

What is going on at Discover Church? How are we doing on this Father's Day Sunday? As Always it is such a blessing and an honor to be up here this morning to share the word of God with you. Before we get into today's message, I would be remiss if I did not pause for a moment to talk about Dads right?

To all the fathers out there this morning, thank you. Thank you for leading families and children alike. Thank you to the fathers that were dads to kids that were not actually theirs. Whether it was through mentorship or through just giving a ride to practice thank you. Being a dad has been the most rewarding and most challenging thing I have ever done. It is the biggest blessing that usually leads to the biggest headaches. Thankfully along the way I had an incredible example

This is me and my old man. Without him and his mentorship, I have no clue where I would be or what I was doing. So thanks dad for always being there for me. The only thing I really do not appreciate is the lack of hair in my future and the horrible heart genetics but that is a story for a different time!

So enough of that before I start to cry. Let's jump into today's message first by recapping the awesome word pastor Mark gave us last week. Last week, Pastor Mark walked us through one of the most powerful truths in all of Scripture: the good news of the gospel. Romans teaches us that the answer to our sin problem isn't found in trying harder, following more rules, or measuring up to God's standard on our own. The Law reveals our sin, but it cannot save us. Salvation comes through Christ alone.

Paul tells us that through faith in Jesus, we are declared righteous before God—not because of what we've done, but because of what Christ has done for us. Through His death and resurrection, our sins are forgiven, we are made right with God, and we are given a living hope.

But that raises an important question. If we've been forgiven, if we've been declared righteous by faith, then what happens next? How does the gospel change the way we actually live day to day? Are we simply forgiven and waiting for heaven, or is there something more?

That's exactly where Paul takes us in Romans 6 through 8. He moves from what Christ has done for us to what Christ is doing in us. Today we're going to discover that the gospel doesn't just forgive us from sin's penalty—it frees us from sin's power.

So turn with me to Romans Ch 6, I do not care if you do not have a physical copy of the bible, pull out your phones and follow along. Also open your notes app or pull out a piece of paper if you are old school because I want you guys to be taking notes on this!

Why? Because listen to me for a second Romans 6-8 is DENSE. It is full of some incredible foundational truths to life as a follower of Christ. With that being said, I want to make sure you guys are locking this stuff in! The book of Romans is often called one of the “greatest theological documents” that we have. Look at this quote from Martin Luther

So this is pretty powerful stuff, and I cannot wait to dissect it with you this morning so here we go! Throughout these chapters the author of Romans Paul offers up 5 rhetorical questions that I think we may have all asked ourselves. And using these questions is how we are going to work through these chapters. Question one comes to us in the 1st verse of ch6:

This question is based on something Paul said earlier in Romans 5. He talks about how where sin increased, grace increased all the more. So Paul asks the question: "Well then... should we just keep doing the bad stuff so grace can keep growing?"

I'll put it to you the way my old roommate jokingly said it to his extremely Catholic grandmother: "Remember Mimi, if you don't sin, Jesus died for nothing!"

Now obviously that was a joke. But I'd be lying if I said there aren't people who think that way. Maybe not out loud, but functionally. They treat Jesus and His grace like a get-out-of-jail-free card. They think, "Well God will forgive me anyway, so what's the big deal?"

Paul's answer is immediate and emphatic: Absolutely not!

He says that when we were baptized into Christ Jesus, we were baptized into His death. In other words, something fundamentally changed when we put our faith in Christ. The old us—the person enslaved to sin, controlled by sin, defined by sin—died with Christ. And just as Jesus was raised from the dead, we too have been raised to walk in a new life.

Now let's be clear about something.

When Paul says we have died to sin, he is not saying we will never struggle with sin again. If that's what he meant, every single one of us would be in trouble. We all know the reality of temptation. We all know what it's like to fall short. We all know what it's like to battle the same sins, habits, and weaknesses over and over again.

Before Christ, we were slaves to sin. We couldn't help but follow its desires. But because of Jesus, sin no longer has the authority it once had over our lives. The chains have been broken. We have a choice now. We have been made alive in Christ. That's why Paul says this:

Notice Paul doesn't say sin is gone. He says don't let it reign. Why? Because a king only reigns if you let him sit on the throne. Paul is reminding believers that sin is no longer their ruler. Christ is. So every day we have a decision to make: Who is sitting on the throne of my life today? My old sinful nature, or the Savior who died and rose again for me?

