**The Reign of Grace! (Part #2)**

**Romans 5:12-6:23**

**(Lesson #9)**

***12 Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned —  13 for sin indeed was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not counted where there is no law. 14 Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sinning was not like the transgression of Adam, who was a type of the one who was to come.***

**Vs 12 -** Here Paul is walking through the implications of the fall:

1. It was at the fall, when sin came into the world, through one man (Adam).
2. It was at the fall, where death came through (dia) or by sin
	1. We could say spiritual death immediately
	2. The process of physical death
3. Death spread (let that word and the picture it provides sink in). Death spread, from Adam, like a cancer, to all men… **Adam’s descendants have all sinned, thus proving they are sinners.**

**Sin is personified in these verses** and it is this **insidious**, **horrible**, **sinister power** that was given an opportunity through (Adam) and the resulting death spreads through all mankind, the whole human family.

**Vs 13 -** This is an absolute fact. Adam was created approximately 2,500 years before the law was given on Mt. Sinai. Adam’s sins and the penalty of death (spiritual death and ultimate physical death) continued to affect all humanity even before the appearance of the Mosaic law.

So, although people were sinning and death was the ultimate result of their sin. God had not yet, presented the invoice (law) which specifically outlined the charges. So, during the period from **Adam to Moses** **(about 2500 years),** God had not yet presented the **“bill”** in the form of the Mosaic Law.

During this time, people were sinning, and they received the penalty of their sin, but it would not be until the Mosaic law that a clear explanation of sin and the clear consequences of sin would be provided.

Paul has already proven that men and women have right and wrong built in their hearts, they have moral reasoning, and that they can sin without possessing the written law, and that they are guilty before God.

**Vs 14 –** This verse solidifies and further explains verse 13. YET, death reigned from Adam, to the giving of the law on Mt Sinai to Moses and the nation of Israel.

**Notice again the personification of death, it spread throughout the world, now death is presented as reigning (as if from its own horrible and horrific throne!)**

**APPLICATION:** Have you ever seen this picture before? This metaphor of death, reigning like a king over all human beings? No one was outside its kingdom; all were under its domain! Because of sin!

Beginning with Adam all the way to the giving of the Mosaic Law, death is reigning. **It is reigning over those who have sinned against natural revelation**, they have **sinned against conscience**, they **have sinned against moral reasoning (Rom 1-2)**.

It was reigning over those whose **sinning (missing the mark**) **were not like**, not as bad, not as horrible as the **transgression (violation of a clear command) like Adam.**

**Then Paul tells us something, that is a set-up for what he is building to. That Adam was a type of the one who was to come.** That Adam was a shadow of the one who was to come.

The Greek word is **τύπος** (tupos). It means an **impression**, something that **represents** something greater. Adam was a **prefiguring** of the one **who was to come who is greater**.

**Paul is beginning to outline how what Adam did affected the whole human race and in this way he prefigures Christ, because what Jesus did affects the whole human race.**

**Equally, so that I do not bury the lede, Paul will tell us how Adam was a type of Christ, but then in other ways where he was not.** So let’s keep following his logic.

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***15 But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if many died through one man’s trespass, much more have the grace of God and the free gift by the grace of that one man Jesus Christ abounded for many. 16 And the free gift is not like the result of that one man’s sin. For the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation, but the free gift following many trespasses brought justification. 17 For if, because of one man’s trespass, death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ.***

**Vs 15 -** But the **free gift** the **χάρισμα** (charisma) **is not like** the **trespass. Here is how what Adam did is NOT LIKE, what Christ did.**

In spite of similarities and Adam (in some ways) is a type of Christ, there are ways where they are **very different**.

**What does Paul mean?** At first glance it seems like they are the same. Adam sinned all men died. Christ died, so that all men could live. **I believe he is thinking about degrees:** One sin, many died, MUCH MORE the free giving of the grace of the one man, Jesus, that the love of God overflowed for the benefit of many.

