

The Christian doctrine of suffering explains, I believe, a very curious fact about the world we live in. The settled happiness and security which we all desire, God withholds from us by the very nature of the world: but joy, pleasure, and merriment, He has scattered broadcast. We are never safe, but we have plenty of fun, and some ecstasy. It is not hard to see why. The security we crave would teach us to rest our hearts in this world and oppose an obstacle to our return to God: a few moments of happy love, a landscape, a symphony, a merry meeting with our friends, a bathe or a football match, have no such tendency. Our Father refreshes us on the journey with some pleasant inns, but will not encourage us to mistake them for home.
From *The Problem of Pain* -- Compiled in A Year with C.S. Lewis

GADSBY'S CATECHISM – William Gadsby about 1800

(Presented here as originally published – this does not constitute a full endorsement of the Riverside Baptist Church)

Question LXXII. Since a believer is made free from the law, is it any part of his freedom to be at liberty to sin?

Answer. No; for he is called to holiness; and though he is dead to, and free from, the law of works, he is not now, nor does he wish to be, without law to God but is under the law of Christ. Luke 6.46; Rom. 6.1-2,6-7,11-19 & 7.1-6; 1 Cor. 9.21; Gal. 5.1,13-25; Col. 2.6-7; 2 Tim. 2.19; Tit. 3.8.

Question LXXIII. What is the law of Christ?

Answer. The law of Christ is the gospel of His grace, which is the law from Zion, called the law of faith, the law of liberty, and the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus.

Isa. 2.2-3; Jer. 31.31-34; Mic. 4.1-2; Rom. 3.27 & 7.21-25 & 8.1-4; Gal. 6.2; Heb. 1.8 & 8.6-13; James 1.25.

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THE RIVERSIDE BAPTIST REPORT

THE RIVERSIDE BAPTIST CHURCH

“The Pillar and ground of the Truth” -- 1 Timothy 3:15

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WHO SHALL DELIVER ME?

O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin. Romans 7:24-25

There are many who believe that a truly born again believer could never utter the agonizing words that we read here. There are many who have held to the idea that the apostle Paul was writing in description of the difficulties experienced by an unsaved person. Yet, it is evident that an unregenerate individual does not have the sensitivity to sin that has been expressed in this and the several verses preceding the statement. The commentator, John Gill, suggested that the apostle Paul wrote what he felt at that time and was describing his own personal experience in the struggle against sin. Objections to such thoughts as these, no doubt, come about because men have a less than biblical sense of sin.

The concept of sin in the minds of men has always been a serious issue and a cause of division. Many have an outward sense of sin owing to the moral constraints of a society and its standards. That sense is compromised as the standards of a society are weakened. Such is the situation that we see in our country today. Things which the Bible identifies as sinful and offensive to God are treated as being socially acceptable today. Thus the concept of sin becomes, to many, an arbitrary matter or as a matter of personal liberty. No such concessions are made in Scripture.

It is sad that many who profess faith in Christ show no evidence of new life in Christ in their walk. They are either given to sin in their own lives at the worst, or are indifferent to it at the

best. Again, such an attitude is not consistent with either the aim of the Gospel or the example that is placed before us in the Word of God. The understanding of what sin is and the reaction of God toward it are clearly understood by true believers. By virtue of the fact that they are new creatures in Christ Jesus and bearing his nature, sin is hateful to them as it is to God. It is true that the Scriptures tell us that “that which is born of God cannot sin.” However, when we are made new in Christ there remains an old nature which is as corrupt as ever. This old nature no longer has the authority to rule in the life of believers. Yet that old man struggles to regain control and therefore plays to temptation. The life of a believer includes a life long struggle against that old sinful nature.

This cry for deliverance expressed by the apostle Paul sets before us an acute consciousness of sin and the desire to be completely free of it. It is been well said that in salvation we are delivered from the guilt and penalty of sin; from the present power of sin and someday we shall be saved from the very presence of sin. Only in those who are led by the Spirit of God and who walk in the presence of God is there such sensitivity and hatred of sin. It is a fact that believers still sin. John in his first epistle makes this clear when he directs us to confess our sin and thus obtain forgiveness and cleansing from sin. One would do well to read carefully the last half of Romans chapter 7. Paul lamented the fact that the things he should do

he did not always do. And furthermore, there were things that he did that he did not want to do. He was conscious of that old nature and saw it as a burden and a hindrance to his fellowship with God. One commentator expressed it thusly, "He feels as if he has a decomposing body strapped to his back. That body, of course is the old nature in all its corruption."

If believers were left in this struggle without an explanation it would bring about total frustration. Perhaps, this is the reason for the apostle Paul sharing this under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. This frustration has led many to deny that they sin. Others have simply refused to take sin seriously. That which brings about the precious distinction is one's consciousness of and faith in the victory that Christ has registered over sin. In chapter 6 of Romans, the declaration is made "sin shall not have dominion over you." That did not say sin would be nonexistent; rather it alluded to the fact that we are led of the Spirit. Even as the Apostle Paul expresses what seems to be a desperate cry he is comforted in the fact that Christ rules in his

life.

