

"Further Examination of Free Will" (Slide 1)

Reading: Romans 5:12-21

Last week we established that *Jesus* is an individual within the *GodHead*. He is referred to as the *Son of God* and the *Son of Man* in the Bible. He is known as the *Word which became flesh*. He was and is the Messiah, *The Christ*, thus *Savior* of the world.

Much of what we read last week from the Gospel of John chapter 1 establishes that Jesus was God The Son. He was the Word that became flesh through miraculous means. That makes Him 100% God and 100% man.

I can emphatically say that I don't 100% understand this spiritual phenomenon, yet, by faith I know it to be so. It boggles the human mind to grasp this concept, so we should leave it at that.

We determined that Jesus had free will. He stated in:

John 10:17-18a (Slide 2)

17 For this reason the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life so that I may take it again. 18 No one has taken it away from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative.

This was the will of the Father and He obeyed His will!

He says; ***"I and the Father are one."*** Jesus was all in on God's plan of salvation before the foundation of the world that *"He created Himself!"*

Since Jesus had *Free Will* we established that it was possible for Him to sin. Otherwise He couldn't possibly be the High Priest that the Hebrew writer describes in Hebrews 4 where it states: that He can ***sympathize***, that

is; understand or relate to/ with our weaknesses because He was tempted just like we are. This would mean nothing if He could not sin.

Yet, He was without Sin

1 Peter 1:18-20 (Slide 3)

18 knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, 19 but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ.

(Slide 4) ***20 For He was foreknown before the foundation of the world, but has appeared in these last times for the sake of you***

Speaking of Christ as our example Peter states in:

1 Peter 2:21b-22 (Slide 5)

leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps, 22 WHO COMMITTED NO SIN, NOR WAS ANY DECEIT FOUND IN HIS MOUTH;

Jesus is our example. We are His followers and as such we are to follow His lead. If He was tempted yet remained sinless, then when we are tempted we are expected to not sin. Ask yourself; *"How am I doing?"* I can't answer for you but for me I can say, unfortunately, *"Not that good."*

I know one thing for sure though that I can escape temptation because the Bible, specifically, the Apostle Paul, clearly says in:

1 Corinthians 10:13 (Slide 6)

No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it.

When tempted by Potiphar's wife to commit adultery; Joseph ran!! That was his way of escaping her temptation!!

The statement on the “**common temptation**” parallels what Solomon says: ***there is nothing new under the sun.*** (Ecclesiastes 1:9b).

“If I can’t seem to escape it, Then how did the Man, Jesus do it?”

We often hear the phrase “*willpower.*” That can be misinterpreted. If we leave it at that without extensive examination we might not fully realize what “*willpower*” infers.

That phrase is often associated with being on a diet so that one can lose weight or become more physically fit or healthy. I don’t know too many people who enjoy dieting because it is difficult to resist foods or snacks that one enjoys, especially when it comes to something like rich milk chocolate. Speaking for myself, of course.

Diets are hard to maintain or to stick with. People I’ve known, including myself, tend to backslide and indulge in foods or snacks that are forbidden for the diet. In other words, they lack the “*willpower*” to say no.

“So how did Jesus remain sinless? He said NO to the temptation.” This doesn’t mean He could not sin, it means with “*Free Will*” He chose not to sin.

He clearly knew what it would be like to become a man faced with the possibility of sinning. And if we think it was easy and that God shielded Him from temptation we would be wrong. What we read in **Hebrews 4** points that out.

The Hebrew letter also points out the difficulty in running this race we are in and that Jesus Himself faced that same difficulty.

Hebrews 12:1-2 (Slide 7)

1 Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, (Slide 8) 2 fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

The word ***“race”*** in this text comes from the Greek word *“Agona”* in which we get our english word *“Agony.”* Jesus knew His life on earth would be filled with agony.

Especially the physical pain of the cross and the mental agony of its shame. Yet, He of His own *free will* endured the cross.

