheid; onderwijs elkaar en wijs elkaar terecht, met psalmen, lofzangen en geestelijke liederen. Zing voor de Heere met dank in uw hart.

This is another reason why we need to spend quality time in the Word of God.

We all are to be involved in building up one another, and one of the ways to do that is to study the Word of God together.

When, in September, I was coming to the house of Joseph on Wednesday evenings, I enjoyed the Bible study also myself, even though his children were sometimes asking questions I could not answer just like that. It meant that I had to think and sometimes rethink things in order to know how to answer them. And that helped me again to not just take things for granted.

Let's go to the last sheet.

Colossians 3:17 / 1 Corinthians 10:31

- And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.
- En alles wat u doet met woorden of met daden, doe dat alles in de Naam van de Heere Jezus, terwijl u God en de Vader dankt door Hem.
- So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.
- Of u dus eet of drinkt of iets *anders* doet, doe alles tot eer van God.

Let this be our ultimate motivation for the things we do:

- Giving thanks to God the Father through the Lord Jesus Christ;
- Doing everything we do unto the glory of God.

Shall we pray?