

## **Died to sin, Live in Christ**

**Romans 6:5-14**

**November 6, 2022**

Before we begin to study any portion of Scripture, we need to understand the context and purpose of the Scripture. Paul wrote this epistle so that we would understand the Gospel; the Gospel is the power of God for salvation (Romans 1:16). Paul's purpose in Chapter 6 is to help us see that believers in Christ cannot continue to live in sin. Pigs are very happy in a mud pit, but cats find it disgusting! Similarly, a Christian should despise living in sin. As a new creation, it is not in their nature to live this way. In the first three chapters of Romans, Paul declares that the unconverted person is sold out to sin. It is not that they occasionally slip up; he is saying that they actively and purposefully search out sin. This theme changes in Romans 3:21 with, "But now...". Here Paul begins to describe a way of escape from a life of sin, and it is not a method or a religious system, but a Person, Jesus Christ. In Chapter 4, Paul helps us see that salvation is by grace alone, through faith alone, for the glory of God alone. Chapter 5 brings a new perspective – justification. Being justified before God brings peace, joy, and a new perspective on suffering. Those who were previously under the wrath of God are now in a harmonious relationship with God through faith in Jesus. Even the faith we have is by the grace of God; it is a gift. (Ephesians 2:8-9) At the end of Chapter 5, Paul compares the imputation of Adam's sin and its effects on all men with the effects of the imputation of Christ's righteousness on the elect. Then he makes the, often misinterpreted, statement, "where sin increased, grace abounded all the more" (v. 20).

To the unregenerate man, two possible and false conclusions come to mind when they hear "where sin increased, grace abounded all the more". First, the antinomian takes this statement and uses it as license for more egregious sinning with the thought that since more sin causes more grace, then God should get more glory if we keep on sinning. graincreaand second, the legalist who argues that teaching that where sin abounds grace abounds even more gives people license to sin. Paul had written in Romans 3:5-8, "But if our unrighteousness serves to show the righteousness of God, what shall we say? That God is unrighteous to inflict wrath on us? (I speak in a human way.) 6 By no means! For then how could God judge the world? 7 But if through my lie God's truth abounds to his glory, why am I still being condemned as a sinner? 8 And why not do evil that good may come?—as some people slanderously charge us with saying. Their condemnation is just."

The question of righteousness resulting from obedience to the law has remained a struggle in mankind from time immemorial. The basic theme of Romans is that righteousness is by faith (Romans 1:17). In Romans 3:28, Paul wrote, "For we hold that one is justified by faith apart from

works of the law.” Because of this teaching, some of the Jews in Rome accused Paul of teaching antinomianism.

When people purchase a product or a service, a transaction takes place. The transaction, whether verbal or written, states *If you do X, I will do Y*. This agreement is a covenant. God has made several covenants with mankind, but some of His more significant covenants are one-sided. His covenants with Noah, Abraham, David and the promise of salvation through faith in Christ are all covenants to which only God obligated Himself. We also need to understand that salvation is not only a transaction but an entire transformation.

## I. The Argument

Chapter 6 begins with “What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound?” Experiencing abundant grace seems like something to be desired, especially to the antinomian, the person who, in effect, says *No law for me!* He answers this rhetorical question with “By no means!”, a most emphatic denial, then asks another rhetorical question “How can we who died to sin still live in it?” (How can cats live in a pit of mud?) Paul begins to describe the transformation of the Christian in Romans 6:5, “For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his.” Obviously, we cannot die a death like His in the sense of dying for the sins of another, but we can be united with His death in the sense of being dead to sin. As pointed out in several verses in Romans 6:1-14 this death is real and it is obvious, and in every place in these verses, it is past tense. Christ died once for all time (Romans 6:10). Similarly, we don’t die to sin daily; we died once. Let us not snatch death from the jaws of victory!

A primary step in understanding the gospel is to understand Ephesians 2:8-9, “For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, 9 not a result of works, so that no one may boast.” The result of being saved is described in 2 Corinthians 5:17, “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.” An encounter with great grace should absolutely, fundamentally change who you are and how you deal with those around you. There should be a transformation in your life; a transformation that is stark and clear - a difference such as the difference between life and death. You are a completely new creation, the old man is dead, the new man has come.

