

Lesson 14 - Baptism--Part 2

In lesson 13 we learned:

- 1) God's grace is greater than our sin.
- 2) Grace does not lead to careless living, but on the contrary, motivates us to do what glorifies the Lord.
- 3) Grace and works are mutually exclusive. If you mix works with grace then it is no longer grace.
- 4) The first issue in our lives as believers is to know something.
- 5) We must know that we have been baptised into the death of Jesus Christ.
- 6) The baptism in Romans 6 is an operation of the Holy Spirit. It is not water baptism.

Know

As mentioned above, the first issue in our spiritual walk is to know something. Many believers are preoccupied with wanting to know what they should do. They continually cry out for "practical teaching." However, before you worry about what to do, you must have some knowledge. What if a carpenter began to work very hard at building a house, but he didn't know where the door should be or where the windows should be located? What if you were hired for a job and the boss told you to get to work, but didn't tell you what to do or how to do it? Many believers are just like this! They are very busy with church activities, but they haven't taken time to study God's Word in order to know what to do and how to do it.

Dead to Sin

Romans 6:2 says that we are "dead to sin." Verse seven says that we are "freed from sin." What does this mean? If I am "dead to sin" and "freed from sin," why do I still sin? God says, "our old man is crucified with him" (verse 6). If my old self (sinful nature) has been crucified, why do I continue to sin?

Let us imagine that a child has a very cruel and dominating father (old man). The father is constantly scolding and beating the child. He controls the child's life with the use of fear and guilt. The child grows up and becomes an adult. One day the cruel father dies. The child is now a man of forty years of age. Is the child (now 40) still controlled by the father who is dead and buried in the ground? You probably think the answer is "no" since the father is dead and can no longer scold or beat the child. However, the correct answer is "maybe." It is true that the father can no longer scold or beat the child. However, the child can go through life thinking: "If my father were here, he would scold me for this." When trying to make a decision the child may think: "My father would tell me to do this rather than the other thing." In other words, the child's thinking is still controlled by the father, though the father is dead. The child is free from his father's control, but he lives as though he is still dominated by his father.

So also, our old man has been put to death through our baptism into Christ's death. We are no longer in bondage to the power of our old self. Before we were saved, we were slaves to sin and could do nothing to get free from its influence over us. Now the Holy Spirit has freed us from enslavement to our sin nature. No man on this earth has ever lived a sinless life (except Jesus Christ), but in any situation we are in, it is possible for us to not sin. It is always possible for us to do what honours the Lord. If we sin, it is for one reason only---because we choose to sin. We have no excuse for sin since our old man has been crucified. We cannot blame our circumstances, other

people, or our personality (or nature). In every circumstance we find ourselves in, we are now free to do what is right and pleasing to God. This is because of the baptism described in Romans chapter six.

Human Good and Evil

When we speak of being freed from sin, it is important to understand that there are two sides to sin. God told Adam not to eat of "the tree of the knowledge of good and evil" (Genesis 2:17). If Adam and Eve ate of the forbidden fruit, they would come to know "good and evil" (Genesis 3:5). Why would God try to stop Adam and Eve from knowing "good"? How could they come to know "good" by disobeying God (eating the fruit)? The solution to this puzzle is to understand that these verses are speaking of human good, not the good that comes from God. Human evil includes such things as murder, rape, theft, drunkenness, etc. Human good refers to man's attempt to earn salvation through his own religion and efforts to be good.

Isaiah writes "all our righteousness are as filthy rags" (Isaiah 64:6). Notice this does not say that the wicked, evil things we do are filthy rags to God. It says that the righteousness (good things) that we do is filthy rags to God! [In the context Isaiah is speaking about Israel.]

Many of us are not seriously tempted to murder, steal, or rape. However, we are tempted to think that we can gain God's blessings by being a good person. Or we think we can stop God from punishing us by doing religious things like going to church, giving money to the church, praying, etc. Such thinking dishonours our Lord and Saviour! Our spiritual baptism has freed us from the control of human evil and human good.

Reckon "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 6:11). The first issue in a spiritual walk is to know about our baptism into Christ's death. The second stage is to reckon it to be true. This simply means that we believe what God says. Our circumstances, our emotions, and other people may tell us that we are still sinners. However, God says that we are "freed from sin."

Will you believe your feelings or will you believe God? Your circumstances, your emotions, and other people may deceive you. God will always tell you the truth. If we live in sin, it is only because we choose to. God has made it possible to live in victory!

Yield

The final stage in a spiritual walk is to yield our self to God's service. "Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God" (Romans 6:13). There is a chorus for children that says "Be careful little eyes what you see" and "Be careful little feet where you walk" and "Be careful little ears what you hear." These are the "members" that we are to yield to God. In the past we used our eyes to look upon things that did not please God. Now we can use our eyes to serve God by looking at things that are pure and true. In the past we used our feet to take us to places where we indulged in sinful practices. Now we can use our feet to take us to places where we will do what is honest and good. In the past our ears listened to evil and ungodly things. Now we can use our ears to listen to things that are lovely and virtuous.

First we must know what God has done for us. After gaining this knowledge through Bible study, we must reckon it to be so. We must believe what God has said. Finally, we must yield our members to God's service. This is the way to joy and victory!



Review Questions Lesson 14 - Baptism--Part 2

True or False

1. God's grace is greater than almost all sin.
2. The Bible teaches that we are alive to sin.
3. We must try to put our old sinful man to death by obeying God.
4. In the book of Isaiah it says that Israel's righteousness were as filthy rags to God.

Multiple Choice

5. The final stage of a victorious walk is to:
 - a. be water baptised
 - b. keep the Ten Commandments
 - c. try to do your best
 - d. yield your members to God's service
6. The first issue in our spiritual lives is to:
 - a. confess your sins
 - b. know what God has done for us
 - c. pray every day
 - d. go to church regularly
7. The illustration above about the cruel father and the child teaches that:
 - a. sometimes God is cruel
 - b. we cannot overcome the power of sin
 - c. we sin only because we choose to
 - d. our old man never truly dies

Fill in the Blanks

8. Adam was told not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of and _____ .
9. "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be _____ indeed unto sin"
10. We can have victory over sin because we have been _____ into the death of Jesus Christ by the Holy Spirit.