**So, Paul is going to use many and all to compare and contrast the work of Christ.** HerePaul is using the word many **πολύς** (polus) pol-oos’ to set up a comparison. **Paul has been clear, in Adam all died.**

**If by one misstep, one transgression, one act of disobedience to the revealed will of God, humankind died in Adam.**

**MUCH MORE… A logical inference. It is certain, that God’s free gift of Christ’s sacrificial death has succeeded in abundantly bringing justification and redemption to many!**

**If God’s judgment can be certain because of Adam’s transgression. MUCH MORE can we be certain of God’s mercy the redemption in Christ Jesus.**

**Vs 16 -** Again, Adam is a type of Christ, but Paul wants to show how although similar, **there is another thing that is very different, let’s follow his logic.**

The free gift again Paul would say is different and he gives another reason**. One trespass (by Adam) brought condemnation (judgment in the negative sense).** The free gift, which came not simply to eradicate the nature of Adam’s one heinous trespass, **but it came following MANY TRESPASSES against God.** It spite of coming after MANY TRESPASSES it brings **JUSTIFICATION!**

**God did not simply erase Adam’s trespass, rather, God brought justification to human beings in spite of the ruin they had brought on themselves through numerous trespasses (and we could add sins)!**

**Vs 17 -**  The point: If Adam, one man in all his frailty, could bring death upon all humanity, a death that would reign from Adam forward, then MUCH MORE can God, in his power, love, and grace easily overwhelm and reverse what Adam did through the “free gift” of the righteous life of Jesus.

**Death reigns over all mankind, EXCEPT** ***over those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness!* They now REIGN in life through (dia) by Jesus Christ!**

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***18 Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men. 19 For as by the one man’s disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man’s obedience the many will be made righteous. 20 Now the law came in to increase the trespass, but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more, 21 so that, as sin reigned in death, grace also might reign through righteousness leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”***

Throughout these next few verses Paul is drawing a parallel between Adam and Christ and he will choose terms to keep the structure of the parallel, at times “all” and at other time “the many”. So as you see many and all you must understand each in the broader context.

In Adam began the “reign of death” in Christ the “reign of grace” has been inaugurated!

**Vs 18 - Therefore, Paul is going to summarize and conclude**.

**Here we see the solidarity of man and mankind in Adam.**

So also, one act of righteousness by Jesus. One act, one step, one action, one thing, led to justification and life (eternal life) **for all men (who believe)!**

**Two men performed actions with results that impacted all men. Adam sinned all men died. Christ died, so that, all men who place faith in Him can live! This is the gospel.**

**Vs 19** - Here Paul takes the language of **many** again, but the many is used to represent all in that **particular group**.

As by one man’s trespass, his disobedience to a clear command of God **(the many)** were all made sinners. **So by one man’s active act of obedience (the many) all those who place faith in him will be made righteous!**

I cannot help but think about what Paul says in Philippians 2:

*“And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.” (Php 2:8 ESV)*

**Vs 20 -** So Adam, transgressed God’s law and this plunged the entire human race into sin. Hundreds of years later, at Mt Sinai, God gives the law.

**Listen closely to what Paul says here: The law came to “increase” the trespass!** **WHAT?** In what way, scholars disagree.

There are a number of possibilities that Paul could have in mind:

1. **The idea of forbidden fruit**. Once you tell a depraved person not to do something, they will want to do it all the more.
2. **The idea of partial obedience would be OK.** The law can result in people trying to find security in keeping it, thus causing sin to increase.
3. **The law allows us to see sin better.** The law came which resulted in mankind being able to see sin clearer. It resulted in us seeing how bad our condition is and thus we see more sins.
4. **When the law comes sin changes to transgression.** When the law comes, sin now becomes transgressions (like Adam) and the whole matter becomes much worse, for now when men disobey they are actually transgressing against God’s clear law.
	1. This is what I believe Paul is getting at, but it could be another or even all of these.

Clearly there is a qualitative difference between sinning against (general revelation) and transgressing against the clear revealed will of God (special revelation).

**But even as sin abounded… IN THAT VERY SETTING, grace did much more abound!**

**Vs 21** - **Sin had been reigning king in death.** Until Jesus, and now grace reigns, through his personal righteousness and because of his imputed righteousness to us, which leads to eternal life through (dia) or by Jesus, the Messiah, who is our Lord!

This is Paul’s point. In the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ, we find the end of the reign of death, and the commencement of the reign of GRACE!

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***6:1 What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? 2 By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? 3 Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? 4 We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.***

**Vs 6:1-2 -** As Paul has done throughout this letter, he is **asking rhetorical questions** that are no doubt forming in the minds of some, if not many, within his audience.

**To frame this up…** If the Mosaic law cannot form the basis for breaking the power of sin in a believer’s life, (for the law came in to **“increase the trespass”**), then it seems the believer has **no basis for ethical behavior**.

*“Now the law came in to increase the trespass, but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more,” (Ro 5:20 ESV)*

Now, based on everything that Paul said about justification this seems like a reasonable conclusion.