We GET to give ourselves over to righteousness by doing what is right, we GET to do that. How amazing is that? Sin has no dominion over us because we are under Grace.

Now don't misunderstand what Paul is saying here. Grace isn't just God's permission to keep messing up. Grace is God's power to live differently. Grace doesn't lower the standard; it changes the person trying to meet it.

Before Christ, we were trying and failing to earn righteousness. We were trapped in a cycle of sin, guilt, and shame. But now, because of Jesus, we have been given a new identity, a new heart, and a new master. We are no longer living under the weight of trying to measure up. We are living in a relationship with the One who already measured up on our behalf.

And apparently Paul knew exactly what some people would be thinking at this point, because he immediately asks another question.

It's basically the same question as before, just asked a different way.

"Okay Paul, if we're not under the law anymore... if we're covered by grace... if our salvation isn't based on our performance... then what's stopping us from just doing whatever we want?"

And again, Paul's answer is a resounding no. You see, grace doesn't make obedience unnecessary. Grace makes obedience possible.

The law could tell me what was wrong, but it couldn't change my heart. The law could point out my sin, but it couldn't free me from it. Grace does what the law never could. Grace transforms us from the inside out. And that's where Paul introduces one of the biggest themes in Romans 6:

Everybody serves something. The question isn't whether you'll have a master. The question is who your master will be. Paul is very clear here. Will we be slaves to our wicked ways? To pornography, to lust, to our finances, to our fleshly desires?

Following those things leads to darkness every. Single. Time. Not 9/10, every time. And Paul calls us out. He pretty much is saying for those of you who lived that way “How’d that work out for ya little buddy?” not good right! Like when a southern person says “oh bless your heart”

I mean i tried it my way for so long. I have had buddies kinda say to me like “man you used to be a lot more fun, what happened” I WAS GOING TO HELL. I needed to make a change. I had to become a slave to God.

We get to reap holiness, we GET to live set apart from culture, and I do not know if you have been living under a rock but has there ever been a better time to live set apart from culture? People be crazy out there! Why would we want to live in that?

But as Paul is working through all of this, another question naturally comes up. If the law couldn't save us... if righteousness comes through faith... if we're no longer under the law but under grace... then what are we supposed to think about the law itself?

Was the law the problem? And just like the first two questions, the answer is an immediate no.

Paul has spent all this time explaining that the law doesn't save us, but don't get it twisted—the law isn't bad. The law isn't sinful. The law isn't the enemy.

The law is actually what showed us we needed a Savior in the first place.

Think about it this way: if there were no speed limit signs, how would you know you were speeding? If there were no standard, how would you know you missed it?

Without God's law, we wouldn't even fully understand what sin is. The law shines a spotlight on our hearts. It reveals what was already there. So Paul asks his third question:

And once again, Paul's answer is absolutely not. The law didn't create sin. The law exposed sin. The law showed me where I was broken. The law showed me where I fell short. The law showed me my need for Jesus. The problem was never the law. The problem was me.

And that's where Paul gets incredibly honest about a battle every single one of us knows all too well. Because let's be honest—when we're told not to do something, what do we do? Exactly that thing. I think deep down we're all just 13-year-old boys trying to push the limits of authority.

Like the time I was coaching football and I may not have completely agreed with what I felt was a terrible holding call. So I may or may not have stepped out onto the field to have a very polite conversation with the official about his inability to do his job. He looked right at me and said, "Take one more step out here and you're gone." So naturally, I put my feet together and hopped toward him. He never said I couldn't jump. Just not walk. I got ejected. As I should have.

But that's us, isn't it? We push. We test boundaries. We see the line and immediately want to know how close we can get to crossing it. Then when the consequences come, we somehow convince ourselves we're the victim.

Paul says that's exactly what sin does. Sin takes something good and twists it. It takes God's holy law and uses it as an opportunity for rebellion. Which leads Paul to his fourth question:

Again, the answer is no. The law didn't condemn us. Sin did. Sin took what was good, holy, and righteous and used it to reveal just how far we had fallen. The law became the mirror that showed us our condition. It wasn't the cause of our death—it exposed the disease that was already there.

And now Paul gets to the struggle that every believer knows. Because even after we're saved, there is still a battle raging inside of us. Part of us wants to honor God. Part of us wants to obey Him. Part of us wants to live holy lives.

