

Romans 6

Good morning and once again thank you for joining us. would you please turn in your Bibles to Romans 6?

If you've ever spent much time traveling by plane, you know how frustrating flying can sometimes be.

SHOW AIRPORT CROWD PIC After a long day of flying, and waiting for the airplane exit to open, like a herd of cattle you stampede your way to the baggage area as everyone rushes to get their bags. **CLOSE AIRPORT CROWD PIC**

But did you ever notice as you're waiting for your bag, **SHOW BAGGAGE PIC** there's always that lone piece of luggage no one has claimed on the carousel, and it's just spinning around and around and around?

Tragically, this scene appropriately describes some Christians, who never have victory over life dominant sins. And they seem to just go round and round in frustration and heartbreak. **CLOSE BAGGAGE PIC**

But it doesn't have to be this way. This morning we're going to see what the Bible has to say about overcoming life dominating sins.

We're going to pick up our study in verse 11 of chapter 6 and finish the chapter, and the title of this morning's message is XXXX

LET'S PRAY

It's been a couple of weeks since we did our study in Romans, so it's important to recap what we've studied so far in Romans.

If you recall, Romans 1 through 5 dealt with the word justification. And remember justification means 'just as if I've never sinned.' Jesus paid for all of our sins upon the cross when He died for us

and when we place our trust in Him, we no longer have sin credited to our account.

In the first 5 chapters of Romans we've seen over and over again that salvation is apart from works. That no amount of good works we could ever do would get us in the right standing of God because of His holiness. Only the perfect work of Jesus settles our sin debt.

We've spent significant time discussing justification.

Now in chapters 6 through 8, the emphasis switches from the positional truth of justification to the practical truth of sanctification.

The word sanctification comes from the term sanctified. To "sanctify" something is to set it apart for special use; to "sanctify" a person is to make them holy.

Because we are justified positionally, we are sanctified practically. As Christians we are set apart to be used by the Lord, and to become more like the Jesus.

Show Slide of differences

Romans 1 through 5 tells us we are dead in sin. Chapters 6 through 8 tell us we are dead to sin.

Chapters 1 through 5 tell us we are free from the penalty of sin. Chapters 6 through 8 tell us we are free from the power of sin.

Close Slide of differences

A few years ago a little boy came home from Sunday School, and said he learned that the apostle Paul's father was one of the thieves on the cross next to Jesus. The boy's mother wondered where he'd gotten such a wild idea. The boy then quoted Paul in

Romans 6:6, “my old man was crucified with Christ...” That’s not what Paul meant!

But it’s actually not far off...

See everyone has a father who had a father, who had a father... all the way back to Adam. And the fallout of that original sin in the garden is felt in every human heart. Every one of us is born with a sin nature. This is what Paul calls “the old man.” It’s the BC-before Christ version of us. The old man describes when we were completely governed by selfishness and pride – it was us as we ran away from God.

But when we surrendered to Jesus, this old natural tendency to reject God and pursue sin was crucified

God’s answer to our sin nature isn’t turning over a new leaf, or some behavior modification, or hypnosis, or psychiatry, or reality therapy. The only way to get victory over our old man is to crucify him.

It’s not a 12-step approach we need. It’s a one-step approach. The victory is won at the cross. And through the power of the HS, we see practical ways for each of us to be sanctified, meaning for us to be more like Christ.

Let’s dig in.

11 Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord. The Greek word translated "reckon" means "to consider it so", or "to treat it as if it’s really true." When Paul tells us to reckon ourselves to be dead to sin and alive to God, he’s saying we should consider it a done deal.

We need to see ourselves in light of this truth! We are dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus!

The 1st step to overcoming dominant sins is to change the way we view ourselves. Rather than seeing ourselves as struggling sinners, we need to learn to see ourselves as victorious saints in Christ.

But it's not enough to just know this truth, we need to take it a step further, and let the truth that's in Christ shape our mind and our thoughts.

I want to be clear- this isn't mental gymnastics, or the power of positive thinking. Considering it so doesn't make it so. We consider it so, because it is so!

Show Pic of Honus Wagner Many years ago a sportswriter asked baseball's greatest shortstop, Honus Wagner, if baseball was a tough job. His reply was classic, "Ain't much to being a ballplayer, if you are a ballplayer." **CLOSE PIC**

And the same is true with being a Christian...All of us need to make sure we're living out what we are!

The 1st step to overcoming dominant sin- change the way we view ourselves.

So what's step 2?

12 Therefore (pause here) Because you reckon yourselves dead to sin and alive in Christ Jesus....

do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts. Is it possible for Christians to be utterly enslaved to sin? Romans 6:12 tells us plainly and clearly the answer is yes.

Paul commands us not to let sin control the way we live, even as believers. Tragically yes—it is possible for Christians to become enslaved, addicted, and controlled by sin.

A believer can become enslaved to greed, anger, sloth, envy, pride or lust, for example.

