

Redemption in Romans ***Freedom in Christ***

Lesson #9 for August 28, 2010

Scriptures: Romans 8.

1. In Romans 7 Paul's focus was on the fight with sin. In Romans 8 Paul gave his answer to that dilemma. The secret is to learn how to walk in union with the Spirit as opposed to walking according to the flesh. How does that happen?
2. Read Romans 8:1-3. God sent His Son into this world to deal with sin. What is required for God to deal with sin? We need to remember that sin did not begin here on this earth in the Garden of Eden. Sin began in heaven next to the throne of God. Lucifer was the first rebel. (Revelation 12:1-12) In order to deal with sin, God must do whatever is required to restore peace and harmony in the entire universe. Ephesians 1:7-10; Ephesians 3:7-10; Colossians 1:19,20 (GNB); and *Patriarchs and Prophets* 68.2 show us that the life and death of Christ here on this earth were to answer questions in the eyes of the onlooking universe. That is what is described as the "mystery" or "secret plan" of God. Paul was anxious to tell God's "secret" to everyone! The church is supposed to help God in answering Satan's accusations and questions. (1 Corinthians 4:9) God is seeking to bring His entire creation—both in heaven and on this earth—back together into peace and harmony. It is much more than just paying the penalty for my sin. How does the life and death of Jesus bring harmony back to the universe? Did the sinless angels get their questions answered from the life and death of Jesus? Did the fallen angels learn anything? Who was telling the truth in the Garden of Eden? In what sense did God need to be justified?
3. Of course, the most difficult challenge for God is those of us who live on this earth and are fallen into sin. For the holy angels, trust must be reaffirmed. For us, trust must be established. By coming to this earth and living as a human being from cradle to crucifixion and then rising from the dead, Jesus Christ has come as close to the human family as He could. What has been the result?
4. Christ the Son of God took on humanity, the only way He could relate to us, could be a perfect Example, and could become the Substitute who died in our stead. He came "in the likeness of sinful flesh" (Romans 8:3). As a result, the righteous requirements of law can be fulfilled in us (Romans 8:4). In other words, Christ made victory over sin, as well as meeting the positive requirements of the law, possible. (*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*, August 21, 2010)
5. How did Christ actually accomplish that? Is our trust in God reestablished by looking to the life and death of Jesus? Is the problem a legal one or a trust problem? Don't sinners need a radical attitude change? Was this done instantly by a forensic declaration of "not guilty"? Or, was it done gradually over a period of time through the quiet work of the Holy Spirit? Or, was it both? Compare Romans 7:24,25. Did Paul's attitude change? Martin Luther was a lawyer, and he had lived under a church system that "required" a lot of works in order to be saved. He wanted to make it clear that all those works were not necessary. So, he said, "We are justified by faith *alone*." (Romans 1:17) Luther added the word *alone*.
6. Read Romans 8:1. What does it mean to say that there is now no condemnation to those who are in union with Christ Jesus? Paul suggested that the person who is still living according to his old desires is under the condemnation of death. (Romans 7:11,13,24) Such a person is still living according to the law of sin. (Romans 7:23,25) He is also in a terrible

state of wretchedness. (Romans 7:24)

7. But when the person surrenders to Jesus, an immediate change is wrought in his or her [legal?] standing with God. Formerly condemned as a lawbreaker, **that person now stands perfect in the sight of God**, stands as if he or she had never sinned, because **the righteousness of Jesus Christ completely covers that person**. There is no more condemnation, not because the person is faultless, sinless, or worthy of eternal life (he or she is not!), but because Jesus' perfect life record stands in the person's stead; thus, there is no condemnation. (*Study Guide*, Sunday, August 22, 2010)
8. In what sense does Christ's righteousness "cover us"? Can guilt or sin be moved around or covered? Doesn't our guardian angel still know what we did? Does God the Father serving as a Judge (or is Jesus the Judge? [John 5:22]) in the courts of heaven not have 20/20 vision? When He looks at us, is He unable to see the truth about us? Are the heavenly records defective because of missing data? Is His omniscience compromised by this change? Or does God just choose to overlook our sins? If so, why did Jesus have to die to make that possible? Who else is present at the judgment? (Daniel 7:9,10)
9. It is important to note that in this chapter, Paul suggested that there are only two choices. We can serve the sin master or we can serve the Son Master. There is no other option. If we are serving sin, we are still slaves. If we are serving Christ, we have freedom.
10. Every soul that refuses to give himself to God is under the control of another power. He is not his own. He may talk of freedom, but he is in the most abject slavery. . . . While he flatters himself that he is following the dictates of his own judgment, he obeys the will of the prince of darkness. Christ came to break the shackles of sin-slavery from the soul.—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 466.
11. Could you outline or explain briefly in a paragraph or two exactly how Christ frees us from the condemnation of sin? God is challenging us to be His sons, daughters, and heirs. We must reject the lies of Satan. We must learn to trust God. This changes everything. Our past history does not really matter. Does this take all the fun out of life? Or does sin have terrible consequences even in this life?
12. Not only does the Spirit make our minds and bodies over to be Christlike rather than sinful, He remodels our relationships into those of sons and daughters of God, with an intimacy that cries out in recognition of our close connection to Him. (*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*, page 103)
13. Is it really possible to be instantly changed from being a rebellious child of the Devil to being a perfectly obedient child of God? How do we actually take on the characteristics of Jesus Christ? When you think about God—especially the Father—do you think of Him more as a Father or more like a Mother or maybe a Brother or Sister? Or, in your mind, is He more like a police officer or a judge?
14. Some Christians emphasize the fact that we "die with Christ." What does that mean? When does that actually happen? Is that the truth about baptism? Is it a mystical experience? We love to believe that we are in charge of our lives! Every time we commit a sin, we are saying to God, "I believe that right now, it will be more fun or more rewarding or better for me to do my will instead of your will! I will come back to your plan later."
15. There are many things that the law cannot do for us. Read Romans 8:3,4. Notice what God

does for us that the law cannot do: 1) God dealt with sin; 2) He condemned sin in the flesh (it has awful consequences); and 3) He met the righteous demands of the law. Are those demands of the law equal to demands from God? Does the law have any right to demand anything? What is it that we can now do that we could not do before? Can we live a life that meets the righteous demands of the law? Can we crucify the flesh? (Galatians 5:24) Could we actually reflect the character of Christ?

