

Slaves Yet Free

Rom 8:12-17 ¹² Therefore, brethren, we are debtors — not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. ¹³ For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. ¹⁴ For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. ¹⁵ For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father." ¹⁶ The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, ¹⁷ and if children, then heirs — heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.

If I should ask, "Do you find it pleasant to be in debt?" No doubt you would answer, "It is never pleasant to be in debt." But in this passage we shall learn that there is a indebtedness that is richly rewarding. Paul here is speaking of two types of indebtedness. One is seriously deadly but the other is the source of great blessing.

But understand, the truth simply put, is this, All Men Are Debtors! From the passage before us I want us to note three things regarding the enslavement of men. 1. The indebtedness of the unsaved world; 2, The indebtedness of the redeemed. 3. and a consideration of the result of each.

A. The enslavement of all mankind. - The indebtedness of the unsaved world.

1. All men are born into slavery.

- a. What would be the reaction of the average American citizen to this declaration?
- b. Need to consider the response of the Jews to Jesus when He proclaimed that He had come to set them free.

John 8:31-33 Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." They answered Him, "We are Abraham's descendants, and **have never been in bondage to anyone**. How can You say, 'You will be made free?'"

- c. More importantly we need to note our Lord's response to them.

John 8:34 Jesus answered them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin.

- d. Men are conceived as sinners therefore all men are slaves at conception.

2. What would apply to the circumcised would apply to all men.

Gal 5:3 And I testify again to every man who becomes circumcised **that he is a debtor to keep the whole law**.

Prov 5:22 His own iniquities entrap the wicked man, and he is caught in the cords of his sin.

3. The enslaver is Satan himself, the god of this age.

Eph 2:3 And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, **according to the prince of the power of the air**, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience,

4. The very snare that entraps all mankind is death. - *For if you live according to the flesh you will die.*

- a. You will (mello) die – The word here denotes an action already begun, or at least in preparation, rather than wholly future.
- b. It would express the sad truth that a life of carnality **is not only the sure prelude to endless death, but fuel for the final flame**. (Barnes notes)

2 Sam 22:6 The sorrows of Sheol surrounded me; the snares (noose, trap) of death confronted me.

Rom 6:23 For the wages of sin is death.

5. Therefore the only answer is to put to death the deeds of the body. - *but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live*

- a. It has been said that '**If you do not kill sin, it will kill you.**'
- b. Thankfully we have the presence of the Spirit of God to help us in this battle.

B. The indebtedness of the redeemed. - *Therefore, brethren, **we are debtors**.*

1. We are not debtors to the flesh, the world or the devil.

- c. The world has done nothing for us. – We owe it nothing.
- d. Satan has done nothing for us. He has only deceived and destroyed. – We owe him nothing.
- e. The flesh has only brought death. - *For if you live according to the flesh you will die*

2. On the contrary it is implied here that we are debtors to God.
 - a. He has redeemed us from the bondage that we were born under.

Gal 4:3 Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world.

- b. He has redeemed us from the bondage of the law.

(1) If we were to gain eternal life through the law we would be required to keep the whole of the law.

*Gal 3:10 For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who does not **continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them.**"*

- (2) We were unable to meet that requirement.
- (3) Jesus did what we could not do.

- c. We have been redeemed from the law of sin and death.

*Rom 8:2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made **me free from the law of sin and death.***

3. Therefore we owe a debt of gratitude to our Savior.
 - a. Not as a means to make ourselves acceptable to God.
 - b. But out of thankfulness to God.
4. It is not that we are no longer slaves, it is that we now have a most gracious Master.
 - a. Do you remember how Paul introduced himself in the opening of this letter?

Rom 1:1 Paul, a slave (doulos) of Jesus Christ.

- b. Exact same word as used by Paul in his letter to Titus.

*Titus 2:9 Exhort servants to be obedient to their **own masters**, and to please them well in all things; not answering again;*

- c. Jesus calls us to take upon us His yoke.

Matt 11:29-30 Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."

- d. The yoke is a symbol of servitude, of slavery.

1 Tim 6:1 Let as many slaves as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honor.

Conclusion: Therefore we are indebted to our Lord. – He has redeemed us from the curse of the law.

We are slaves of Jesus Christ.

If the world would belittle we need only ask them these two questions.

1. Whose slave are you?
2. And what is the reward you shall receive?

For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.

On the other hand what is the reward of God's elect?

Here we are told we will live, Jesus said that He not only gives life but He gives it more abundantly. What is this abundant life we have in Christ?

The Lord willing we shall consider next Lord's Day what does it mean to be a joint heir with Christ.