

Trinity 4. 2 July 2023. Sermon. Romans 6:12-end. Revd David Treharne

Gracious Father, by the obedience of Jesus you brought salvation to our wayward world: draw us into harmony with your will, that we may find all things restored in him, our Saviour Jesus Christ.

Romans 6:12-end

¹² Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. ¹³ Do not offer any part of yourself to sin as an instrument of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer every part of yourself to him as an instrument of righteousness. ¹⁴ For sin shall no longer be your master, because you are not under the law, but under grace.

Slaves to Righteousness

¹⁵ What then? Shall we sin because we are not under the law but under grace? By no means! ¹⁶ Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to someone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one 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 have come to obey from your heart the pattern of teaching that has now claimed your allegiance. ¹⁸ You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness.

¹⁹ I am using an example from everyday life because of your human limitations. Just as you used to offer yourselves as slaves to impurity and to ever-increasing wickedness, so now offer yourselves as slaves 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 of 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 ^[b] Christ Jesus our Lord.

Sermon. Romans 6. Attached to SIN or attached to Christ?

It's easy to skim through our bibles readings day by day and week by week and year by year and miss some startling words.

The power of Paul's words in Romans... particularly chapter 6

Last week in Romans 6:9. "Death no longer has power over him" Death no longer has power or mastery; death no longer rules.

Of course, death has no power over Jesus. HE has already died and come back to life. Death is robbed of its power. But the power of Jesus' resurrection did more than make Jesus able to pass through walls and ascend into heaven. Jesus wasn't/isn't the only one whose life has been changed. BY HIS death and resurrection... he has destroyed the power of sin and death for humanity... he died to sin once and for all (Romans 6:10).

Jesus wasn't the only one over whom sin and death does no longer reigns. All who have united themselves with Christ Jesus in his death and resurrection share in his victory over sin and death. In Christ we too can access all the blessings of his risen life. Our baptism is the gateway and the sign for that.

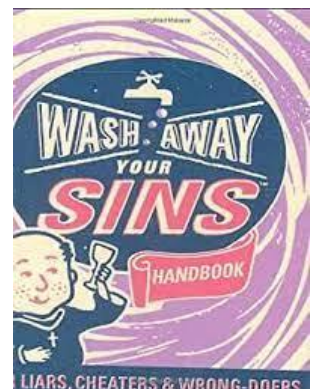
Died. Risen!!! ALLELUIA!!! Romans 6:9. Death no longer has power over him... and no longer has power over us. How attached to Jesus' death and resurrection do you feel?

May we never forget the power of what Christ has done for us.

The other day I found this wash away your sins conversion kit.

I thought it can gone in the bin!

These miraculous new products are "proven" to wash away sin after sin, reducing guilt by 98.9 percent or more! Industrial strength, they're effective



enough for most liars, cheaters, and wrongdoers. Includes one bar of Wash Away Your Sins soap, to make amends while cleansing, and three Easter-lily scented towelettes for sinners on the go.

It's a rather amusing reminder that we can't deal with our own sin. You can try the kit if you like but we can't deal with sin and death and its effects in our strength and by our own efforts.

It is Christ Jesus who saves us

It is Christ Jesus who takes away our sin

It is Christ Jesus who has opened the way to new life.

It is Christ, not our own efforts and our own strength that washes us and gives us the grace, strength and means... his very own life to live differently.

Now our Christian baptism... and our sharing in Christ's death and resurrection doesn't mean that we can walk through walls as Jesus did AND it certainly doesn't guarantee us sinless perfection... you may have noticed that!

BUT

It does release us from the permanence of sin and death. It does release us from its seemingly unbreakable hold.

We are no longer hopelessly chained to sin and its effects... we have access to grace in and with Christ which enables us to say no to temptation and receive forgiveness and freedom from guilt when we yield to temptation.

Death is now longer the defining tragic final end to our lives... but the doorway to new, glorious beginnings.

Slavemaster...

Paul uses a slave analogy in Romans 6 to help us understand a little more of what's going on. When a slave passes into the ownership of a new master... the previous master's authority over that slave comes to an end.

So Paul is saying that once upon a time... sometime previously... you were slaves of sin. Sin was your slavemaster and you were forced to do all the polluted and perverted things that sin ordered and demanded of you to do... and you had no power to say "NO." Sin controlled your actions and your life.

BUT now... you have passed from being under the slavemaster and in the service of sin and are now in the service of God... your business is now to do what pleases God, not what your previous master sin dictated.

It's a powerful analogy to help us comprehend the new life in Christ Jesus.

In addition, there is a big difference between the kinds of things you will do as servants of the Lord and the kinds of things you used to do as servants of sin.

What's more, service under the Lord God, under grace, is a liberating experience and is a choice! We are free to serve the Lord.

Sin paid its servants a wage... death.

God does not pay his servants wages. He gives something far better! He unites himself to his servants and gives the free gift of eternal life!

But this is more than just analogy for our imagination! This death to sin and being alive through being united to Christ has and is proved a reality for so many people.

Through these verses of Scripture Paul really gives a focus on how we live the newness of life (Romans 6:4) **BUT** he also highlights the challenges we face in this post baptism, pre physical death period of our lives. He recognises that the power of sin is still active in the world of believers... he expresses it about his own life... and he recognises the quite bizarre reality that despite all that Christ has done and the power of God in our lives... we find ourselves entertaining a return to be under the mastery of our old master... sin.

Again you may have noticed!

We have to confront with honesty the real peril of falling back into the submission and slavery of sin that will result in us marring our humanity... using our freedom – with freedom comes choice... to choose to return to allowing sin to have dominance over us and opening ourselves up to the wages of this master... death.

Like the Israelites. Shall we go back to the way it was?
Do we really want to go back to Egypt and live under Pharaoh's cruel tyranny.

12 Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. 13 Do not offer any part of yourself to sin as an instrument of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer every part of yourself to him as an instrument of righteousness. 14 For sin shall no longer be your master, because you are not under the law, but under grace.

Having been brought from slavery to freedom and having been welcomed as not only servants of Christ... but welcomed into the family of God.... There is still a choice... who we serve, who is our God, who/what reigns over us... and how we are going to live.

We could therefore ask... which slavery do we want...

- A. Slavery to sin that leads to impurity, ever increasing wickedness and death or
- B. Slavery to Christ that leads to righteousness, holiness, union with God and eternal life?

Or to put it another way, which freedom do we want...

- A. Freedom that chooses sin that leads to impurity, ever increasing wickedness and death or
- B. Freedom that chooses obedience to Christ that leads to righteousness, peace, wholeness, holiness and eternal life

God does not want our lives to be dominated by sin and death and evil.

As Max Lucado wrote... "God loves us just the way we are, but He refuses to leave us that way. He wants us to be just like Jesus.

He wants to release us more and more from the old master sin and incorporate us more and more... immerse us more and more into him.

There is a real call today to live differently... not in slavery to sin... and not using our freedom from sin in Christ to indulge in sin and live how on earth WE want to live. BUT in the extravagant love and power of God in Christ to be freely obedient to Jesus Christ and live on earth how he desires and enables us to live.

We shall read on in Romans in the coming weeks to see how God enables us to live this new life in the Spirit rather than in the old life of sin.