16. Have you thought about the implications of what it means to be a slave? Is your life a life of slavery to sin? Remember that “sin pays its wage: death!” (Romans 6:23) Does God declare us right? Or, does He actually set us right? Is there a difference?
17. Read Romans 8:5-8. Do these verses carefully identify the differences between living according to one’s old worldly self and living according to the Spirit? Do they make it clear that we cannot obey the law and that we cannot please God so long as we are living the old worldly kind of lives. We are, in fact, in a state of enmity against God. Is God’s plan really the right way to live?
18. Paul was trying to convince a group of formerly Jewish Christians that Jesus Christ, the Messiah promised in the Old Testament, was the One on whom they needed to fasten their hopes instead of looking to the old Jewish system. What would you say if you were in Paul’s place trying to convince them?
19. Read Romans 8:9-14. In these verses we are clearly told that if we are not living according to the Spirit, we do not belong to Christ. However, if we live in union with Christ, “the Spirit becomes life for us”—“He is our righteousness.” What do these phrases actually mean? Compare these verses in *The Message*—paraphrase of the Bible. What does it mean to use the Spirit to put to death the deeds of the body?
20. In light of all the suggestions about how God does so many things for us and on our behalf, what does it mean to die daily? We are never supposed to serve sin again! Is it easy to stop sinning?

Thus, after conversion there still will be a struggle against sin. The difference is that the person whom the Spirit indwells now has divine power for victory. Furthermore, because the person has been so miraculously freed from the slave master of sin, **he or she is obligated never to serve sin again.**

Though not yet possessing perfect character, this person is oriented by a desire to please God rather than satisfy self. Miracle of miracles, this means that what the law requires can be accomplished satisfactorily in us. We no longer “have to” beat our spouses, lie publicly, humiliate our children, cheat on taxes, murder, steal, or commit adultery! (Or gossip, slander, dominate, have our way all the time, and so on.) We are freed from that behavior in Jesus. (*Teachers Study Guide*, p. 109)

21. It is a law both of the intellectual and the spiritual nature that by beholding we become changed. The mind gradually adapts itself to the subjects upon which it is allowed to dwell. It becomes assimilated to that which it is accustomed to love and reverence. (*Great Controversy* 555.1)
22. Is this the only way that such an incredible change can take place? Don’t children become like their parents? So, what are we putting into our minds? TV?
23. Read Romans 8:15-21. What are the major changes that take place when we stop being slaves to sin and become children of God? The child of God will sincerely want to serve Him. And he can do so without fear. He has the right to an inheritance that will continue forever.

24. The spirit of bondage is engendered by seeking to live in accordance with legal religion, through striving to fulfill the claims of the law in our own strength. There is hope for us only as we come under the Abrahamic covenant, which is the covenant of grace by faith in Christ Jesus.—Ellen G. White Comments, *The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 1077.
25. Can we be certain that we have passed through this kind of experience?
26. The inward witness of the Spirit confirms our acceptance. While it is not safe to go merely by feeling, those who to the best of their understanding have followed the light of the Word will hear an inward authenticating voice assuring them that they have been accepted as children of God. (*Study Guide*, August 26)
27. What is the source of this inward voice? Can we trust every inward voice that we hear?
28. When Christians make the choice to live a Christlike life and enter into the experience of baptism suggesting they have died to their old selves and want to live a new life in Christ, they enter upon a lifelong work. Sanctification is the work of a lifetime. Our baptismal vows must be renewed every day. We must decide day by day and moment by moment to avoid, as far as possible, the evil in the world around us on television, on the Internet, even in the suggestions and conversations of others around us. Instead, we must choose to focus our minds and hearts on God. That is our only safety.
29. The man who attempts to keep the commandments of God from a sense of obligation merely—because he is required to do so—will never enter into the joy of obedience. He does not obey. When the requirements of God are accounted a burden because they cut across human inclination, we may know that the life is not a Christian life. True obedience is the outworking of a principle within. It springs from the love of righteousness, the love of the law of God. The essence of all righteousness [98] is loyalty to our Redeemer. This will lead us to do right because it is right—because right doing is pleasing to God. (*Christ's Object Lessons* 97.3)
30. What does it take to make such a paradigm shift?
31. In 2 Timothy 3:12, Paul said, “Everyone who wants to live a godly life in union with Christ Jesus will be persecuted.” Was that true only in Paul’s day? Or, is it still true today? Why do we need to suffer persecution in order to prepare us to live the peaceful, harmonious, and joyous life in heaven? Is it that Satan is determined to attack God’s people? Do we need to be tested?
32. Read Romans 8:18-39. This is one of the most glorious passages in all of Scripture. It emphasizes the fact that God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—are all on our side. It tells us that even in the worst possible circumstances, God will work to bring about what is good. We must not allow anything to stand between us and the love of God. Every one of us is called. If we respond in the appropriate way, we will be changed into His likeness, and thus, inherit eternal life. Aren’t these promises sufficient reason for choosing the Christian lifestyle for the rest of our lives?

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