

# Adult Bible Discovery- June 28, 2020

This study has been designed for you to do on your own or with the members of your family.

## **For Starters:**

*Share about the most amazing before and after story you have ever heard.*

*What made it so amazing?*

*Have you ever had a before and after situation that changed your life?*

*Is there any reason you would ever want to go back to the "before" part of your story?*

## **Read Romans 6:1-23**

In his lectures on the book of Romans, Luther writes:

"In Chapter 6 Paul takes up the special work of faith, the conflict of the spirit with the flesh for the complete slaying of the sin and lust that remain after we are justified. He teaches us that we are not by faith so freed from sin that we can be idle, slack, and careless, as though there were no longer any sin in us. Sin is present; but it is no longer reckoned for our condemnation, because of the faith that is struggling against it. Therefore we have enough to do all our life long in taming the body, slaying its lusts, and compelling its members to obey the spirit and not the lusts. Thus we become like the death and resurrection of Christ, and complete our baptism—which signifies the death of sin and the new life of grace—until we are entirely purified of sin, even our bodies rise again with Christ and live forever."

"All this we can do, he says, because we are under grace and not under law. He himself explains what this means. To be without the law is not the same thing as to have no laws and to be able to do what one pleases. Rather we are under the law when, without grace, we occupy ourselves with the works of the law. The sin certainly rules us through the law, for no one loves the law by nature; and that is great sin. Grace, however, makes the law dear to us; then sin is no longer present, and the law is no longer against us but one with us."

"This is the true freedom from sin and from the law. He writes about this down to the end of the chapter, says that it is a freedom only to do good with pleasure and to live well without the compulsion of the law. Therefore this freedom is a spiritual freedom, which does not overthrow the law but presents what the law demands, namely, pleasure in the law and love for it whereby the law is quieted and no longer drives men or makes demands of them. It is just as if you owed a debt to your overlord and could not pay it. There are two ways in which you could rid yourself of the debt: either he would take nothing from you and would tear up the account, or some good man would pay it for you and give you the means to satisfy the account. It is in this latter way that Christ has made us free from the law. Our freedom is, therefore, no carefree fleshly freedom which is not obligated to do anything, but a freedom that does many works of all kinds, and is free of the demands and obligations of the law." (AE 35:375-376)

## **Look at Romans 6:15**

- Why does it seem so desirable to keep sinning because of the grace that has been given to us in Christ?
- If we live under grace, why should we even concern ourselves about the law?

- *“The Holy Spirit does not permit sin to have dominion, to gain the upper hand so it can be carried out, but represses and restrains it from doing what it wants. If sin does what it wants, the Holy Spirit and faith are not present.”* (Smacald Articles III III 44)
  - Does this help you with the struggle between sin and grace? How or how not?

We may be tempted to make grace an invitation to sin. Because God will forgive me, why not do what I want? This is an immature attitude and it misses the point. Christ unites Himself to us! In His death and resurrection, we receive forgiveness and life. He calls us to live in His life, not to turn back to life dominated by sin. He enables us to live in the freedom of His grace.

### **Look at Romans 6:16-19**

- Why is it important that Paul uses the past tense to describe our connection to sin?
- The image of slavery illustrates the fact that we will serve something or someone. Jesus knew this too when he said, *“No one can serve two masters. He will hate the first master and love the second, or he will be devoted to the first and despise the second.”* (Matthew 6:24a) Of course Jesus was talking about money in this part of the Sermon on the mount but the same principles apply.

### **Look at Romans 6:20-23**

- What is the fruit of living only by the law?
- Paul uses the imagery of a slave for his first century audience. If Paul were writing to a 21<sup>st</sup> Century audience, what imagery might he have used to convey this same point?
- What fruit are we freed to bear? (See Galatians 5:22-23)
- To read more about living for Christ and not being slaves to sin, read Galatians 5:1-26

Although many people consider freedom to be the ultimate human right, no one is truly free spiritually. We were slaves to sin and bound to death. Knowing this, Jesus came to serve us by giving his life on the cross for us. Freed from sin, we can now serve God. Only when we are “slaves” to God will we have the freedom to be the people He created us to be.

### **Occupy your mind with these thoughts this week:**

- How does our sinful past still find ways of impacting our current and future reality?
- When this happens what can be done?
- What are some of the things that need to be confessed from your past as you move into the reality of bearing fruit?

As you ponder this remember what Jesus has already done for you. He has moved you from before to after and has placed you to make today and tomorrow a better place until he brings you to his place in heaven.