In Romans 6:3-4, Paul said, “Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? 4 We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.” We don’t bury live people – only dead. In verse 7 he said, “For the one who has died has been set free from sin.” If we have died to sin, we are free from the

bondage of sin. A person can be enslaved by some common activity in life, baseball for example, while others may be dead to baseball. Some baseball fanatics eat, sleep, and drink baseball incessantly. However, someone dead to baseball has no interest whatsoever in baseball; in fact they find it detestable and will avoid it with a passion. This is the attitude of the person who has died to sin.

Hebrews 11 is known as the Hall of Faith, where the writer lists many Old Testament saints of great faith who stood firm against sin, showing that they had died to sin. In Chapter 12 he writes, "Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, 2 looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God." How can we who are dead to sin dishonor the One who endured the cross for us by living in sin? How can we not honor the great crowd of witnesses who encourage us in the race of life?

## **II. In Christ Jesus**

Based on the race we are running, the way we are striving to bring the body of sin to nothing, the way we keep our eyes on the person and work of Jesus, it should be obvious that we are alive in Christ. In Romans 6:5, Paul unfolds the doctrine of imputation and brings in the related doctrine of our union with Christ. Our union with Christ is the key to our death to sin and our life to God. Salvation is not just having our sin imputed to Christ and His righteousness imputed to us (2 Corinthians 5:21), we are a new creation! This union with Christ is called a mystical union because it is mysterious. We cannot understand this fully, but we can understand it truly.

The New Testament described many benefits of being in union with Christ:

- "In him we live and move and have our being..." (Acts 17:28)
- "Because I live, you also will live. In that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you." (John 14:19-20)
- Nothing "will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus." (Romans 8:38-39)
- God has blessed us with every spiritual blessing (Ephesians 1:1-13)
  - Chosen to be holy and blameless (v. 4)
  - Been redeemed (v.7)
  - Forgiven trespasses (v. 7)
  - Inheritance (v. 11)
  - Predestined according to God's will (v. 11)
  - Sealed with the Holy Spirit (v. 13)

- Made alive (1 Corinthians 15:22)
- Freedom (Galatians 2:4)
- Sonship (Galatians 3:6)
- Seated with Christ in the heavenly places (Ephesians 2:6)
- Persecution! (2 Timothy 3:12)

In 1 Corinthians 6:15-17 Paul gives an example of a cursed union and in Ephesians 5:28-32 he gives an example of a blessed union. “Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Never! 16 Or do you not know that he who is joined to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For, as it is written, ‘The two will become one flesh.’ 17 But he who is joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with him.” The positive side is “In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. 29 For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, 30 because we are members of his body. 31 “Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.” 32 This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church.” Being in union with someone is a very powerful force, and our union with Christ is the reason for the transformation in our life.

### **III. Died to Sin**

In verse 6 of this section of Scripture, Paul states “We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin.” When Jesus died on the cross, it was a real, total death, not a swooning from which He would later recover. When our old self (unregenerated self) was crucified with Him, it, likewise, was a real death. When we were baptized into Jesus, the power of sin died (brought to nothing) so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. According to John MacArthur, “Although the old self is dead, sin retains a foothold in our temporal flesh or our unredeemed humanness, with its corrupted desires (Romans [7:14–24](#)). The believer does not have two competing natures, the old and the new; but one new nature that is still incarcerated in unredeemed flesh.” Our old man - who we were in ADAM- is not beaten down for a time and then recovers in the dark gathering strength so that when it crawls out it can re-enslave you. NO! Christ died. We died. The old man is dead. We are transformed - a new creation.

This section of scripture teaches that we are positionally sanctified. The old man is crucified with Jesus; His holiness is imputed to us. We are united with Christ, and we are placed into His Kingdom. This allows us to be progressively sanctified. We are no longer slaves to sin – our nature no longer force us to sin. We are set free from sin - we are can obey. Christ’s holiness

being imparted to us is the process of sanctification; it is a lifelong struggle that is ongoing. The culmination of the sanctification is glorification, the point at which we will have new bodies – bodies that are like Christ’s glorified body (1 John 3:2), bodies that will be completely free of all sin. This glorification will take place when Christ returns for His church. As 1 Corinthians 15:51-52 and 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 explain, when Christ returns at the last trumpet, the dead saints will arise first, then those who are alive will join them in the air to meet Christ. This will occur “in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye” and we shall be changed, “raised imperishable”. When Christ comes we receive glorified bodies and are finally released from this body of sin; we get a new body without spot or blemish; glorification is when we reach perfect sanctification.

