

Obeying the Form of Doctrine

Romans 6:16-18 talks about how the gospel has changed our lives so that we no longer live in sin or for sin. Verse **17** says that we were slaves of sin but became servants of righteousness by obeying from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered to us.

Last week, we observed the doctrine, or gospel, in **1 Cor. 15:1-11**. The gospel teaches us that Jesus died for our sins according to scripture, was buried, arose from the dead according to scripture, and was seen by many reliable witnesses. In order to become a Christian and be free from sin, **Romans 6:17** says that we obey a form of this teaching. Of course, the teaching would have to be in the form of a command in order to obey. We do not obey the facts of the gospel; we believe them. We demonstrate our faith by obeying the commands of the gospel. What commandment does Jesus give us that represents His death, burial, and resurrection from the dead?

The parallel of **Romans 6:17** is **Romans 6:3-4**. Here we find the commandment form of the doctrine of the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. It is baptism. It is a different way of looking at the same process of becoming free from sin and made spiritually alive in Christ. It is the reason, expressed in two different ways, to explain why we must no longer sin.

Baptism is the picture of the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. We are baptized into the death of Christ. Baptism is a burial in water in the likeness of Jesus' burial in the ground. Then we are raised up out of the water spiritually alive to walk in newness of life.

Baptism as a mere ritual has no power at all. This is why the heart is important. *From the heart* we must obey the command to be baptized (the commandment form of the teaching about the death, burial, and resurrection). **Colossians 2:12** explains it is our faith in the working of God that raises us or makes us alive spiritually, but only after we have been buried (baptized). **1 Peter 3:21** says plainly that baptism does also now save us, but it does not say that we are saved by baptism only, just as a verse that says we are saved by faith never says that we are saved by faith only. The same verse (**1 Peter 3:21**) says that it is more than a washing of the body; it is an appeal of a good conscience before God; it is calling on the Lord's name to wash away sins (**Acts 22:16**).

Following the right form of the right teaching with the right attitude makes us free from sin, makes us alive spiritually, and makes us servants of God. Have you obeyed from the heart that correct form of the correct teaching?