The Apostle Paul follows this cry with an expression of thanksgiving to God through Jesus Christ. It is revealed to him that there exists within him a law of sin. That is, there is the struggling of the old man to rule in his life. But the reason of his thanksgiving is that with his mind he serves the law of God. He is expressing the fact that he is fully submitted to the rule of God in his life. Early in the next chapter he refers to this as the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus. Late in his life the apostle Paul referred to himself as "the chief of sinners." Did that mean that Paul had lapsed back into a sinful way of life? Not at all. It simply meant that he had grown more and more sensitive to sin in his life. What would not have been visible to us was painful to him. So it is with all true believers. Great men in Scripture such as Daniel and Job readily confessed that they were sinful men. Where there is such a consciousness of sin will be found a great desire to be renewed again and again in the great consolation of divine forgiveness. *bhs*

How to Repay God

What shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits toward me? I shall lift up the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord. I shall pay my vows to the Lord. (Psalm 116:12-14)

What keeps the paying of vows free from the dangers of being treated like a debt payment is that the "payment" is, in reality, not an ordinary payment, but another act of receiving which magnifies the ongoing grace of God. It does not magnify our resourcefulness. We can see this in Psalm 116:12-14.

The psalmist's answer to his own question, "What shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits?" is, in essence, that he will go on receiving from the Lord so that the Lord's inexhaustible goodness will be magnified.

First, lifting up the cup of salvation signifies taking the Lord's satisfying salvation in hand and drinking it and expecting more. This is why I say that "paying" back to God in these contexts is not an ordinary payment. It is an act of receiving.

Second, this is also the meaning of the next phrase: "I shall call upon the name of the Lord." What shall I render to God for graciously answering my call? Answer: I shall call again. I will render to God the praise and the tribute that he is never in need of me, but is always overflowing with benefits when I need him (which I always do).

Then the psalmist says, in the third place, "I will pay my vows to the Lord." But how will they be paid? They will be paid by holding up the cup of salvation and by calling on the Lord. That is, they will be paid by faith in future grace. John Piper in *Future Grace*

“The earnest of our inheritance.”

- Eph_1:14

Oh! what enlightenment, what joys, what consolation, what delight of heart is experienced by that man who has learned to feed on Jesus, and on Jesus alone. Yet the realization which we have of Christ's preciousness is, in this life, imperfect at the best. As an old writer says, “’Tis but a taste!” We have tasted “that the Lord is gracious,” but we do not yet know how good and gracious he is, although what we know of his sweetness makes us long for more. We have enjoyed the firstfruits of the Spirit, and they have set us hungering and thirsting for the fulness of the heavenly vintage. We groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption. Here we are like Israel in the wilderness, who had but one cluster from Eshcol, there we shall be in the vineyard. Here we see the manna falling small, like coriander seed, but there shall we eat the bread of heaven and the old corn of the kingdom. We are but beginners now in spiritual education; for although we have learned the first letters of the alphabet, we cannot read words yet, much less can we put sentences together; but as one says, “He that has been in heaven but five minutes, knows more than the general assembly of divines on earth.” We have many ungratified desires at present, but soon every wish shall be satisfied; and all our powers shall find the sweetest employment in that eternal world of joy. O Christian, antedate heaven for a few years. Within a very little time thou shalt be rid of all thy trials and thy troubles. Thine eyes now suffused with tears shall weep no longer. Thou shalt gaze in ineffable rapture upon the splendour of him who sits upon the throne. Nay, more, upon his throne shalt thou sit. The triumph of his glory shall be shared by thee; his crown, his joy, his paradise, these shall be thine, and thou shalt be co-heir with him who is the heir of all things.

C. H. Spurgeon from *Morning and Evening*



Someone has said, “The Bible contains the mind of God, the state of man, the way of salvation, the doom of sinners, the happiness of believers. Its doctrines are holy, its precepts are binding, its histories are true, and its decisions are unchangeable. Read it to be wise, believe it to be safe, and practice it to be holy. It contains light to direct you, food to support you, and comfort to cheer you. It is the traveler's map, the pilgrim's staff, the pilots compass, the soldier's sword, and the Christian's charter. Here Paradise is restored, Heaven opened, and the gates of Hell disclosed. Christ is its grand Subject, our good its design, and the glory of God its end. It should fill the memory, rule the heart, and guide the feet.” And God has called us to preach and teach it! Wow! What a blessing.

Soli Deo Gloria,
Ron Rumburg

“Beware every time you notice yourself doing a good thing, because you ruin it by the notice.” – Oswald Chambers, from *Run Today's Race*