



Sermon Growth Guide

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Freedom From, Freedom For | Romans 6:12-23

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Key Verse: Romans 7:14 “We know that the law is spiritual, but I am unspiritual, sold as a slave to sin.”

Big Idea: Freedom from sin means freedom for living the beautiful and good life won for us by Jesus Christ.

Foundations

By this time in our sermon series based on Romans, we should know this: we are sinners. From the very beginning of his Letter to the Romans, Paul has laid out, very systematically all the ways we human beings “fall short of the glory of God.” We pursue every hedonistic impulse, dragging ourselves and others deeper into spiritual and even physical death.

Paul describes our broken and self-driven condition in detail. He does not let anyone off the hook. But if that were all he wrote, we would have stopped reading at the end of Chapter 3, if not before. But just as he diagnosed our dire circumstances, he always spoke of the redemptive hope we have. He always accompanied judgement with God’s grace, made possible by Jesus’ death and resurrection.

In today’s passage, he takes up the last refuge of sin-deniers – following the law. He tells us that keeping the Law does not wipe away our sin. And he tells us that the Law is a mirror into our decaying souls. Dale Bruner writes: “The really good thing that the Law of ‘do-Good’ does for us humans is this: it shows us what we deeply need to know – how utterly ‘undone,’ selfish, sinful and in need of salvation we actually are if we are to be and to do the authentically good.... it shows us how utterly problematic we human beings really are. It reveals us to ourselves.”

Understanding God’s Word

By the time we get to Romans 7, we are aware that we can’t just decide on our own to leave sin behind. We are in its grasp...we are enslaved and addicted. It is our master, our lord. But in announcing the freedom we have in Christ, Paul does not tell us our freedom makes us responsible only to and for ourselves. Rather he tells us that we are free from one lord so we can have another Lord, Jesus. Read John 8:1-11. Describe how you think this woman’s story illustrates Paul’s description of our bondage and release.

Applying God’s Word

We are in a season of Forty Days of Prayer, leading up to celebrating Christ’s Ascension which proclaims his lordship over all creation. This is a time when you set aside something so that you have room for God’s gifts. As you participate in this season as you can, how will you pray to know God’s freedom from something? How will you pray to know and live into God’s freedom for something far better?

Witnessing God’s Word

How can your life be free of the frenzy and burden of trying to be righteous, demonstrating to others the liberating joy we have in Jesus Christ.