

Notes for the Ones Called-Out to Meet

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There's More: Freedom, Victory and Fruit

by Dan Trygg

“Jesus said to the Jews who had believed Him, ‘If you continue in My word, you really are My disciples. ³² You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free... ³⁴ Everyone who commits sin is a slave of sin... ³⁶ Therefore if the Son sets you free, you really will be free.’”
John 8:31,32,34,36

“Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus. ¹² Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts, ¹³ and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. ¹⁴ For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law but under grace.”
Romans 6:11-14

“But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. ¹⁷ For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please. ²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. ²⁴ Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. ²⁵ If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit.”
Galatians 5:16-17,22-25

Becoming a Christian is the beginning of a new life of discovery and growth in Jesus Christ. Coming to trust in Jesus and being born from above opens up to us many new possibilities. We are called to be disciples, ...active followers, learners, and implementers of what Jesus has made available to us. We are born from above, born of the Spirit, which has opened up for us new capacities to see, perceive and experience things that we were otherwise blind and unaware of. New life in the Spirit has introduced a new power for living. **If we are learning to grasp what Christ has done for us, and are discovering how to walk in the power of the Spirit, the entire tenor and quality of our lives will change.** We will be transformed, changed to become like Jesus in our character and the way we treat others.

We have been talking about discipleship skills, ...the abilities we are to become proficient in as we follow Jesus. **Today we are going to look at how we are to find freedom and victory over sin in our lives, and learn to walk in the fruit of the Holy Spirit.** These are not just theological concepts or ideals of behavior. Victory over sin is part of our inheritance in Christ. He came to break the power of sin in our lives, and teach us an entirely different way to live. **These are skills for living that God wants us to learn and master.** The moment we chose to align ourselves with Jesus as our Lord and Savior, we were set apart, ...we became “holy ones” or “dedicated ones”..., ones who became consecrated to God. **We ARE holy, in that we are already set apart, or dedicated to God. The Holy Spirit, however, wants to impart His life into ours, so that we will BECOME holy or Christlike in our thoughts, attitudes and behaviors.** He wants to renew us and transform us so that our lives will express the heart and character of God.

Sadly, there are so many who profess to believe in Jesus who do not even know that this is a possibility, or an expectation for those who are following Christ. **They simply assume that they are, and always will be, sinners who are “covered” by God’s forgiving grace. They have not been taught that there is more, ...that God has already broken the power of sin in their lives, and has set aside the power of His Spirit to enable them to live differently.** “All things of His divine power, the things that pertain to life and godliness, *have been granted* to us...” (2 Pet. 1:3). “He *has granted to us* His precious and magnificent promises, so that... you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust” (2 Pet. 1:4). **If you don’t know that this is a possibility, why would you look for anything more?** If you think that forgiveness of sins was all that was available to you, or all that was expected of you, or for you, then **you would simply live with what you expect.** You would never look any farther, never expect anything more, and you would live a very immature, fleshly and substandard Christian life. So, so many believers are right there! They have no awareness or belief that there is anything more, so they live by their own understanding and their own self-ability. **They settle for what they expect, never knowing that God intended more.**

This is exactly where Paul begins his teaching about freedom from sin in Romans 6. He says, “Do you not know...?” *Ignorance* of what God has done for us in Christ, and what He is making available to us, is responsible for much of the lack of maturity and substandard living among believers. **God has done more, however. He has provided for our freedom from the bondage and power of sin, and He has made available to us power to walk in victory over sin.** He *has* made it possible for us to be transformed in our minds, hearts and character so that we will walk like Jesus. **As disciples, we need to learn how to discover these realities and develop the ability to walk in the Spirit.**

There are three important realities here: Death with Christ; Made Alive With Christ; and Learning to Live in Christ. The first two of these principles go back to what Jesus did for us. **He not only took our sins upon Himself** when He was on the cross, so that He could pay the penalty for them on our behalf, but **He also took us into Himself,**

