

Romans ch. 6

See 2 Peter 3:15 “there are parts that are hard to understand”

Chapter 6 wrestles with the problem of morality after justification. Put simply, if all our sins are forgiven, and we are made completely right with God (justification) then what about our continued ability and desire for sin. The problem: a baptized turkey is still a turkey. Is Christianity removing morality from the world Paul addresses this in several ways.

vv. 1-4 Paul applies (again) the principle we call recapitulation, which we have seen before. Jesus does what Israel as a whole did, but this time He gets it right.

*40 years in the desert vs 40 days in the desert resisting sin

*Israel went through the Red Sea to be free from slavery, Jesus underwent baptism for the same reason but He was without sin.

*Israel failed to keep the commandments of the Law but Jesus obeyed them

Here: because sin = death, Jesus died for our sins so that we can be free of them; He rose from the dead, and we are raised with Him

*v. 4 there is that Gloria again

v. 5-11 WE still must die, it is the common lot of all men and women since the fall and that even included Jesus. Nonetheless the final freedom from sin will only occur after death, when this damned body we wear will be destroyed. But because of what Christ has done, this present life is the last freaking time we are going to have to wrestle with sin and all penalties have been paid

v 11 consider yourself dead to sin- the drama of Christ's death is still being played out in our own bodies, He was crucified and we still are until the resurrection.

vv. 12-14 it is no longer necessary for us to put up with sin, but instead we now have the power to fight against it

vv. 21-23 slavery consider what slaves you were when we obeyed sin
excursus on the Roman world and slavery. In this chapter alone there are 8 references to slavery or slaves

for us the word slavery is normally an archaic one (Latin: servus, Gk: doulos) For the ancients, slavery was a very real phenomenon and they saw it and the effects it had on people every single day

*Rome more than elsewhere - one in three Romans were enslaved

70% of the population of Italy

90% in Sicily

*it had nothing to do with skin color

*a slave had absolutely no rights and could be killed

*the marks of whipping, scars, burnings, misshapen bodies were real

Re: Pompeii and the recovered bones showing signs of Acute wear

*sexual abuse of slaves was so common it was assumed

Paul alludes to this in verse 19

*Cicero: a man loses half his life on enslavement

*a Roman legally could not be enslaved, but not only a minority of those in the Empire had citizenship, and a considerable number came from war

*in times of desperation one could submit to slavery (note. V.16

*a handful of house slaves had a tolerable life but to the majority, the plantations, quarries, military warships and worst of all the dreaded salt mines of Sardinia consumed them.

*it was possible to enter into it voluntarily or parents to put a child in

*the City of Rome was the largest single auction house of human flesh.

There were comedies about it. Slaves were to be laughed at. Note “A funny thing happened on the way to the Forum”

So when Paul says you are slaves to the one you obey v. 16 ff

And the wages of sin are death

But now, when one resists sin, they avoid this degradation and find the path to sanctification.

75,000 foreign nationals and 400,000 citizens are slaves today and 19 states permit bonded servitude for punishment for crimes. Of the above numbers 80-% are women and children

Ergo: choose your master wisely – everything depends of this

v. 22-end There is yet good news.

The Christian is freed from slavery to sin and its inevitable end – death

This leads to “ie put on the path to sanctification which leads to life

Notice: it leads to sanctification – this is an ongoing process until we die

Pastorally many people struggle with ongoing sins and this leads to shame; but the purpose of our faith is not and must never be to shame people Just because you or person X cannot break a bad habit it does not mean they are less than Christian or are failure: the process is ongoing and we are not to despair