

Romans Part Four

Rom. 1:16 ¶ For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is **the power of God for salvation** to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

Rom. 1:17 For in it the righteousness [= rightness] of God is revealed from faith to faith [= by faith for faith]; as it is written: **“BUT THE RIGHTEOUS ONE WILL LIVE BY FAITH.”**

“Salvation” in Romans means deliverance from God’s _____ towards sinful human beings in that God is handing sinful humans over to a deeper experience of sin.

The Christian life starts by faith and is lived by faith. We are powerless to be right with God. We are powerless to overcome sin. So, the only just way for God to work with people like us is for God to justify us. And the only just way for God to give that grace is on the principle of faith in Jesus Christ, not our relative amount of good works.

So having been justified by faith, now God can justifiably give His power to Christians to overcome sin and be delivered from His wrath. That’s what we saw in chapter 5:

Rom. 5:9 Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we **shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him**.

Rom. 5:10 For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we **shall be saved by His life**.

Since the death of Jesus Christ made a way for us to be justified by faith, then certainly the resurrection of Jesus Christ can empower us to overcome sinfulness. This experience is also going to be experienced by faith in what God can do.

Paul is leading up to:

Rom. 8:11 But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead **will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you**.

In chapter 5, Paul explained that we have been set free from servitude to sin. Adam ushered in the reign of sin over humanity. People sin like Adam and we experience death like Adam. But now through another man and because of His obedience at the cross, Jesus Christ has opened up the reign of God's grace and the experience of life.

Rom. 5:21 *so that, as sin reigned in death, so also **grace would reign** through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

This is speaking of our Christian life. But when you bring up God's grace, you are always going to be accused of promoting sinfulness:

Rom. 6:1 ¶ *What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase?*

Rom. 6:2 *Far from it! How shall we who died to sin still live in it?*

Paul has been picturing sin as a terrible slave master who pays us back with death.



But Jesus Christ has set us free from this servitude. Jesus paid for our freedom at the cross so that God's grace now reigns over those of us who have believed. But now Paul says something else surprising. Christians have died to sin. If sin is this terrible slave master who kills us, then we don't have to serve sin anymore because we are already dead to sin.

Think of it this way. Let's suppose that a Roman ruler has a bunch of slaves. He owns and bosses around those slaves as long as they are alive. But if they are dead, then they are free from the slave owner. He can't boss them around anymore. And that's Paul's picture for us to grasp.

But what does Paul mean that we have died to sin? How is that possible?

Rom. 6:3 *Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death?*

Every time that Paul uses the phrase “baptized into Christ,” it always refers to Spirit baptism (1 Cor. 12:13; Gal 3:27). It refers to the moment a Christian believes in Jesus Christ and is inaugurated into the body of Christ, the Church. Jesus Christ’s power and life are now working through the Church.

There is another reality for every Christian. All Christians in the Church also died to sin because Jesus Christ died to sin. Jesus took the full legal penalty for our sin at the cross. Jesus even paid the ransom price to set us free from sin’s ownership of us through dying in our place.



Rom. 6:4 *Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too may walk in newness of life.*

Paul gives us a beautiful picture of resurrection life here and now in our Christian life. He’s about to explain this more, but the point of believing that we have died to sin is that now we can experience resurrection power and “walk in newness of life.” There is now an experience of extraordinary resurrection life for us to enjoy! This is all speaking of the present Christian life.



Now Paul explains more details about the metaphysics of all of this because he is not saying that we have literally died and are literally being resurrected physically:

Rom. 6:5 *For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection,*

Rom. 6:6 *knowing this, that our old self [= inner person] was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with [= made powerless], so that we would no longer be slaves to sin;*

Rom. 6:7 *for the one who has died is freed from sin.*

So, here is what Paul is clarifying. Before we became Christians, sin reigned over all of us, our bodies and all of the immaterial part of ourselves— our spirit, mind, thinking, emotions, etc. But when we were baptized by the Spirit, the old inner person we used to be where sin reigned died to sin. But we still have sinful bodies. But these sinful bodies where sin reigns in death doesn't have authority over my new inner person! I have been set free from sin's bossing me around.

The Holy Spirit makes all Christians new within, freed from sin's dominion and made alive with new longings for righteousness. The problem is that sin is still influential because the new "inner person" freed from sin is trying to live in an unresponsive body where sin is still powerful. However, the new "inner person" is "freed from sin" and "dead to sin." All we need as Christians is a resurrection of our "dead" bodies in order to overcome sin and be saved from God's present wrath!

Rom. 6:8 ¶ Now if [= since] we have died with Christ, we **believe** that we shall also live with Him,

Rom. 6:9 knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, is never to die again; death no longer is master over Him.

Rom. 6:10 For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all time; but the life that He lives, He lives to God.