so that we were identified with Him in His death and resurrection. 1 Peter 2:24 says, “He Himself bore our sins in His body on the tree, in order that being separated away from the sins we might live in the righteousness.” We are told four times in the NT that He is the “propitiation” or sacrifice of atonement for our sins (Rom. 3:25; Heb. 2:17; 1 Jn. 2:2; 4:10). Because of this, “having wiped out (erased) every accusation of debt against us, ... He has taken it away, nailing it to the cross (Col. 2:14). So, **He removed the sin, ...its stain and penalty..., away from us. But, more than that, He put us into Himself, so that we died with Him in His death. Our death with Him is what brought about our freedom from the power of sin, the flesh and the law.** We have been crucified with Him, and *that* set us free. Our old self was put to death with Him. “How shall we who *died to sin* still live in it? ³ Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus *have been baptized into His death?*... ⁶ ...knowing this, that *our old self was crucified with Him*, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin; ⁷ for he who has died is freed from sin.” (Romans 6:2-3,6-7) “Therefore my brethren, *you also were made to die to the Law* through the body of Christ...” (Rom. 7:4). “Now those who belong to Christ Jesus *have crucified the flesh* with its passions and desires” (Gal. 5:23), and, “...*the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world*” (Gal. 6:4).

Through our union with Him we were also made new. “...in order that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, *so we too might walk in newness of life.* ⁵ For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection” (Rom. 6:4,5). “Having been buried with Him in baptism, *you were also raised with Him* through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. ¹³ And when you were dead in trespasses and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, *He made you alive together with Him*” (Col. 2:12,13). “Therefore if anyone is in Christ, *he is a new creature*; the old things passed away; behold, *new things have come*” (2 Cor. 5:17). “...*put on the new self*, which in God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth” (Eph. 4:24). “...*you have put on the new self* who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him” (Col. 3:10). **The conclusion Paul states, “Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.”** (Rom. 6:11). “Therefore, my brethren, you also were made to die to the Law through the body of Christ, that you might be joined to another, to Him who was raised from the dead, that we might bear fruit for God... ⁶ But now we have been released from the Law, having died to that by which we were bound, so that we serve in newness of the Spirit and not in oldness of the letter” (Rom. 7:4,6). **It was necessary to die in order to be made new, to be joined to Jesus, and to be able to be led by the Spirit to bear fruit for God.**

All these things are the facts. They are historical, spiritual realities that happened in Christ. The verb tenses are past completed actions. **The stage has been set. The possibilities are there and available to us. Now, we just have to learn how to walk in them. How do we learn to walk in victory over sin, and in the fruit of the Spirit?**

(1.) We consider, evaluate, take into account, and reckon upon these facts – Romans 6:18. This is what God has done for us in Jesus Christ. We must clearly count on it in our minds and our choices.

(2.) We must consciously put off the old man and our former practices, and put on the new person – Ephesians 4:22-24; Colossians 3:5-14. This is also about putting your mind and heart right. Who are you, really?

(3.) We must set our minds on the things of the Spirit – Romans 8:5. Here we have a choice. We can set our minds on the things of God, or the things of our flesh. We decide what we will focus on. You and I have the capacity to set our minds in one direction or the other. We are not capable of *holding* our minds there, but we are capable of *investing* our minds on the things of the Spirit or the things of our fleshly desires, our emotions, the attractions of this world. In Colossians 3:1-4, Paul wrote, “So if you have been raised with the Messiah, seek what is above, where the Messiah is, seated at the right hand of God. ² Set your minds on what is above, not on what is on the earth. ³ For you have died, and your life is hidden with the Messiah in God. ⁴ When the Messiah, who is your life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory.” Your life, your identity, is somehow hidden with Christ in God. The apostle John wrote, “Beloved, *now we are* children of God. It does not yet appear who we will be. When He appears, we will be like Him...” (1 Jn. 3:2). We do not currently see who or what we are, but we are destined to become like Him. We can join ourselves to Him by being conscious, prayerful and attentive to the leading and activity of the Holy Spirit.

The fruit of the Spirit will come as we follow the leading of the Spirit.

(4.) We are to be honest and authentic in dealing with our emotions in a healthy way – Ephesians 4:17-27. In verses 17-19, Paul described the vain, empty and unproductive way that others deal with inner pain. Verse 19 says, “being in pain away from themselves, they have given themselves over to sensuality... with greediness.” Basically, they are stuffing their pain and medicating themselves with pleasure-seeking. This is unproductive. Instead, Paul encourages honesty, and keeping short accounts with frustration and anger, working to resolve conflict.

(5.) We must fill and satisfy our souls with God – Ephesians 5:18-21; 2 Corinthians 3:17,18. I tell people to “put their praise on”. **Delighting in God and enjoying Him is the greatest solution to the struggle with sin.** He changes us from the inside out, as we meditate on and fellowship with Him. He is the Source of our freedom.