The 2nd step to resisting sin is to not give into the temptation. The bible tells us when temptation comes, we do not have to yield to it

1 Cor. 10:13 No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.

To resist sin we must make the proper choice and fight the temptation. And the best way to resist the temptation is to remember who you are in Christ. I don't need to look at pornography on the computer because I'm a child of the living God. I don't need to allow my anger to spiral out of control because I'm a child of the living God.

You get the point.

Verse 13 has 2 sections we're going to break down...

13 And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, pause here. The term 'your members' is describing the various parts of our body – our ears, lips, eyes, hands, mind, and so on.

The point is clear and very practical: "You have eyes. Don't put them in the service of sin. You have ears. Do not put them in the service of sin."

If you want to avoid sin, don't allow the use of the parts of your body to sin. Don't use your eyes to watch garbage. Don't allow your ears to listen to wicked music.

Think for a moment about how God used David's hands to slay Goliath. Yet later, David used his hands for sin as he committed adultery with Bathsheba.

We've all been guilty of using our parts of the body for sin. Perhaps none more than our lips. Look at **James 3:10 Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be so.** The same mouth we use to sing praises to God is the same mouth that so often gets us into trouble through boasting, or gossiping, or slandering.

So verse 13 begins by telling us what we're NOT to do with our bodies, but what are we to do?

...13 but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.

Pause here. We're to present ourselves to God as being alive from the dead. Of all the people Jesus raised from the dead, think of Lazarus for example, do you think there was some excitement, some enthusiasm, and some consecration to say Lord I'm all yours? I bet there was-we need to do the same-say Lord I'm no longer dead in my sin and trespasses-I'm all yours!!!

Notice the emphasis in this entire section is on the choice. It's a decision of our will what we do with our bodies, these instruments that God has given us.

Studies have shown that if a person lives in prison for years, and then is set free, they often still think and act like a prisoner. The habits of freedom aren't ingrained in their life yet. And Satan tries to do the same with the believer too by lying to us that these freedoms aren't available to us!

I read the fascinating story recently of 2 brothers who fought for the right to rule in Belgium in the 14th century.

The elder brother's name was Raynald, but he was commonly called "Crassus," a Latin nickname meaning "fat," for he was horribly obese.

After a heated battle, Raynald's younger brother Edward led a successful revolt against him and assumed the title of Duke over his lands. But instead of killing Raynald, Edward devised a devious imprisonment.

He had a room in the castle built around Raynald a room with only one door. The door was not locked, the windows were not barred, and Edward promised Raynald that he could regain his land and his title any time that he wanted to. All he would have to do is leave the room.

The obstacle to freedom was not in the doors or the windows, but with Raynald himself. Being grossly overweight, he could not fit through the door, even though it was of near-normal size. All Raynald needed to do was diet down to a smaller size, then walk out a free man, with all he had before his fall.

Yet his younger brother kept sending him an assortment of tasty foods, and Raynald's desire to be free never won out over his desire to eat.

From time to time some would accuse Duke Edward of being cruel to his older brother, but he would simply reply, "My brother is not a prisoner. He may leave when he so wills."

Raynald stayed in that room for ten years and wasn't released until after Edward died in battle. By then his health was so ruined he died within a year. He was a prisoner of his own appetite.

Just as Raynald was enslaved by his appetite, sin will enslave all those who yield to it.

Sadly, this illustrates the experience of many Christians. Jesus set them forever free legally, and they have the ability to walk in that freedom from sin whenever they choose. But since they keep

yielding their bodily instruments and appetites to the service of sin, they live a life of defeat, discouragement, and imprisonment.

Brothers and sisters, it doesn't have to be that way!

...13 But present yourselves to God: It isn't enough to not use our body for sin, rather we're to use our bodies in the service of our King!

If you remember from our studies in the book of Exodus, the priests consecrated their bodies to God. Sacrificial blood was applied to different parts of their body, showing that their body belonged to God and were to be used for His glory **Exodus 29:20** **Then you shall kill the ram, and take some of its blood and put it on the tip of the right ear of Aaron and on the tip of the right ear of his sons, on the thumb of their right hand and on the big toe of their right foot, and sprinkle the blood all around on the altar.** It was a display demonstrating from head to toe, their body was to be used for God.

God didn't just give us these bodies to sit around and watch the news or funny videos all day.

Now whenever we talk about sin and resisting sin, lot's of folks try and quote the bible and say if you resist the devil he will flee from you.

But that's not what the bible says. **James 4:7 Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.** You cannot resist the devil if you do not first submit yourself to God.

14 For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.

For the Jewish person of Paul's day, living life under the OT law and trying to obey it was everything.

But we are not under the law, we are under the New Covenant. We're not under the law but under grace because of what Jesus did on the cross for us.

Remember the OT law is good, holy, and righteous. But nobody can keep the OT law perfectly, which means the law then condemns everyone who has failed to keep it.

But praise God we're no longer under the law as a condition of acceptance with God. Jesus fulfilled all the law **Matthew 5:17**

"Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill.

15 What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? Certainly not! Paul's question here is not a repetition of verse 1. Romans 6:1 says What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?