To show us how far removed this line of thinking is for Paul, I want to remind you of what he said earlier in Romans:

*“7 But if through my lie God’s truth abounds to his glory, why am I still being condemned as a sinner? 8 And why not do evil that good may come? —  as some people slanderously charge us with saying. Their condemnation is just.” (Ro 3:7-8 ESV)*

First his response: ***By no means, certainly not!* This is the classic Pauline rejection of something that is completely false!**

But his response to his rhetorical question, **opens up a whole new line of thought**, that up until this moment has not been exposed.

**Vs 2b - *How can we who died to sin still live in it*?** Paul has been discussing how **Jesus was delivered for our offenses** (4:25), how **Jesus died for the ungodly** (Rom 5:6), and how **God showed his love for us, when Jesus died for us** (Rom 5:8).

But here, in pure Pauline fashion. **How can we who have died to sin, still live in it?**

Let’s grasp Paul’s conclusion and then work backwards to understand what he means and when it happened.

**His point is easy enough.** Believers are **“dead to sin.”** This verb is aorist tense, indicative mood. **It is simply a statement of fact; we are not looking at conditions or possibilities.**

But what does Paul mean and when did this occur**.**

Here is Paul’s point. When you and I placed faith in Jesus, in a sense we died in and with him, we were placed in the grave with him.

Having died to sin and its authority over us we are now free to walk in a new way, empowered by the Spirit.

**Frank Thielman:** *“Believes are no longer living in the sphere of sin, that is, in its power because Christ, through his atoning death, had delivered them from sin’s overwhelming power (Eph 2:1-6; Col 3:3).”*

**Douglas Moo:** *“Paul uses the language of realm transfer to show how inconceivable is the suggestion that a believer should remain in sin in order to accentuate grace.”*

**Paul is not saying that after we are justified, after we are saved, now we never sin. He is saying that the power of sin, and its dominion in our lives has been broken!**

**Vs 3 -** **The rhetorical question…** ***“Do you not know”*** is making the point that you should know. All of who have been baptized into Christ Jesus, were baptized into his death.

The Greek word translated baptized in both places is: βαπτίζω (baptize). It literally means to dip, dunk, submerge, or to wash.

**Scholars disagree if Paul is alluding to water baptism or fully and only referring to water baptism.**

**For sure, he is at least alluding his readers back to their physical water baptism.**

**Something to consider:**

Baptism is used in a number of different ways in the New Testament. I do not want to develop those here only to provide you some examples if you are interested in running this (Mat 3:11 - baptized with the Holy Spirit; Mat 20:22-23 – to James and John being baptized like Jesus was baptized; I Cor 1:13 – a questions about being placed in union (baptized) with Paul; I Cor 10:2 – to be placed in union (baptized) with Moses.

I believe that is what Paul is getting at: ***Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized*** (united) ***into Christ Jesus were baptized*** (united) ***into his death?***

**Then I would add, of which water baptism is a perfect picture of the spiritual reality that took place!**

Equally, for believers during the New Testament era, they were always baptized by water once they professed their faith. We see this throughout the New Testament (Acts 2:38, 8:12, 8:36, 9:18, 10:47, etc.)

What you should be grappling with in your mind. Paul sees a metaphorical reality, when you placed faith in Jesus, you were (united) into Him (by faith) and thus (united) into his death! YOU ARE IN ONE SENSE, A DEAD MAN WALKING.

**This uniting has moved you out of the realm of death, where you previously resided and has placed you under the sphere of Christ’s power, or as we saw moments ago… THE REIGN OF GRACE!**

**This is the deathblow to your former way of existence. You are no longer a slave to sin!**

**Now, this spiritual reality, was typified in your water baptism. It is a beautiful picture of a spiritual reality that took placed when you placed faith in Jesus Christ!**

**Vs 4** - **Since sharing in someone’s death means sharing in their burial**, Paul is able to shift the metaphor slightly and prepare the way for another amazing point!

Notice the picture. We died with Christ… We have been ***buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that,***

**Here is the goal:** ***just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.***

We might see that the power of sin has been broken in our lives, and now **empowered by the Holy Spirit of God**, we are brought into **new spiritual life** “**as pictured**” by coming out of the water.

The term newness is the Greek word **καινότης** (kainotes). It connotes a **startling freshness**, a **new quality that makes it different**. This word is only used by Paul and only here in Romans.

Believers in Christ, those who have been justified by faith, have a newness of life. It does not mean they never sin. It does mean the dominion of sin in their life has been broken by Christ!