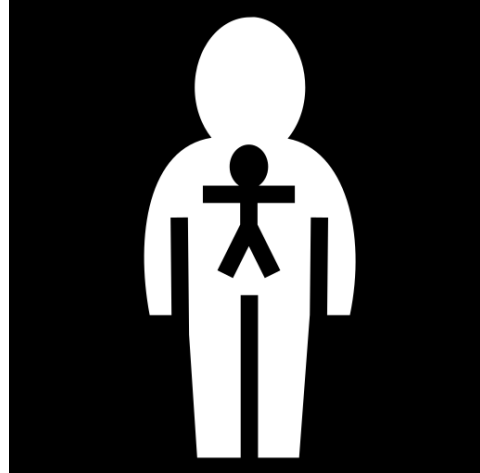
Rom. 6:11 So you too, **consider yourselves to be dead to sin**, but alive to God in [= by] Christ Jesus.

The death of Jesus set us free from slavery to sin. We are dead to sin in our inner person. And we also share in the resurrection life of Jesus Christ just as much as we get the benefits of His death to sin. What is important is that we have to believe this truth. We have to live by faith in God's power. We have to say, "I'm free from sinfulness in my inner person. God's grace has set me free. I feel new things. Inside of me is a longing for life and obedience. I can live a new life that is the life of Jesus through me."

Rom. 6:12 ¶ Therefore sin is not to reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts, **Rom. 6:13** and do not go on presenting the parts of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; **but present yourselves to God as those who are alive from the dead**, and your body's parts as instruments of righteousness for God.

So, instead of living under a servitude to sin, I need to serve God. I don't want to obey sin, but obey God. I want to offer this body to God's use. But it starts from within. I have to believe I am a new person within who is free from sin's bossing me around.

One of the reasons that what Paul explains about a Christian's new, dead to sin's power, "inner person" is important is that Christians are often taught that they have two natures within themselves, a new nature and a sinful nature. This is not true. A Christian has one inner nature that has been connected to Jesus Christ's power and life.



Rom. 6:14 For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under the Law but under grace.

But he asks another question about God's grace because people have a hard time accepting the grace of God:

Rom. 6:15 ¶ What then? Are we to sin because we are not under the Law but under grace? Far from it!

Rom. 6:16 Do you not know that the one to whom you present yourselves as slaves for obedience, you are slaves of that same one whom you obey, either of sin resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness?

As Christians we now have a choice. We can live out our new freedom or go back into servitude to sin. We've been given a second chance at life! The key is to offer up our bodies to God to transform them for obedience to Him rather than give into sin that still remains in our bodies.



Rom. 6:17 *But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were entrusted, Rom. 6:18 and after being freed from sin, you became slaves to righteousness.*

Rom. 6:19 *I am speaking in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented the parts of your body as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness, resulting in further lawlessness, so now present your body's parts as slaves to righteousness, **resulting in sanctification [= personal dedication to the interests of God].***

Rom. 6:20 ¶ *For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in relation to righteousness.*

Rom. 6:21 *Therefore what benefit were you then deriving from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the outcome of those things is death.*

To build on this metaphor you could think of it this way. Before you believed in Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit connected you to His life and power, you were a slave to sin and thus free from righteousness. But all you got for that was shame and “death.” “Death” is the absence of life. In other words, you lived obeying sin and missing out on life from God.

Rom. 6:22 *But now having been freed from sin and **enslaved to God**, you derive your benefit, resulting in sanctification [= personal dedication to the interests of God], and **the outcome, eternal life.***

Putting this together:

- 1. You have to believe that your inner person is “freed from sin” because Jesus Christ died in your place for your sins.**
- 2. You have to present your sinful body to God believing in what He can do (“living by faith” in God’s ability).**
- 3. This devotion to God in faith will result in an experience of “newness of life,” “eternal life,” the resurrection life of Jesus Christ through you!**

Rom. 6:23 For the wages of sin is death, but the gracious gift [= the free gift] of God is eternal life in [= by] Christ Jesus our Lord.

If you hand your body over to sin and don't live in freedom from sin, you are going to get paid back with an experience of “death.” You are going to miss out on righteousness and true life. But the gracious gift of God is the experience of eternal life, divine life, resurrection life, the life of Christ Himself.

Often this verse is shared with non-Christians to explain that eternal life is a gift of God. And it's true that our new birth is a gift of God that happens when we first believe in Jesus Christ (John 3:16; John 5:24; Eph 2:8-9). But Paul is writing to Christians about overcoming sin in their lives. Every time God empowers us to overcome sin (resurrects our “dead” bodies we offer to Him), we do righteousness and experience *eternal life*, the life of Christ. This too is the free gift of God we get *by faith*.