

Prayer

Show us your ways, Lord, teach us your paths. Guide us in your truth and teach us, for you are our God, our Savior and our hope is in you all day long. You guide the humble in what is right and teach them your way. The ones who reverence you will be instructed in the way they should choose. You confide in those who reverence you and reveal to them the depths of your commitment. May our families and their lineage serve you. May future generations of those not yet born be told of you. No king is saved by the strength of his army; no warrior escapes by his great strength. I pray for my brothers and sisters that you would help them. I pray not only for them but also for those who will believe in you *through their word*.

The Heart of the Spirit Filled Life

Given that we are justified by grace alone through faith alone, how then shall we live? That's the subject at hand today. How are you to live your life in light of the fact that you will *never* stop living? Are you preparing for that? One day your personality will transition into an immortal frame. You are a spiritual being with an unceasing destiny created to rule forever with God in his great universe. With that in mind, what kind of person are you becoming? The greatest opportunity we have in life is to bring our kingdoms under the governance of God's kingdom. This is what it means to say "thy will be done." *In this, we demonstrate our love for God, by willing what God wills and acting out the goodness of what he wants.* As partakers of eternal life, even now we are reigning with him. When you apply your will to choose what is

good in that sense you rule with God *in life* (Romans 5:17). How are your choices preparing for you for the responsibility of reigning with HIM, forever (Rev. 22:5)?

The heart of the spirit-filled life is obedience (Jn 14:21,23;15:9-11); the pathway to obedience is discipleship to Jesus. Through discipleship to Jesus we grow in obedience, through obedience we become skillful at being Jesus' disciples. By discipleship to Jesus I mean deciding *once and for all* to be his life-long student. His apprentices. To be his disciple- we devote ourselves to practicing Jesus' teachings and *adopting* his way of life. We must come to the place where we wholeheartedly believe that we can be like him. "Very truly I tell you," said Jesus, "the one who believes in me will do the works I have been doing" (John 12:24). The one who believes in Jesus will follow him into his practices/his habits. *As maturing disciples it is incumbent on us to know what his habits were.* "Whoever serves me must follow me and where I am there will my servant be also. Whoever serves me him will my Father honor" (John 12:26). The word serve is the same word for doing deacon work. It means to actively and practically serve in haste, on the move. As a word picture, imagine a person kicking up dust in a hurry to serve another. It means to give attention to anything that would cater towards the interests of another. In this case, it means to do anything that will cater towards the interests of Jesus. Serving him is centering your life on accommodating him. "Whoever serves me," said Jesus, "him will my Father honor."

For Paul, Romans 6 is the result of new life from God; the result of the Spirit making his home in us.

A New State of Affairs

In this new state of affairs *we are learning to live in the past*, but not our past. The Father counts Christ's death on the cross as the death that we died. Since we were immersed into Jesus' death we will also be immersed into his life. To be immersed into his death means that our lives are no longer defined by our past, but by what his past accomplished. Listen to the verb tenses in the truths of Romans 6.

- We were buried with him in baptism (v. 4). "Your old sin-loving nature was buried with him by baptism when he died, and when God the Father, with glorious power, brought him back to life again, you were given his wonderful new life to enjoy." LB

Being immersed in the death of Jesus means that we are no longer defined by our past, but by his past. Jesus is the only one who can look back on his past and say well done. His social life, his psychological life, and his spiritual life were perfect.

- We have been united with him in death (v. 5). "For you have become a part of him, and so you died with him, so to speak, when he died, and now you share his new life, and shall rise as he did."
- Our old self was crucified with him so that our body will no longer be controlled by sin (v. 6). "Your old evil desires were nailed to the cross with; that part of you that loves to sin was crushed and fatally

wounded, so that your sin-loving body is no longer under sin's control, no longer need to be a slave to sin."

- We were under the law (v. 14).
- We have died with Christ (v. 8). "...Your old sin-loving nature died with Christ."
- We used to be slaves to sin (v. 17). "...you once chose to be slaves to sin."
- We have been set free from sin. We are now slaves of what is right (v. 18).
- We used to present ourselves as slaves to impurity and (ever-increasing) compounding wickedness (v. 19).

Our Present Reality

- Just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father. We too may live a new life (v. 4).
- You are free from sin (v. 7).
- Count yourselves as dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus (v. 11).
- *Do not let* sin reign in your mortal body (v. 12). Don't let it control you since you have a newly found ability to do so.
- Offer yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer every part of yourselves to him as an instrument/weapon of righteousness (v. 13).

- You are under grace. *The law commands us to fly but doesn't give us wings. Grace gives us wings and commands us to fly* (v. 14).
- We can obey God's word from the heart we are now slaves of obedience, slaves of all that is right (v. 16 & 17).
- You are now able to commit yourselves to all that is right which leads to becoming, ever-increasingly, like God (v. 19).

Sanctification/holiness- is a consciously chosen and sustained co-operation with God in which we *learn* to habitually do what is pleasing to him. It is the *process* by which we co-operate with God to become like him.

We can follow Jesus into his habits to assist in conforming us into his image. We can form new habits, but we need to practice. Practice takes time, patience, and effort. In our efforts of weakness we anticipate the power of God coming to our aid. We need to nurture the habit of letting our yes be yes. We need to nurture the new habit of breaking away from the noise of life to pray. We need to nurture the habit of immersing ourselves in God's word. We need the habit of helping the marginalized. We need new habits of not bringing attention to ourselves every time we do something good. We need new habits of abstaining from food (fasting) to devote ourselves to God. We need new habits of not bailing out on relationships because we were misunderstood. We need new habits of loving others by our actions. These are just a few of the habits of Jesus displayed in the gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

2 Peter 1:5 says, “make every effort” to add to our faith virtue (How much effort does that leave out?). Virtue is moral excellence. It means to become your very best (2 Peter 3:18). It entails training. This is a call for experimentation. It is a call to practice what is good, not just attempt what is good, but practice. This is a call to train, not just try. What we are going for is sustained action over the course of time *in spite of failure*. The way we would practice if we wanted to learn to play Beethoven. Practice, the way we would if we wanted to successfully do a triathlon or body build or learn how to make chef quality pan seared scallops with risotto. Right practices are the sails into which the Spirit blows. He, the Spirit of truth, will help us.

Summary

Your baptism signified that your story is now intertwined with the story of Jesus (what is true of him is true of you). You have transitioned from death to life as a student of Jesus. Now, there lies in you a new capability. There is freedom to be a slave of obedience, of righteousness, freedom to be a slave of God instead of sin. With this new found freedom comes the responsibility of cultivating a life that practices, and trains others to practice all that Jesus has commanded. This is love for God and the heart of the Spirit-filled life.

Discovery Questions

1. What did I learn about God (Father, Son, and Spirit?)
2. What did I learn about people/myself?
3. How can I apply this to my life?
4. How can I apply this to help someone?
5. Who whom will I share my discoveries?

Additional resource: [Development of Virtue](#)