

Redemption in Romans Lesson 7 3Q 2010

Victory Over Sin

Thoughts regarding the title?

What is your belief about what this means?

Is it possible to have victory over sin? In this life? What would that look like? What does it entail?

When the Scripture says that “you shall call his name Immanuel for he shall save his people from their sin” what does that mean?

Should we expect victory over sin in this life?

Grace can thrive only in the heart that is being constantly prepared for the precious seeds of truth. The thorns of sin will grow in any soil; they need no cultivation; but grace must be carefully cultivated. The briars and thorns are always ready to spring up, and the work of purification must advance continually. If the heart is not kept under the control of God, if the Holy Spirit does not work unceasingly to refine and ennoble the character, the old habits will reveal themselves in the life. Men may profess to believe the gospel; but unless they are sanctified by the gospel their profession is of no avail. **If they do not gain the victory over sin, then sin is gaining the victory over them.** The thorns that have been cut off but not uprooted grow apace, until the soul is overspread with them. {COL 50.4}

Christ specified the things that are dangerous to the soul. As recorded by Mark He mentions **the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things.** Luke specifies the cares, riches, and pleasures of this life. These are what choke the word, the growing spiritual seed. The soul ceases to draw nourishment from Christ, and spirituality dies out of the heart. {COL 51.1}

Thoughts? Can we experience victory? How?

Christ promised that the Holy Spirit should abide with those who wrestle for victory over sin, to demonstrate the power of divine might by endowing the human agent with supernatural strength and instructing the ignorant in the mysteries of the kingdom of God. . . . {AG 212.5}

When one is fully emptied of self, when every false god is cast out of the soul, the vacuum is filled by the inflowing of the Spirit of Christ. Such a one has the faith that purifies the soul from defilement. He is conformed to the Spirit, and he minds the things of the Spirit. He has no confidence in self. Christ is all and in all. {AG 212.6}

What does it mean to have every false god cast out?

Christ gave his life that all who would might be freed from sin, and reinstated in the favor of the Creator. It was the anticipation of the redeemed, holy universe that prompted Christ to make this great sacrifice. Are we followers of God as dear children? or are we servants of the prince of darkness? Are we worshipers of Jehovah, or of Baal? of the living God, or of idols? **No outward shrines may be visible, there may be no image for the eye to rest upon; yet we may be practising idolatry. It is as easy to make an idol of cherished ideas or objects as to fashion gods of wood or stone. Thousands have a false conception of God and his attributes. They are as verily serving a false god as were the servants of Baal.** God is a God of truth. Justice and mercy are the attributes of his throne. He is a God of love, of pity, and tender compassion. Thus he is represented in his Son, our Saviour. He is a God of patience and long-suffering. If such is the being whom we adore, and whose character we are seeking to imitate, we are worshiping the true God. {RH, December 3, 1908 par. 2}

Could a person be a Christian, a baptized member of the church and not experience victory over sin because they continue to worship a false god in concept and idea?

How do we understand, “Be perfect as your father in heaven is perfect”? Is this an impossibility? Would God direct us to do something impossible to achieve?

Is it based on behavior or something else?

“You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’⁴⁴ But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,⁴⁵ that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.⁴⁶ If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that?⁴⁷ And if you greet only your brothers, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that?⁴⁸ Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect. Matt 5:43-48

What type of perfection is this? Would this be victory over sin?

Is it a perfect attitude of love and desire to grow, develop, advance – a humble, cooperative attitude? Is it living like Micah wrote?

He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God. Micah 6:8

This week I thought we might do something a little different than just examine what the study guide says. This week’s lesson is focused on Romans chapter six. Let’s examine Romans six ourselves and see what we discover. If we have time we can then examine some points from the lesson guide.

Read Romans 6:1-4

What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? ² By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? ³ Or don’t you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? ⁴ We

were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.

Thoughts? What does this passage mean to you? How would you explain it?

What does it mean to die to sin? How does baptism play a role? Is sin something active, something within, or is sin historical, records? If sin is recorded acts how do we die to it?

So what is sin? Is it a commodity?

I asked over 350 Christian HS students to answer the question, on a 3x5 card, "what is sin" here are some of their answers:

- An act against what God stands for
- It is something that separates us from God
- To do something that is morally wrong
- Anything evil or unjust
- Something that brings us down
- The absence of anything good/anything not of God
- Doing anything you know in your gut is wrong
- Bad stuff
- A bad thing that Satan discovered and brought upon us
- The cause of all pain and suffering
- When you do something you feel guilty about
- Anything that makes God unhappy
- Something to be forgiven
- Whatever you do wrong and you don't even care what you did

And the following two answers were submitted by more than ten percent of the students:

- Sin is not following the Ten Commandments
- Sin is going against the will of God

These answers break down into two general categories:

- (1) sin is bad behavior, an act of disobedience, something we do wrong; or,
- (2) sin is some evil commodity, entity, element, some “thing” or some “stuff” that separates us from God or makes us unhappy.