How? He Emptied Himself for our sake and the Sake of the one who sent Him!!

Philippians 2:5-7 (Slide 9)

5 Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, 6 who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men.

emptied Himself-made Himself of no reputation

“Let this sink in!!” Jesus could have chosen to act and live much differently than He did. He had privileges and power beyond our comprehension as the *Son of God* but chose to act according (*surrender*) to God’s will!!

His *willpower* to resist temptation and to be obedient to the *Will of God* comes from the fact that *He emptied Himself* and became so Morally erect that the thought of sin was incomprehensible. To commit sin was inconceivable and apart from the nature of who He became on our behalf.

All of this doesn't mean that Jesus could not sin. It does, however, conclude that He chose not to sin. If He wasn't able to Sin then He wouldn't be able to have grown in knowledge as the *Gospel of Luke 2:52* states that He did. If He were only God on earth, and not 100% man at the same time, an all knowing God would not grow in knowledge nor need too!!

Jesus was the second Adam

So many people believe that man is born into sin. It is an inherited condition that stems from the fall of *Adam* and *Eve*.

Granted, the Bible says that:

Romans 3:23 (Slide 10)

for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God

Paul's message to the Romans doesn't say that men were *born into sin* or are *inherently corrupt*. In fact, theoretically men could remain sinless. He is, however, stating that at some time or another men commit sin.

Further, if what they are saying about being born a sinner is true, that would make what God said after the creation a falsehood. It would also make His nature false.

Genesis 1:31a (Slide 11)

God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good.

Our God, who cannot lie, cannot be tempted by evil nor inhabit space with evil, would not create anything corrupt or born with sin.

Romans 5:12 (Slide 12)

Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned—

Analyze this for a moment. When did Adam sin? When he was born or when He was a baby or a toddler? No! He was created fully grown! A man!

Sin came into the world because Adam *chose to sin* of his own *free will* when he knew better.

Romans 5:15 (Slide 13)

But the free gift is not like the transgression. For if by the transgression of the one the many died, much more did the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abound to the many. This is a profound and true statement. What He accomplished through His own free will, His choice, established that we would not die spiritually, if we are in Christ through baptism and continued faithfulness!

Romans 5:18-19 (Slide 14)

18 So then as through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men, even so through one act of righteousness there resulted justification of life to all men. (Slide 15) 19 For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous.

We would have absolutely no comfort thinking that it was impossible for this one righteous man that is; *Jesus*, to not have the ability to sin.

He was God on Earth and a Man who, really beyond our comprehension, held onto the *nature of God* through it all and became the perfect sacrifice to save mankind from sin.

Where Adam chose to sin, knowing full well his actions were wrong, Jesus chose not to sin, knowing full well the consequences of sin. Emptying Himself to the will of God, He died on the cross for our guilt.

Joseph chose not to sin. Job chose not to sin. It is rare but not impossible.

Invitation

If you have not emptied yourself to the will of God, why not? Do it today and be baptized into Christ for the remission of your sins.

If indeed you have been baptized but have opened up a place in your heart where God once dwelt and allowed something else to come in, but today you recognize your weakness; may we pray for you and with you? The prayers of the faithful who can sympathize with your circumstance can help restore your walk with Christ Jesus.

Please let us know how we can help you today.

Reading:

Romans 5:12-21

12 Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned— 13 (For until the law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law. 14 Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned according to the likeness of the transgression of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come. 15 But the free gift is not like the offense. For if by the one man's offense many died, much more the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abounded to many. 16 And the gift is not like that which came through the one who sinned. For the judgment which came from one offense resulted in condemnation, but the free gift which came from many offenses resulted in justification. 17 For if by the one man's offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.)

18 Therefore, as through one man's offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man's righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life. 19 For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man's obedience many will be made righteous.

20 Moreover the law entered that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more, 21 so that as sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

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