

Choices
Romans 6:1-14, Part 4
#18 in a Series on Paul's Letter to the Romans
Faith Community Church – February 19, 2006

***Objective:** to help the congregation understand the responsibility we have in relation to sin, and to commit to making the appropriate daily choices that lead to sanctification.*

Introduction – Please turn in your Bibles to Romans 6.

1. This is the fourth Sunday we will look at this same passage. Because what Paul says is so significant, I want to make sure we understand clearly what he is saying – and what he is not saying.
2. There are a number of concerns that I have had as I have been preparing to talk to you each week:
 - a. Concern that you might not think that the life Paul talks about is really possible this side of heaven. I tried to touch on that a little two weeks ago. Let me assure you that it is. It is not easy, but it is possible for us to live in a way in which we see the impact of sin progressively reduced in our lives.
 - b. Concern that you might not be interested. What I mean is that while you may profess to be a Christian, you have little or no interest in pursuing a distinctively Christ-following way of life. If that is true, I have been praying for you. You might want to examine your heart to see if your faith is real.
 - c. Concern that because we're talking about some things that are mystical and supernatural, that you would relegate this at best to religious mumbo-jumbo, or at worst view it as plain-old weird. It will come off that way if you believe that the only reality is that which you can perceive with your five senses. But the Bible makes it plain that we are spiritual beings, and that the spiritual dimension of life is very real.
3. Having said that, I want to very briefly re-trace what we've covered so far over the last several weeks, and then look at the part of the passage we have not yet been able to give attention to – verses 12-14.
4. Let me locate Paul's discussion in chapter 6:1-14 in the overall picture of Romans (visual).
5. What we should be expecting from Romans 6-8 is the answer to the question "What do I need to know and do in order to be like Jesus?" And that is the natural desire of the person who understands what God has done for them in Christ.

Let me summarize what Paul has said so far in verses 1-11:

1. *we have been united with Christ in his death and resurrection*
2. *this union is illustrated in our baptism, which should be a reminder of what took place in us*
3. *this union with Christ means*

- a. *that the power of sin has been broken in our lives and that*
- b. *we have been given the ability to live in a way that pleases God.*

On the Path to Being Like Jesus

As a result of this, what are we supposed to do? Paul presents us with two choices we need to make:

1. Choice #1: Accept the reality of what Christ has accomplished for us and in us (6:11).
 - a. We are dead to sin.
 - i. What Paul does not say:
 1. that sin as a force within me is dead. Sin is a force in our lives, though its power has been broken.
 2. that we are now without sin.¹
 - ii. What Paul does say is that we are (meaning at this point and for the rest of our lives) released from the inevitable hold of sin on our lives. This is also true because . . .
 - b. We are alive to God. We are able to pursue a life that pleases God because we have the life of God in us (2 Corinthians 5:16).

So what do we do with this? Where does this new way of thinking about ourselves lead us?

2. Choice #2: Don't let sin reign in your life (6:12-14).
 - a. Sin reigns: We are told not to let sin reign because it does and it will. The power of sin in human lives is never a comfortable minor player. Sin wants control. It enslaves, it rules, it dominates.
 - b. We deny sin the opportunity to reign by a choice of who to serve.
 - i. The choice is to contrasted in verse 13.
 - ii. How does this translate to day-to-day life? How does it work?
 1. It means we look at life differently than we are probably used to looking at it. Seeing it not from the standpoint of what we can do to please ourselves, but how we might best serve God.
 2. It means we live life more deliberately (if you have to remind yourself in the mirror, then do it!) We evaluate our choices with the commitment to being honor to God (even if no one else is looking) in the decisions we make. (Is there something wrong with thinking a bit more deeply before we act?)

¹ Adapted from: Boice. Romans Vol 2, page 677.

Conclusion

1. So this is going to make a difference? Yes it is. Not all at once, of course, but over time we get better at this business of following Christ. That's why Paul tells Timothy (1 Tim. 4:7), "*Train* yourself for godliness." He also tells him that Scripture, which reveals what we should be doing, is for "*training* in righteousness" (2 Tim. 3:17).
2. We live like Mr. Magoo. Remember him? The little man with horrible vision who stumbled through life oblivious to most of what was going on. This passage corrects Magoo tendencies. But you have to want to open your eyes. If you really understand what God has done for you in Christ, that should be a natural thing. So let's look for ways to purposefully turn away from sin and serve God.