Three students saw sin differently. Their answers pierced a deeper level of truth. To them sin was something more than bad behavior and was certainly not a commodity that could be passed from one person to the next. These three saw sin as:

- The absence of love
- The opposite of God’s character – sin is being selfish
- Focusing on self. It all started with Satan and how he wanted to be greater than God. This is the root of all evil.

They saw sin as a state of being, a defect in character, a deviation from God’s heart of love.

How do you answer the question, “What is sin?” Does our answer to what is sin impact how we understand Romans?

Satan's rebellion **was to be a lesson to the universe** through all coming ages--a perpetual **testimony to the nature of sin** and its terrible results. The working out of Satan's rule, its effects upon both men and angels, would show what must be the fruit of setting aside the divine authority. It would testify that with the existence of God's government is bound up the well-being of all the creatures He has made. **Thus the history of this terrible experiment of rebellion was to be a perpetual safeguard to all holy beings**, to prevent them from being deceived as to the nature of transgression, to save them from committing sin, and suffering its penalty. {PP 42.4}

Has the nature of sin been a question in the Great Controversy? Satan’s allegation is that sin is legal, breaking rules, God’s position is that sin is a condition, a state of being out of harmony with His law of love – a principle at war with love – selfishness.

Here is my paraphrase of Romans 6:1-4:

Romans 6:1 What, then, should we say about this amazing healing plan? Should we spread the infection of distrust and selfishness, cause more devastation and destruction so that the power of God's healing solution may be more fully displayed? ² Absolutely not! We have taken the antidote, and the infection of distrust and selfishness has been purged from our hearts and minds; how then, can we choose to be reinfected with distrust of God and practice selfish methods again? ³ Or don't you realize that all of us who were immersed into union with Christ Jesus were immersed into selflessness and have died to self-centeredness? ⁴ We symbolically demonstrate we have joined him in dying to self by being buried in water, in order that just as Jesus arose from the dead displaying the life giving glory of the Father, we too live a new life displaying God's glorious character in our lives.

Thoughts?

Read Romans 6:5-7:

If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection. ⁶ For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin— ⁷ because anyone who has died has been freed from sin.

Thoughts? How do you understand this? How would you explain it to another?

What does it mean to do away with the body of sin? Is it talking about our physical tissue, our actual human body? Is it talking about our inherited condition of selfishness?

Here is my paraphrase:

^{6:5} If we have joined him in dying to self, we will absolutely join him in his resurrection and new life! ⁶ For we know that when our old selfish hearts and fear ridden minds trust God and surrenders to be crucified with Christ, the infection of selfishness is purged, and our hearts are no longer controlled by Satanic principles – ⁷ because anyone who dies to selfishness is free from Satan’s methods, principles and control.

Thoughts?

Read verses 8-10:

⁸ Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. ⁹ For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him. ¹⁰ The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God.

How would you explain these verses? What does it mean the death He died He died to sin? What is sin? How did Christ die to it? Why does death no longer have mastery over Him?

Here is my paraphrase:

^{6:8} Now if we join Christ in dying to self, we are confident we will live with him forever. ⁹ Because Christ was raised from the dead and cannot die again; he has secured the remedy and has revealed the truth, and death cannot touch him again. ¹⁰ The death he died, he died once destroying Satan’s lies, the infection of fear and selfishness and restoring love and trust; therefore, the life he lives, he lives to glorify God.

Thoughts?

Read verses 11-14:

In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus. ¹² Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. ¹³ Do not offer the parts

of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness. ¹⁴ For sin shall not be your master, because you are not under law, but under grace.

How would you explain this? What does it mean do not let sin reign in your mortal body? What would it mean to offer your body to sin? What about offering your body to God? How do we experience a life where sin is not our master?

Here is my paraphrase:

^{6:11} In the same way recognize you are dead to the ways of Satan and alive to the ways of God as revealed in Christ Jesus. ¹² Therefore do not indulge the selfish desires and participate in destructive activities. ¹³ Do not use your physical body for evil, to indulge selfishness, but rather offer your entire being to God – revealing that Satan’s principles of death have been replaced by God’s principles of life. So offer your entire self to God doing what is right and healthy because it is right and healthy. ¹⁴ For distrust, fear and selfishness will no longer be what controls you, because you are no longer under the law’s terminal diagnosis, but have partaken of God’s gracious remedy and are under his healing care.

Thoughts?

Read verses 15-18:

What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means! ¹⁶ 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? ¹⁷ 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. ¹⁸ You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness.

Thoughts? What does it mean sin leads to death? Does it mean God must inflict death for sin? What about obedience which leads to righteousness?

What does it mean to be set free from sin? To be slaves of righteousness?

