

# ROMANS (6:14-18)

## *Emancipated from Sin*

PART 22 – JANUARY 2, 2005

### TSUNAMI RELIEF FUND

The Tsunami devastation on the shores of the Indian Ocean (in South/Southeast Asia) is incomprehensible. Have you seen this before/after satellite photo of Banda Aceh (*Bonda Ah-Chee*) on the Indonesian coast? We're receiving contributions today, to give to "World Relief" (an extension of the \*N.A.E.) which our church belongs to.

- They'll be working through Christian churches in Indonesia, Thailand, Myanmar, India, Sri Lanka, and the Maldives.

### TSUNAMI OF SIN

I want to use this tsunami event as an analogy for our study in Romans (6:14-18) today. Let's say you're in a boat rescuing people from this devastating flood. Could you imagine the one you're trying to rescue saying:

- No thank you, there's no flood ... I'm really dry.
- No thank you, I take pleasure in treading water.
- No thank you, I am certainly not worth rescuing.

No one in their right mind would respond like this; and yet these are some of the ways we react to the Lord (as believers) even while swamped in sin.

For sin shall not be your master, because you are not under law, but under grace. What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means! Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to someone to obey him as slaves, you are slaves to the one whom you obey – whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness? But thanks be to God that, though you used to be slaves to sin, you wholeheartedly obeyed the form of teaching to which you were entrusted. You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness. – Romans 6:14-18 NIV

Q: Do you know what really strikes me about this passage?

A: Nowhere in it does Paul suggest that a person might *not* be a slave to *something*.

He's simply imploring his readers to change their "ownership" from one master to another.

## OUT FROM UNDER

Self-rule isn't an option, it's a delusion. It's like saying, "I'm not drowning. I'm okay. I'm in control." It reminds of Jesus when he said that no one can serve two masters ... we must choose.

For sin shall not be your master, because you are not under law, but under grace.  
- Romans 6:14 NIV

Q: What does it mean to be "under law" versus "under grace"?

Paul is summing up what he's been teaching so far:

- Under Law: my righteousness comes from keeping laws

God approves of me because I read my Bible, and I go to church, and I pray, and I donate to Tsunami victims ... and ... and ... I read my Bible ...

If I don't *come out from under* this philosophy, any and every sin I commit is capable of overwhelming/dominating me, because it threatens to separate me from God's love and acceptance.

- Under Grace: my righteousness comes from receiving a gift

Therefore, when we're "under grace," nothing (not even our own sins) can separate us from the love and acceptance of the Lord.

God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons. - Galatians 4:4-5 NIV

Jesus was "under the law" to do for us what we could never do for ourselves. He kept and fulfilled the law perfectly. And now the Lord offers to freely credit the perfect law-keeping righteousness of Christ to our "accounts". So, when Paul says that "Sin shall not be your master" it's not a command ... it's a *promise* and a *pledge*!

## A NEW LOYALTY

Now, Paul addresses believers who think that this "gift of righteousness" is a license to sin without penalty.

What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means! - Romans 6:15 NIV

You see, the grand lie of temptation is that the transgression will serve the perpetrator. But if I play this game, I won't rule sin ... sin will rule *me*; because sin is a master.

Q: Can you name *one* sin that *benefits* the sinner?

- The sinner will *always* serve the sin

Sin always takes me farther than I want to go, keeps me longer than I want to stay; and costs me more than I want to pay. And having an attitude that grace gives you a license to sin makes your deliverance from its power *impossible*. That attitude *allows* sin to remain as the master and the sinner as the slave.

Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to someone to obey him as slaves, you are slaves to the one whom you obey – whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness? But thanks be to God that, though you used to be slaves to sin, you wholeheartedly obeyed the form of teaching to which you were entrusted. – Romans 6:16-17 NIV

Paul's bottom line here is quite simple: we have a new master and therefore a new loyalty. And God expects sincerity.

- If you don't *want* victory, don't *expect* victory

There's only one master whose enslavement actually *liberates*. To the degree that we hold back from total commitment to Christ, we allow ourselves to remain enslaved to self-destructive sin.

Q: So, how does receiving righteousness through Christ (being "under grace") *guarantee* that sin won't dominate us?

You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness. – Romans 6:18 NIV

Being fully committed to Christ ("enslaved" to righteousness) actually sets us free in some way from the domination of sin.

## **FREE AT LAST**

Q: So, what exactly is it that grace sets us free *from*?

Remember the analogy of the people who refused to be rescued? The first one said: "There's no flood ... I'm not even wet."

1. Grace sets us free from sin's delusion

Our culture largely believes that virginity before marriage is shameful; and that self-indulgence can never be overdone.

But, as we comprehend God's unconditional love and care and concern, we begin to see ourselves and others through his eyes. And grace begins to lift the fog, and discernment develops: Promiscuity *punishes*, but purity rewards! selfishness *restrains*, but selflessness liberates!

And this leads right into the next phase of freedom. This was the person who said: "I like treading water. This is fun!"

## 2. Grace sets us free from sin's desire

Sin has warped many to the incredible degree that even when they see their sin as destructive they refuse to give it up. But grace draws me to the one who treasures me most. And as I begin to treasure him ... sin becomes more and more unattractive.

The Christian life is a triumph of desire, not willpower:

- It's more than choice, we must cherish.
- It's more than logic, we must truly love.
- It's more than decision, we must delight in our Lord.

But, freedom from desire isn't the same as freedom from temptation.

Q: How many times have you *desired* to drive past Krispy Kreme? And then it "sang out its demonic siren's song!"

The third phase of freedom is the most incredible. This was the person who said: "I'm not worth rescuing."

## 3. Grace sets us free from sin's despair

Sin deludes people into thinking that wrong is right. Then it lures them into doing that which is shameful. Then it shames them for doing what it lured 'em into.

Q: Do you know why?

A: Because when we're filled with self-disgust, self-remorse, self-pity, and self-loathing, we'll do just about anything to numb, escape, or distract ourselves from it. And sin is right there to offer the means ... of enslavement.

But because of God's grace: My value is not derived from my performance! I was loved as a sinner, before I loved God! I am forgiven and cleansed when I fall down! There are times when I'm rightly ashamed of my *behavior*, but because of grace, I *never* have to be ashamed of myself.

Grace breaks the back of guilt and shame and despair ... and sets me free from sin!