

## Romans Chapter 6 - John Karmelich

Title "Why do we live like a caterpillar when we got butterfly wings?"

If you've been reading my Roman lessons, or are just familiar with the Gospel Message, you know that we are only saved by our trust in who Jesus is. As most of us can state that idea by heart! That leads to the question: Am I'm free to sin all I want as the price for sin was completely paid? The answer is why would we want to sin? That's Romans Chapter 6 in a nutshell! The author, Paul's making the argument here that just because we're free to do what we want, the issue is, what to do with that freedom?

The related issue is our "old nature" fights us when we want to please God. A great illustration is if we were trying to push a car up a hill. It dawned on the person pushing, that car has an engine! We should just ride in the car and not push it! I realize many are dealing with issues where that illustration doesn't help. You're singing the old tune, "I got a big problem and there's no solution in sight!" I know that I'm "preaching to the choir" when I say, pray for a solution! We must realize in any situation God's guiding our lives and we're to make the best decision we can, with the information we got! Sometimes it means just wait! Yes, I realize that is easy to say and hard to do! The important point is Romans 6 is all about "putting our money where our mouth is" (so to speak) for our commitment to God. Of course, salvation is by faith alone. It leads back to my infamous "now what" question. Let me continue!

The last chapter ended Paul's long argument that the only way to eternally saved is to just trust in God's complete payment for our sins (believe that Jesus is God, died for our sins and He resurrected Jesus for proof of that promise). The question that arises from that argument is, does that mean we are free to sin all we want so God will forgive us?" The key point of Chapter 6 is "no, it doesn't"! The real question is how much do we want to sin? In that sense, Chapter 6 separates into two questions: The first one deals with habitual sins (think of problems we've had for ages). The second is Paul deals with the occasional sin. I can just hear some of you say, "you've got no idea how long I've struggled with this sin!" What is my first reaction is, if you feel guilty about it, that's an indication of your salvation, as you realize what we're doing isn't pleasing to God! Next is my "car illustration"! God gave us a car (Holy Spirit) to help us where we know we're doing wrong, but still struggle with it! It's important to tell God, "I realize I'm struggling with an issue that isn't pleasing to You"! Help me to be the type of Christian you desire that I be, on Your timing!

That doesn't mean we'll be perfect five minutes later. Sin's a lifelong battle even for the best of us. It's a matter of telling God, "I can't change without Your help! Help me to be the kind of person you desire so I can be a better witness for You!" I heard an illustration I like: Being "Born again" to use a cliché we know well, is like instantly changing from a caterpillar to a butterfly! God wants us to fly (live how He desires) but we still want to do things our old way, like living like a caterpillar but with wings to fly! I know I'm preaching to veteran Christians. We all struggle and desire a "magic pill" to change! Most of us have heard many sermons about reading the bible when we desire to sin! We get the lecture about telling our hands or our eyes to not do what we know will lead to sin"! The fact we know what we are doing is displeasing to God's a good sign that 1) We want to please God and 2) We struggle with what we know isn't pleasing to Him!

Let me ask a more basic question. If we're saved by grace alone, why bother? What's to gain by trying to be a good witness for Him? It is not about our good deeds outweighing our bad ones in life. The first thing to remember is we're saved for a purpose: To glorify God with our lives! I know that's scriptural, but I'm too lazy to look it up right now! I state a lot we do have rewards in heaven as believers. That's

based on whether we live as He desires. Does that mean we lose rewards when we mess up? If we are saved, we're not graded on our good deeds outweighing our bad ones! God gives each of us desires to please Him and gifts we can use to do so. He wants us to use those gifts to make a difference for Him. That's where rewards come in! What about Christians who are martyred or die at a young age! To me a "fair God" judges fairly!

Meanwhile back to Chapter 6. The key point is we can't lose our salvation based on what we do, but it is still important what we do! Not to get more saved or show what a good person we are! God created us and saved us to be His witnesses to the world around us. God wants people to be saved. None of us know who is and who isn't. I realize God can save who He wants when He wants. Still, He wants us to be a living witness for Him. That's where the "Biblical Law" comes in! I know some biblical laws only apply to those of Jewish backgrounds (e.g., the food laws). God doesn't want us to say, steal or murder or lie as one it can get us in big trouble, and it makes us a bad witness for Jesus!

OK John you're preaching to the choir again! I'm not going to pass out "magic pills" so that we'll never sin again. They don't exist! What does exist is the Spirit of God living inside of us. By His power then we can live as He desires. Asking God sincerely to help lead us down the path He desires helps. If you desire an accountability partner or other means to help, those are good things! I recall a story by a man who's a famous pastor telling someone that he is to be accountable to him weekly. After a week he was struggling with that sin and told the pastor, "I was too scared to see you and tell you I messed up!"

Accountability is a good thing if we're willing to make that commitment. The underlying issue is God wants us to live a life as sin free as possible again, not be perfect, not to earn His love, but so we'd be a good witness to others as we go through our life! People pay attention to what we do especially if state we're strong Christians. As we know, living the Christian life isn't difficult, it's impossible! That's why we ask God to guide us. Once we live that way for a while, we still struggle with the desire to go back to our old life when leads us to sin and ultimately leads to be a bad witness for Jesus!

One of the key words in this chapter is slavery. When Paul wrote this, a rough estimate is two thirds of the Roman Empire were slaves! Remember slaves essentially had no rights. Before we trusted in Jesus, most of us realize we were slaves to sin, in the sense we did not care about our behavior, as we thought we got a bad habit we must accept! Being a Christian means we're in effect slaves to Jesus, as we now have a new built in desire to please Him with our lives! I realize "slave" has an ugly ring to it. But it's a great way to describe the Christian life: As a slave to what Jesus desires of us. Obviously living that way brings one far more joy than living any other way!

Another key word in Romans 6 is baptism. The word is a literal translation. We associate baptism with water, but the meaning is about being associated with something or someone. Christians associate with Jesus' death, burial and His resurrection when we commit our lives to Him. The power to turn from sin is the Holy Spirit as He works in our lives!

Let me share something related to this ministry. One of my greatest joys I get is getting messages that a person is grateful for my ministry work! It is far greater than financial rewards and other things. It's knowing I'm making a difference in people's lives that gives me joy! I sincerely hope all of you find a way to use your lives to make a difference for Him. Financial rewards/fame are short term! Making a difference for eternity is greater than anything else we can do in this lifetime. That's why I'm pushing a Romans 6 option as a lifestyle choice! It's how God wants us to live. Being saved is just the beginning of how He wants to use our lives for His glory. I realize some are martyred for their belief while others

go to heaven right after they're saved. Experiencing the joy of God using us for His glory is better than anything else one can experience in this life, bar none! If you get that you get Romans 6!

With that said, hope you like this study. I wrote a more detailed one some years back. If you want to read that, click on one of the links below. It is still a joy to study this stuff and again I'm grateful for you reading this. If you're new here, you're always welcome to e-mail me. Thanks again for reading!

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