My paraphrase:

6:15 What then? Shall we indulge selfish desires because God has provided a gracious cure for our terminal condition? Absolutely not! ¹⁶ Don't you realize that when you gratify the selfish desires, you are slowly transformed and become more and more selfish destroying the very faculties that recognize and respond to God's healing truth – thus over time you lose your freedom to choose and become a slave to selfishness and lust, which leads only to self-destruction and death? Conversely if you accept God's gracious remedy and choose his methods you are transformed and become Christlike in character. ¹⁷ Thanks be to God, that even though you used to be slaves to selfishness, you wholeheartedly accepted the truth revealed by Jesus, trusted God and practice his methods of love, truth and freedom, which you were taught. ¹⁸ Therefore, you have been freed from distrust, fear and selfishness and have been bonded to love, truth and liberty, doing what is right because it is right.

Thoughts?

Read verses 19-23:

I put this in human terms because you are weak in your natural selves. Just as you used to offer the parts of your body in slavery to impurity and to ever-increasing wickedness, so now offer them in slavery to righteousness leading to holiness. ²⁰ When you were slaves to sin, you were free from the control of righteousness. ²¹ What benefit did you reap at that time from the things you are now ashamed of? Those things result

in death! ²² But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves to God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life. ²³ For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

What does this mean? How would you explain it?

My paraphrase:

6:19 I state this as simply as possible, using human terms because it is easier to understand and learn that way. Just as you used to choose to use your bodies in lewd, vile and debasing ways, so now choose to use your bodies doing what is right, reasonable and healthy, which leads to purity and holiness. ²⁰ When you slavishly indulged the selfish desires you avoided what was healthy, right and good. ²¹ But what good did that do you? It only caused pain, heartache and ultimately death. ²² But now you have accepted the truth about God, been restored to trust and been set free from fear and selfishness. You are wholeheartedly committed to God and receive complete recreation of heart and mind resulting in eternal life. ²³ For the infection of selfishness leads only to death, but the gift of God is eternal life through the healing remedy brought by Jesus Christ our Lord.

Thoughts?

How do we have victory over sin? By surrendering self and trusting God with our lives, wants, future and outcomes. By choosing His methods and allowing Him to determine how things turn out. By saying no to selfish desires and yes to what is right and healthy.

SABBATH

Read fourth and fifth paragraph, "In the Bible..." thoughts? Is this clear to you? How do you explain sanctification? How do you explain being sanctified? How is sanctification a work of a lifetime?

Does that mean the older get greater opportunity? Did the antediluvians have an advantage?

Is eating a work of a lifetime? Why? Is this what “sanctification is a work of a lifetime” means? Are we to be daily set apart, dedicated to God? Do we err if we focus on some level of achievement in sanctification rather than focusing on the daily surrender and commitment of oneself to God?

Can one be justified without being sanctified? Can one be sanctified without being justified? What is the benefit of such distinctions?

SUNDAY

Read first paragraph, “Paul follows...” Thoughts? Is the lesson stating that a justified person has died to sin? I think so and I agree with that, but wouldn’t that mean something has changed in the believer? If a person has died to sin hasn’t a change occurred in them? Is such a change more than a “claim” or “declaration”? Yes, justification is putting the sinner right with God again, which means the sinner, in heart, has died to sin.

MONDAY

Read first paragraph, “The word...” thoughts? What is sin? After our discussion today, how do you answer?

Read third paragraph, “The Greek...” thoughts? Have you ever heard the idea that we overcome by faith and claiming promises? What does that mean? I have many patients say they pray every day, they claim promises but....

Thoughts?

TUESDAY

Read last paragraph, “We should...” Thoughts? What does it mean the condemnation the law inevitably brings? Is it the law that condemns us or our own condition of being out of harmony with the

law, while the law merely diagnoses, exposes, or allows us to see what our condition really is? Should we blame the law for our condemnation?

WEDNESDAY

Read last paragraph, “Notice how...” thoughts?

What does it mean to obey? A humble willingness to listen and follow, an openness to truth, a willingness to be shown the error of your ways, accept redirection and follow the new light.

Wow, how many Sabbath keepers are not obeying?

What is the importance of doctrine? How does doctrine, even correct doctrine become a stumbling block?

Sabbath, correct day of week taught, but taught as an arbitrary test suddenly misrepresents God and obstructs the truth about Him!

THURSDAY

Read third paragraph, “Notice too...” thoughts? Did the paragraph make it clear to you? That free from dominion means no longer dominated? How would you explain it?

FRIDAY

Read first paragraph? Do you believe this? Why or why not?

Read second paragraph, “A profession..” why is it not harmless to engage in pleasure and amusements?

As the Supreme Ruler of the universe, **God has ordained laws for the government not only of all living beings, but of all the operations of nature.** Everything, whether great or small, animate or inanimate, is under fixed laws which cannot be disregarded. **There are no exceptions to this rule; for**

nothing that the divine hand has made has been forgotten by the divine mind. But while everything in nature is governed by natural law, man alone, as an intelligent being, capable of understanding its of his creation, God has given a conscience to realize the sacred claims of the divine law, and **a heart capable of loving it as holy, just, and good**; and of man prompt and perfect obedience is required. Yet God does not compel him to obey; requirements, is amenable to moral law. To man alone, the crowning work he is left a free moral agent. {ST, April 15, 1886 par. 2}

Thoughts?