In verse 1 Paul asked if we could continue in sin. Here in verse 15 it says shall we sin? In verse 1 he was looking at continual sinning. Here verse 15 deals with specific acts of sin.

The Bible is clear that a lifestyle of habitual sin is not compatible with the person whose life has been changed by grace through Jesus.

But what about an occasional sin here and there? If we are under grace and not the law, do we need to be concerned about a little sin here and there?

The answer is yes-here's why...

16 Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness?

Everybody serves somebody! And we choose!

Whatever you present yourself to obey, you become its servant. For example, if I obey my appetite every time my tummy rumbles, I am a slave to my appetite.

So we have a choice in our service, and we choose- sin leading to death or obedience leading to righteousness.

17 But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered. Obeyed from the heart is a wonderful description of faith. It shows that faith comes from the heart, not only the mind.

See faith results in obedient actions, because if we really believe something, we will act according to that belief.

If I believe my car will start when I leave here, I'll put my key in the ignition. If I believe my house has electricity, I'll flip on the light switch. Faith results in actions according to that belief.

If our faith isn't leading to obedient actions, we have to ask, do we really believe?

Now we need to spend a moment on the phrase 'that form of doctrine'. The word 'form' describes a physical mold used to shape molten metal.

And it presents a beautiful picture of God working in our lives – first He melts us by the work of the Holy Spirit and the Word of God. Then He pours us into His mold of truth – that form of doctrine and shapes us into His image.

It's describing the process of sanctification.

So why not then, occasionally sin, you know let our hair down and let loose? Because sin is not our master, and we no longer serve it.

18 And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness. What does it mean to be free from sin and to become a slave of righteousness? It means that sin is no longer our boss or our master. As Christians righteousness is our boss, so we're to serve righteousness instead of sin.

To be set free from sin means that we never have to sin again. Though sin is inevitable until our flesh is resurrected in glory, it isn't because God has designed a system by which we must sin.

To be clear, we will not achieve sinless perfection in this body. **1 John 1:8 If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.** We still sin don't we? As believers we all desire to not sin-yet we will still sin-we'll see this in chapter 7 next week.

19 I speak in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members as slaves of uncleanness, and of lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves of righteousness for holiness The Apostle Paul apologized for using slavery as an illustration, because it was so degrading and pervasive, and especially because many of his Roman readers were slaves. But Paul knew slavery was an accurate and meaningful illustration.

And verse 19 repeats the point made earlier. First, we're to present our members as slaves of righteousness, not lawlessness. This means that we don't show up for work to our old boss.

Can you imagine? You land a new job, and the first day on the new job you leave work at lunch time and go to your old job and ask your old boss what they want you to do. That wouldn't make sense! Nobody thinks about trying to please their old boss when you change jobs.

We serve Christ, not sin. Let pleasing Christ be our priority!

And how do we do that? Verse 19 tells us.

Lawlessness leads to more lawlessness. Righteousness leads to holiness – which is more righteousness. Our habits predict which direction we're moving.

If your habits are leading you in the direction of sin, guess what's going to happen?

Do what you need to do. Sell the tv-get rid of the smartphone, etc

20 For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness.

21 What fruit did you have then in the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death. Sin always seems thrilling for a time. Sin can be shiny, tasty, attractive or sweet or even all the above.

Stolen glances turn into thrilling moments with someone who seems sweet, but it's poison to our spirit. Yet how often has a few seconds of pleasure sown years of pain for countless individuals and their families and friends?

Satan will always use sin in such a way to try to get us to ignore the warning of the HS who prompts us to flee the temptation.

SHOW FISHING HOOK PIC If you've ever gone fishing, you know that fishing hook is barbed. The fish nibbles on the worm, your bobber goes up and down, till finally he swallows the hook. And what happens? The fish squirms and fights and I'm sure wishes he wasn't there. But he's hooked. The fish can do nothing on his power to be free. **CLOSE PIC**

And the same is true with us. we cannot free ourselves from sin. Jesus has already done it...look at verse 22 and 23

22 But now having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life. 23 For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

This verse describes two unstoppable absolutes: (1) spiritual death is the paycheck for every person's slavery to sin; and (2) eternal life is a free gift God gives undeserving sinners who believe in His Son.

Three words stand out in Romans 6 - know, and reckon, and present. Know that you're dead to sin and alive to God... Then reckon it so, form a new identity in Christ... And last, present your members as "instruments of righteousness"

In short, get behind your new identity with your mind, and words, and memory, and eyes, and hands, and feet - your members.

Use them as a tool to promote your new life in Christ. Start speaking, and doing, and going in ways that fortify your faith.

Identity determines behavior - how we see ourselves determines how we live our lives. But then ensuing actions reinforce our identity.

If I see myself as a speed skater, but never get out on the ice I won't be a very good speed skater. And you can see yourself as a Christian, but if you never read your Bible, or fellowship, or worship, or witness it'll be hard to hang on to that identity when the pressure gets applied.

COMMUNION

Luke 22 19 And He took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me."

AND

20 Likewise He also took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you."