Verse seven reads, “For one who has died has been set free from sin.” We are free from sin because our old man is dead. The new man is now free to put sin to death; desires of the body and the mind, the lusts of the body, and the worldly thought forms that are natural to the flesh. The new man indwelt by the Spirit should desire and strive to bring these to nothing - running the race, looking to Jesus.

Although it has been emphasized that being dead to sin is a reality, we cannot reach perfection in this life. We may no longer seek sin, but sin seeks us. Jesus warned in Matthew 26:41b, “The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.” Matthew 14 records the story of Peter, coming to Jesus, and walking on water. While Peter kept his eyes on Jesus, he was fine but, when he took his eyes off Jesus, he began to sink. Then Peter cried out “Lord, save me.” The instant we recognize temptation we need to cry the same and remind ourselves of 1 Corinthians 10:13 “No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.” The new man has all he needs to resist sin; we just need to stand in the full armor that God has provided. (Ephesians 6:11-18a)

#### **IV. Alive to God**

Verses ten and eleven remind us that Christ died to sin (our sin, not His) and the life He lives He lives to God, thus we must consider ourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus. Paul considers this fundamental knowledge that every believer should understand. We saw in verse five that if we were united with Jesus in death, we shall be united with Him in resurrection. Christ literally arose from the grave, death no longer has any dominion over Him, and He lives completely for God, as He reigns at the right hand of the Father.

What is the life that he lives to God? He is advancing the Kingdom of God by saving His people (Ephesians 1 & 2), giving His people good gifts to serve the church (Ephesians 4, Romans 12 & 1 Corinthians 12), growing His church, interceding for His people (Hebrews 7:25), etc. Jesus said in

John 14:12 “Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father.” (The proper understanding of greater is *more*; Jesus never traveled outside of Palestine and had contact with a small number of people compared with the seven billion on earth today.) This reality is what got the early disciples out of the bunker, and it should get us off the bench today. Christ lives. We live. We live in the power of Christ’s physical resurrection and in the power of our spiritual resurrection. Advancing the kingdom should be our great desire also.

One of the most encouraging verses in all of Scripture is Philippians 1:6, “And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.” Paul was absolutely certain that God would fulfill this promise, and we can be equally certain! This promise includes justification, adoption, sanctification, perseverance, glorification, and the eternal state. If you are in Christ, you have died to sin and you are alive! God sees you in heaven with his Son now, a future reality. Someday all the remnants of sin will be gone from you - God has made you a new creature; He started on the inside and will finish it on the outside when we are glorified.

Believers are adopted as sons of God and are joint heirs with Christ. (Romans 8:14-17) Paul essentially said, If you truly realize who you are and what your position is, the issue of continuing to live in sin is not even a consideration. In other words, the real trouble with Christian’s who do not understand the doctrine of justification by grace through faith is that they do not realize who and what they are; they do not realize their position. How can we, being what we are, and who we are, live any longer in sin? (DM Lloyd-Jones) God see the Golden Chain of Salvation – foreknew, predestined, called, justified, glorified as all past tense, finished. (Romans 8:29-30) Our old nature has been crucified and we have been raised to a new life not dominated by sin. Paul reassured Timothy with, “The saying is trustworthy, for: If we have died with him, we will also live with him.” (2 Timothy 2:11)

### **Applications for the Christian**

Don’t let sin reign in your body; that body of sin needs to be brought to nothing. Don’t use your body - your members - as instruments of death but present yourselves to God (Romans 12:1) Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength. Your members should be all in for the service of Christ. That service is made possible and acceptable by our union with Christ. This is our reasonable service, our spiritual worship. Sin has no dominion over you. Jesus came in the likeness of sinful flesh on a rescue mission. God has moved us from the domain of darkness to the domain of His Son and we are united with him. We are a new man; the old man is dead. We are free from the bondage of sin. We can put to death the sin that remains in this

body. We can have victory over sin. We are no longer a slave to self-worship and lusts. We are set free to worship God. And we can do this because we are IN Christ.

To him be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

**Selah:**

1. Is there any aspect of the Law of God for which are an antinomian? What is it?
2. How do we properly apply “you are not under law but under grace”?
3. What sin do you struggle with? How can you gain victory over it?
4. How would someone know that you are alive to God?