**Think of the old life (under the reign of sin and death) and the new life under the reign of grace!**

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***5 For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. 6 We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. 7 For one who has died has been set free from sin. 8 Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. 9 We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. 10 For the death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God. 11 So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.***

**Vs 5 -** Paul’s takes his **metaphor one step further.**

Paul clearly sees that when we placed faith in Jesus Christ, **we were made alive in him**, **while at the same time we died to sin**, and **to the power of sin in our lives**! We were buried with Jesus, and in a sense, we have been raised to walk in newness of life in Christ.

**If** we have been united with him in a death like his, **WE SHALL CERTAINLY, be united with in in a resurrection “like his”.**

**This is a masterpiece in the Greek: “If”**, there is the condition, if **“we have been”** this is perfect tense (an action completed in the past, once and for all, and never needing to be repeated) indicative mood (statement of fact). If “we have been” (united in his death by faith), then we shall certainly in the future as a matter of fact, ***be united with him in a resurrection like his.* If “we have been”** then one day, it is an absolute for certain **“we shall be”** future tense indicative, **united in a resurrection like his!**

**The reality that our ultimate resurrection is for certain should give us great confidence and courage to live our lives for God today!**

**APPLICATION:** Jesus’s actual historical death and resurrection were real, unique, special, and both are historically epoch changing events. The realities of those events have a profound effect on those who have been justified by faith.

**APPLICATION:** **More direct!** If that is true, and it is. How then should we live our lives today?

**Vs 6 -** Here we see that our “old man” was crucified with Christ! Sin’s grip on you and I has been broken.

**The “old man” to which believers belong has been co-crucified with Jesus.**

The idea, we should pull in now. Is that we, have been co-crucified with Christ.

*“I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.” (Ga 2:20 ESV)*

Paul had reminded us of the solidarity in Adam and its disastrous consequences. **Here we see the solidarity in Christ and its amazing impact on our life!**

**Vs 7** - The principle that physical death puts a person beyond the reach of sin’s dominance.

Paul brings this point forwardto show, to demonstrate, to prove, that our **union in the Messiah, breaks sins power over us.** We are no longer slaves.

Do not worry, this could lead to an incorrect conclusion (sinless perfection in this life) and Paul will tackle that next chapter.

But hear me. You and I have been snatched from the domain of sin and death!

The word translated “set free” is the word, **δικαιόω** *(dikaioo).* It means **justified**, **declared righteous**, Can we insert the idea?

**Vs 8 -** Notice, Paul continues to drive home the point that **“we died with Christ”** the very moment we placed faith in Him!

Since we (notice the pronoun) have died in Christ, we believe **present tense** (believe and keep believing) that we will one day live with him.

Since, we died with him, Paul would tell us it is only **reasonable to believe that we will live with Him!**

**Vs 9 -** He then shares a **theological point** that we all likely understand. The sinless Son of God died, in **the place of and for sinners**. God raised Him from the dead, and **he will never die again.**

Death only had dominion on him because he was serving as our substitute. He was sinless, and death actually had absolutely no claim on him.

**Vs 10 -** The death of Christ is the **dramatic**, **unlikely**, **amazing**, **climatic** and an **unrepeatable event** that **atoned for the sins of others**.

Jesus, died to and for sins **once** and **he is alive forever more**. The life he lives, he lives for the glory of God.

Unlike you and I, Jesus knew no sin (II Cor 5:21) and therefor he had no need to die in the same sense you and I do.

**Vs 11 -** We are to consider ourselves dead. The Greek word is **λογίζομαι** (logizomai).It is that **accounting term**. God accounted to us righteousness, having placed faith in Jesus Christ, and we should, let’s use Paul’s more emphatic term, we must **“reckon”** or **account ourselves** dead to sin, dead to the power of sin, dead to the domain of sin.

By the way, in the Greek it is in the present tense, which brings with it the idea of a **continual action.**

**APPLICATION:** What is the practice you should follow to help you daily walk with God? **Here is Paul’s answer, for the moment: You should start each day “accounting” that you are dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ.** You and I should continue, day in and day out, to reckon, to account ourselves dead to sin.

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***12 Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions. 13 Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness. 14 For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace.***

**Vs 12 –** Do not let sin reign in our mortal bodies. You see Paul’s point; we should not let sin reign in our bodies that we obey the passions and lusts. WE ARE DEAD to sin!

The present tense command: ***Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, h*arkens back to the reign of sin and death that came because of Adam.**

Adam’s trespass brought the reign of sin and death. Jesus by his righteous deed has introduced the reign of grace and life! Do not submit yourself back under the bondage of sin, to obey its passions.

**We see the first of two metaphors:**

Do not let sin, reign from the throne in your heart and life. Paul once again personifies sin, and places it on this horrific throne.

