

Simply Christ

Gospel Newsletter

Sharing the simplicity that is in Christ

February 26, 2020

Am I a Slave?

Jesus' words, "*the truth shall make you free,*" were received as an insult by those he was speaking to. They said, "*We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man.*" How dare he insinuate they were in some kind of bondage? They demanded an answer from Jesus, saying "*...how sayest thou, You shall be made free?*" John 8:31-36. Jesus' answer only offended them more.

Jesus was very direct. He said, "*Whosoever commits sin is the servant (slave) of sin.*" Could this be true? Is sin a spiritual master over the sinner? Yes, it is true. A sinner is a slave and will be a slave until someone liberates them from sin's bondage. Jesus confirmed this, saying, "*If the Son therefore shall make you free, you shall be free indeed.*" John 8:36.

In the Apostle Paul's testimony concerning what he experienced laboring to serve God by the Law before he came to Christ Romans 7:5, he takes us back to the time he was forced to acknowledge that "the great Saul of Tarsus" who "*touching the righteousness which is in the Law, (was) blameless*" Philippians 3:6, was in fact ...a slave to sin. This realization crushed him and threw his whole world into a turmoil.

Saul, like the Jews who disputed with Jesus, did not consider himself to be a sinner. In fact, Jesus even said, "*If I had not come and spoken unto*

them, they had not had sin..." John 15:22. The Jews had no concept of a sin nature. They were blameless outwardly, but Jesus' message was that sin in the heart IS SIN! A person who "*lusts to commit adultery*" is in fact an adulterer. Matthew 5:28. This message stripped away their illusion of spirituality, and it became the root cause of their hatred for Jesus.

Saul viewed himself to be blameless and without sin until he began to understand the tenth commandment. Its words, "*Thou shall not covet*" Romans 7:7, judged the content of his heart. As Saul sought to eradicate sin from his heart, something began to rage within and forced him to face an undeniable truth about himself.

Never in Saul's life, before or after his conversion to Christ, is there any evidence of immorality, dishonesty, or deception. Even his statement that he was "*chief*" of sinners is directly connected to his role in persecuting the church. I Timothy 1:13-15. His words, "*For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do*" Romans 7:19 were not speaking of moral uncleanness, but were expressing Saul's conflict over his persecution of the church. In all his raging against the believers, Saul never transgressed the Law of Moses. Yet the anger and rage which boiled up inside of him troubled Saul. He had always viewed himself as a "*spiritual*" man, but now he was filled with rage, dragging Christians from their homes and casting them into prisons? Saul hated what he was becoming, but he could not help himself. Something inside was driving him, and he could not control it. "*Cursing and bitterness*" began to spill from his mouth Romans 3:14, and he found himself "*...breathing out*

threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord..." Acts 9:1.

Saul began to consider his own condition. If he cannot do what he wants to do, but instead does what he does not want to do, then it is evident he is under the control of something more powerful than himself. This is where the true fact of his condition hits Saul like a sledge hammer. He wrote, "*Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, **but sin that dwelleth in me.***" Romans 7:20. He had never before considered that sin dwelt inside of him, but the evidence of this was overwhelming. He concluded that if it was sin dwelling in him that was controlling him, then sin must be HIS MASTER! O the horror that swept over this self-righteous Pharisee at that realization. If this was true, then he was not the spiritual person he believed himself to be, but he was "*carnal, sold under sin.*" Romans 7:14. No! How can this be? The great Saul of Tarsus, a Hebrew of Hebrews, IS A SLAVE? His entire religious "house" began to crumble. As he drifted into hopelessness, his soul began to cry, "*O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?*" Romans 7:24.

Saul could no longer deny he was in fact a slave to sin, but who could make this wretched slave free? His next words reveal the answer. "*I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord...*" Romans 7:25. When Saul surrendered to Jesus Christ on the Damascus road, he was delivered from sin, never to serve it again. Romans 6:6. The "*truth*" had made him free!