

What are we to do with our knowledge of these identification and positional truths? Are they academic curiosities for theological debate? No, they point to action, positive action on the part of every hearing believer. Actions based upon faith. Are we surprised our salvation from the power of sin is based upon the same principle as our salvation from the penalty of sin? FAITH! Paul predicts this at the beginning of the letter.

Romans 1:17 *For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.*

[This is wholly consistent with God's ways with Man since the beginning. And understandably so, for faith itself is but a human sized version of God's Omniscience and Omnipotence. What He declares to be becomes so and is so. For instance "Light: be!" (See Genesis 1:3, 2Corinthians 4:6.) God had perfect confidence and knowledge ["FAITH"] that His command would come to pass and it did. Faith in Himself. Similarly, when by faith we reckon His declared truth to be so, it becomes true for us. How like Him to institute a process for our deliverance from the power of sin in our lives that is consistent with His attributes. Our acts in faith parallel His. How sad that deluded men encourage one another to have faith in themselves, making gods out of themselves instead of submitting to God as their God.]

The term "Deliverance" is a word not commonly used in our everyday language. What does it mean? "Deliver" is common enough. A delivery service picks up a letter or package from one address and carries it to another address. So deliverance is simply taking us from one place to another spiritually. For instance a news article might read: "The police released the kidnaping victim from the hands of his abductors and delivered him back to his family. Christ was delivered to His executioners. So we are delivered from the power of sin. Having died with Christ, we are entitled to reckon ourselves as alive (resurrected) to God through Jesus Christ our Lord. For truly He is alive to God in resurrection Life. This being true, we are enjoined against permitting sin to reign in our mortal body. Our mortal bodies generate lusts, lust that lead to sin,

James 1:14 *But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. 15 then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.*

As lost sinners we thoughtlessly, or intentionally, yielded members of our bodies as instruments of sin. Paul has already told us of that. But now being justified by His blood we don't want to continue that practice.

Romans 3:10 *As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: 11 There is none that understandeth, there is*

*none that seeketh after God. 12 They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. 13 Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: 14 Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: 15 Their feet are swift to shed blood: 16 Destruction and misery are in their ways: 17 And the way of peace have they not known: 18 There is no fear of God before their eyes.)*

We are entitled to refuse to yield ourselves and our members (eyes, ears, hand, feet, tongue, etc.) to unrighteousness unto sin. The Greek verbs translated "yield" are fuller than many translations are able to give. The passage is better read:

*"never be yielding your members to sin or as instruments of unrighteousness >.."*

... But ourselves "be yielded" (as a definite past one time act) to God, or, "let yourselves have been yielded" (as a once accomplished act) to God. We are not to be repeatedly trying to yield ourselves again and again to God. And we are **never** to be yielding our members to sin but we are **once and for all** to have yielded ourselves to God. We clearly are to remain conscious of that as an accomplished act the rest of our lives. We are to be those who are alive unto God and our members, eyes, tongue, ears, hands, feet, etc. as instruments to God. Simple enough!

*"Be careful little eyes what you see! Etc."*

Note sin is not abolished in us, or removed from our bodies, but is annulled and cannot dominate us against the will of any who have once for all yielded his or her members to God. Sin shall have no dominion over us because we are not under the law but under grace. This is a hint looking ahead to chapter 7 where the Law (of Moses) is shown to be not only ineffectual to prevent us from sinning but as actually becomes a trigger for rebellion of our Adamic fallen natures.

Furthermore, if we are not under the Law but under grace, that fact does not free us to sin. Again, "far be the thought!" We are indeed no longer under God's code of forbidden acts (trespasses). But not being under the Law (of Moses or of any other religion) doesn't release us to go ahead and sin. On the contrary, now we are free from the bondage of sin and can make conscious choices and decisions that are not sinful. We are bond servants (slaves) to whoever we choose to yield ourselves to obey. **We** are in control. So if we yield ourselves to a master, either to sin or to obedience, that is our master. Sin, unto death or obedience, unto righteousness. Death or righteousness, which will it be? Our hearts (our innermost being, not simply our intellect) now engaged in that choice.

Sin leads to death as James tells us (above).

Now the Apostle interjects an encouraging word. He thanks God that the believers in Rome, upon hearing the doctrine Paul taught, chose to believe it and to obey it from the heart. We are to believe and act too.

Paul summarizes the contrast, apologizing for speaking in human terms, "after the manner of men." He seeks to make what he has been saying more understandable because of the infirmity (or weakness) of our flesh. I am saddled with the old me, the old self and with all of the scars from sinful experiences of my past. These hinder my freely entering into spiritual things of God. So Paul uses earthly, human illustrations to explain the truth he is giving us. simply, in down to earth terms Even then this passage is hard going for most of us.

(On the other hand, God in His grace has given us the Holy Spirit, Who reveals the profound things of God to us, if we allow Him to.

*1Corinthians 2:9 But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. 10 But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. 11 For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. 12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. 13 Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. 14 But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. 15 But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. 16 For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.)*

Being "free from sin" we became the servants of righteousness. Before that, being servants of sin we were "free from righteousness." No way could righteousness control or dominate us then. (We hear and see it all the time around us. "Sin is more fun," or "I want to go to heaven but I want to have some fun first." "In heaven there is no beer, that's why we drink it here.") Upon becoming a believer we change masters, transfer subjection to **sin** to subjection to **righteousness**. We also switch life styles. Switch from being servants unto

uncleanness and iniquity to being servants of righteousness. We thereby replace outcomes, that of iniquity for holiness and eternal life. Which will it be, dirty or clean? Misery or joy? Dead or alive? Self or God?

Being "free from sin" we have become the servants of God as well as servants of righteousness. The God of the Universe. The God of grace. Servants, not simply of righteousness but of God Himself. What a bargain. Not a cruel heartless taskmaster whose wages is death, but a loving Savior God to whom we are delighted to freely be enslaved. Enslaved to work and serve as willing, obedient, faithful servants, without wages, because of the gift already received:

#### THE GIFT OF GOD IS ETERNAL LIFE THROUGH JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD.

Summarizing :

All humans are servants either of **SIN** or of **RIGHTEOUSNESS**. We who are saved have died and risen with Christ. Therefore we have been released from the domination of Sin. We have been put under a new master, Righteousness. Sin pays wages. The final paycheck for sin is **DEATH**. On the other hand, there is no way to earn Eternal Life, neither through righteousness nor righteous works. It is a gift. The free gift of God given through Jesus Christ our Lord. We serve the Lord, not to earn, or to qualify, or to keep our salvation, but serve freely out of gratitude for what He has done and Who He is. (We will learn more of that service in chapter 12.)

Which outcome is better? NO BRAINER!

By Ron Canner, October 10, 2007

NOTE. Verse 23 is not, in this context, a gospel verse, though often quoted with that in view. It is not addressed to the lost. It is addressed to us, the saved. Nevertheless it carries a deep conviction and strong warning for the lost, which we were once. But it is speaking of deliverance of a believer from the power of sin. It makes us rejoice in God's saving gift, the FINISHED work of Christ. And to desire to lovingly subject ourselves to Him as our new Head and Master. Our service for Him is never finished, even after we have finally left Adam's sin nature behind when we go to heaven.

R. C.