**Vs 13 -** Here, Paul implores a second metaphor. This one from the world of soldiering and combat! Do not **present your members to sin as instruments** (**or weapons)** of unrighteousness.

You see what he is saying, do not present yourself, your members, as weapons at the disposal of a very powerful king. **Do you allow your body to be used by the powerful reign of sin!**

*“1 I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. 2 Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.” (Ro 12:1-2 ESV)*

**Imputed righteousness** should lead to a life that no longer wants to serve sin, but instead presents itself to God as an **instrument of righteousness!**

**Vs 14 -** Think about the metaphor that Paul is using, since Adam’s fall this **horrible, wicked king** has ruled over the lives of all of Adam’s descendants. Because God has broken the power of sin in your life, it no longer has that dominion over you.

**You are no longer a servant in the kingdom of death.** You are now a servant in the reign of righteous and you are no longer under the law (as a method to attempt to secure a right standing before God) **but you are under grace. God’s riches at Christ’s expense!**

You are I have been **shifted** from the realm of sin and death and translated into to the realm of grace. **This happened the moment we placed faith in Jesus Christ!**

Now the provocative statement that we are not under the law but under grace could lead some, to an erroneous conclusion that we can sin like the devil, since the law is out of the picture.

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***15 What then? Are we to sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means! 16 Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness? 17 But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed, 18 and, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness. 19 I am speaking in human terms, because of your natural limitations. For just as you once presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness leading to sanctification.***

**Vs 15 -** He leads with the same question, a false inference that he lead with in 6:1:

***“What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound?” (Ro 6:1 ESV)***

Here the same question, but from a different vantage. OK, since we are not under the law, but under grace, does that mean we can go on sinning? **BY NO MEANS, CERTAINLY NOT!**

**Vs 16 -** Here Paul explains a simple truth about all mankind!

First, Do you not know? Surely you understand that **you fall under the power of the master** of whom you choose to obey, in fact, **you are a slave to the one you obey.**

Then he provides only two choices. The same two we have been working with and through:

1. The reign of sin which leads to violence and death.
2. Or obedience (notice Paul now starts to expand the point) he has been, up until now speaking about the reign of grace, now he is talking about obedience that leads to justice, fairness, and uprightness.

**Vs 17 -** **Thank the Lord! All thanks to God!** You were at one time under the reign of sin, and a slave to sin.

**BUT NOW. But Now!** You have become obedient from the heart to the standard that Paul is teaching and which they have already submitted to which is:

You were ushered out of the kingdom of death and into the kingdom of light, righteousness, grace!

This reminded me of:

*“****26*** *And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.* ***27*** *And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.” (Eze 36:26-27 ESV)*

**Vs 18 -** At one time a helpless slave… But now, you have been SET FREE! Having been set free from the reign of sin, **you are now willing and joyful subjects of the reign of grace, the reign of righteousness!**

**Vs 19 -** Here Paul goes back to the imagery he just started earlier and now further expounds. You once presented your members as slaves to impurity and lawlessness, which lead to more lawlessness.

You once spent your energy in sexual immorality, socially destructive behaviors, and suppressing the knowledge of God, all leading to more and more lawlessness

**Vs 19b -** Devote yourself, with all your abilities to the service of “righteousness” rather than the service of “impurity.” **This is what should happen because we have been justified by faith!**

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***20 For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. 21 But what fruit were you getting at that time from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death. 22 But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the fruit you get leads to sanctification and its end, eternal life. 23 For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.***

**Vs 20 -** The is the logical other side of the coin. When you were in bondage to sin, you had nothing to do with and no concern with righteousness!

**Vs 21 -** Being in bondage to sin led to vicious and shameful behavior.

**Vs 22 - BUT NOW,** we have been set free from the kingdom of sin and death. **Set free to serve a new master.** Set free to stop doing shameful things and start doing things that glorify the One who saved us.

The Psalmist said it this way:

*“For a day in your courts is better than a thousand elsewhere. I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of wickedness.” (Ps 84:10 ESV)*

Now Paul is saying because this is true, since this is true, you SHOULD grow in sanctification. We will talk more about this word in the coming weeks. You should bear fruit and the result of the fruit production is indeed sanctification!

**Vs 23 -** Then Paul reminds us. **If we have sinned, and indeed we all have, what we deserve, the wages we have earned, is death (eternal death).**

BUT, I love that conjunction here, **but, God has a gift, and so we do not miss the point.** God has a free gift, and it is eternal life, in the Messiah Jesus, who is our Lord. **This gift can only be is received by faith!**

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