

FREE FROM YOURSELF

I. Introduction

- Pastor Tony has been preaching on “idolatry” the past several weeks.
- He began with the OT, looking at specific examples of the nation of Israel God’s people, building and worshiping idols.
 - I would imagine that none of us have this problem. We don’t have statues around our house, that we bow down to and worship. If you come from a Catholic background, then this has been part of your past.
- The last couple of weeks he has taken us to a couple of specific examples of “idolatry” that we may struggle with today (addictions – pornography, substance abuse). They are not idols that we bow down to, but they are idols none the less, because they have become more important to us than obeying God.

- This morning I want us to see that that, in Christ we have been freed from all of this!!!

Lets see what God has to say on this subject in Romans 8:1-13. (Read)

The first truth we see here is:

II. God has freed us FROM the “death penalty” of sin. (1-3)

- “condemnation” = “death penalty”, not only the pronouncement of guilt, but the punishment as well. (1)

- A. Christ freed us from the law of sin and death. (2)
 - Before you were saved you had no choice but to sin. You were a slave to you sins/desires (dead in your sins Eph. 2 tells us).
 - And the end of that slavery was death!! You were condemned in your own sin. No one did it to you, you had no alibi, you were guilty and the punishment was death and it was certain!

 - As a believer you are free from that condemnation!
 - Notice that it is the Spirit of LIFE in Christ Jesus.
 - The very thing you needed more than anything else – LIFE.
 - “law of the Spirit” = refers to God’s new law, the law that declares you “free in Christ”
 - “law of sin and death” = refers to that “law” that rules you before salvation, that declares you “dead in you trespasses and sins” before God. (7:23)

B. Christ condemned “sin” instead of us! (3)

- Nothing else can – not even the Law of the Bible (referring to OT Law, Mosaic Law).
 - You hear someone say, “I keep the 10 commandments” – so what!! (You really don’t any way, but even if you did it can’t save you!
 - The Law is powerless to saved us because our sinful “flesh” weakens it! It is us, we are the problem.
 - We will get into the “flesh” thing more as we go, unfortunately the NIV has made an interpretive decision (one I would suggest to you is incorrect) when they chose to translate “flesh” as “sinful nature” and “sinful man” throughout these verses.
 - The more you and I do in ourselves, the more condemned we become in our own flesh.
- Only Christ, who came in the “likeness” (not in) of sinful flesh, on our behalf could declare the “death penalty” on the sin in your flesh, because He himself was “in the flesh”.

The second truth we see in these verses is:

III. We have been freed TO fulfill the righteousness of God’s Law, which pleases God! (4-8)

- How does this happen in your life?

A. By not walking according to the “flesh”. (4)

- What does walking “according to the flesh” look like? (5-7)
 - It is having a “fleshly” worldview.
 - Looking at life according to your desires and wants. Allowing you to rule you! If it feels good do it!! It is living as a practicing atheist.
 - Pornography, substance abuse, addictions, they are all feeding your own lusts.
 - So is anger, bitterness, jealousy, rebellion. I want what I want, when I want it and if I don’t get it, I am going to sin! IDOLATRY!!!!
 - The problem is you!!! – Your flesh... (NOT -- It is my wife...if she were a better wife I would not struggle., It is my husband..., It is my job..., My dad was an alcoholic..., I grew up in an angry home..., Bitter?!...if you only knew what they/he/she did to me..., This is just the way I am...)
 - When Paul uses the word “flesh” he is not talking about some kind of dual personality that we as Christians have (i.e. the NIV’s “sinful nature”). Nor is he talking simply about our physical bodies that have developed certain habits toward sin that need simply to be replaced (focuses on the outward behavior).
 - He is using this picturesque word to describe our total person. We have within us an inherent desire to please ourselves and indulge in sin, which then manifests itself through some

physical action (reacting in anger toward your spouse, drinking, looking at the porn., over/under disciplining the children).

- This leads to death (6) – death of relationships, death of Spiritual influence, physical death.
 - Why?
 - Because the “fleshly” way of living (worldview) is enmity with God. (7)
 - It is in complete disobedience to God’s Law (Mosaic Law – everything in God’s Word is built on Mosaic Law). (7)
 - You (in your flesh) are completely incapable of obeying God and pleasing Him. (7,8)

B. What does walking “according to the Spirit” look like? (5)

- It is having a Spirit controlled worldview.
 - Seeking the Spirit’s desires in life. What would He want me to do in this situation?
 - The opposite of the “flesh”
 - The “flesh” is not obeying God’s Law...the life in the Spirit seeks to know, “what does God’s Word say about this, and how can I obey”. (7)
 - Unlike the “flesh”, life in the Spirit can do this, because it is not you, but the Spirit dwelling in you.
 - This leads to life and peace!!! Peace with God, peace in your relationships. Life, real life, life that means something real both now and for eternity.

The third truth we see in this passage is:

IV. In order to “walk according to the Spirit” we must be living life by His power. (9-13)

A. Only one who is truly “born again” can do this. (9)

- A person who does not have Christ is still completely “in the flesh”, a slave to their sin and helpless to change on their own.

B. For the believer, we have the Spirit of God dwelling in us. (10-13)

- This is the same Spirit of God who was powerful enough to raise Christ from the dead! (10-11)
- You may be saved, but you may be thinking “Oh, you have no idea how difficult it is to stop this sin in my life!”, “ I have struggled with this for years”, “I have always had an anger problem”, “I have smoked since I was a teen”.
- God is saying “wait a minute, it isn’t you anyway, but Me in you, My power, that will change you, are you saying I can’t do this, that your sin is too big for Me?”

Lastly:

C. You are indebted to God for life. (12-13)

- Your “flesh” sold you out. As long as you “walk according to the flesh” you will experience death. Just because you are saved does not mean you will not experience the consequences of “fleshly living”.
- Your “flesh” has sold you a lie, “this is good, it will bring pleasure, do this and really have fun”!!
- It is a lie and you know it, why keep serving your “flesh” desires?
- By the power of the Spirit of God, who is in you, you are to be “putting to death the deeds of your body”.
- This is obviously not talking about everything that we do in our body...
 - Many “monks” have believed this over the centuries.
- But those things that are against God’s word (Law) and His will.
 - This is continual process. Which mean you don’t change everything over night, but that you are in the process of change.

Where are you?

1. Not even saved ---
2. Saved, but comfortable in you sin, and not interested in change ---
3. Saved, stuck in you sin, wanting to change, but not sure how --- great, get some help, see me, Pastor Tony, etc.
4. Don’t even see how this applies to you --- sin is self deceiving