But then there's the flesh. Galatians 5 talks about this tension. The Spirit desires one thing and the flesh desires another. They're at war with each other. We want to please the Lord, but our sinful nature keeps trying to pull us in the opposite direction.

Have you ever had one of those moments where you knew exactly what the right thing was, genuinely wanted to do the right thing, and then somehow still did the wrong thing?

Welcome to Romans 7. Paul says, "I do not do the good I want to do, but the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing." And every person in this room says, "Yep. Been there."

That's why this passage is so encouraging. The Apostle Paul—the guy who wrote most of the New Testament, planted churches, and helped shape Christianity as we know it—struggled too.

The struggle isn't proof that you're failing. The struggle is proof that the battle is real. If you're fighting sin, if you're grieving sin, if you're frustrated by sin, that's often evidence that the Holy Spirit is at work inside of you. And eventually Paul reaches the place that every one of us reaches when we're trying to fight this battle on our own.

And church, that is the question. Who can rescue me? Who can deliver me? Who can free me from this cycle of sin and death? The answer is Jesus Christ our Lord.

And that answer takes us directly into Romans chapter 8. The answer isn't more effort. The answer isn't more rules. The answer isn't trying harder. The answer is Jesus Christ our Lord.

And with that answer, everything changes. Because Romans 8 is what life looks like when Jesus steps into the middle of our struggle.

Paul begins the chapter by reminding us that there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. Think about that for a second. The same Paul who just cried out, "What a wretched man I am!" now stands confidently in the freedom of Christ.

Why? Because his hope was never in his ability to defeat sin. His hope was in Jesus' ability to save him.

And as Romans 8 continues, Paul begins stacking truth on top of truth. We are adopted as sons and daughters. In fact, since today is Father's Day, I can't help but stop on one of my favorite parts of Romans 8.

Paul says in verses 15 and 16 that we have received the Spirit of adoption, and by Him we cry out, "Abba, Father." Now "Abba" is an intimate term. A lot of people translate it as something similar to "Daddy." Think about how incredible that is for a moment.

The God who created the universe. The God who spoke the stars into existence. The God who holds all things together. The King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

He doesn't just tolerate us. He doesn't just put up with us. He adopts us.

And He invites us into such a close relationship with Him that we can call Him "Abba." We can call Him "Dad." Now for all the dads in the room, let me ask you something. Is there a better feeling in the world than when your son or daughter runs up to you and says, "Daddy!"

I know for me, there is just something about it. They aren't asking for anything. They aren't trying to impress you. They simply know who you are, and they know they're safe with you.

Church, that's the picture Paul is painting here. Because of Jesus, we don't approach God as strangers trying to earn His approval. We don't approach Him as criminals hoping He'll let us off the hook.

We approach Him as sons and daughters. When we pray, we're not talking to some distant force in the sky. We're talking to our Father.

And the Holy Spirit Himself confirms that reality in our hearts. He reminds us that we belong to God, that we are loved by God, and that we have been welcomed into His family.

What an unbelievable gift. Not only have we been forgiven. Not only have we been set free. We've been adopted.

The Spirit helps us in our weakness. God is working all things together for good. If God is for us, who can be against us? Paul is building a case.

He's reminding us that our salvation started with God, is sustained by God, and will be completed by God. Which leads him to his fifth and final question. And honestly, this might be the most beautiful question in the entire section.

After everything we've talked about today, this is the question that matters. Because if we're honest, many of us know what it's like to wonder.

Can my failures separate me from God's love? Can my past separate me from God's love?

Can my addiction, my mistakes, my doubts, my fears, my struggles, my seasons of wandering separate me from God's love? And Paul's answer is a resounding NO.

Not trouble. Not hardship. Not persecution. Not famine. Not dangerous. Not death. Not life. Not angels. Not demons. Not the present. Not the future. Nothing.

Church, hear me this morning: the same Jesus who saved you is the Jesus who keeps you. The same Jesus who forgave your sin is the Jesus who walks with you through your struggle.

The same Jesus who called you His own is the Jesus who refuses to let you go. You may stumble. You may have hard seasons. You may battle the flesh.

But if you belong to Christ, you are held by a love that cannot be broken and cannot be taken away. Which is why Paul ends with one of the greatest declarations in all of Scripture:

Not because we're strong. Not because we've got it all figured out. Not because we finally stopped struggling. But because Jesus has already won. And because of Him, we have been released to live.

Church, that is the story of Romans 6 through 8. We were slaves to sin. Jesus set us free. We were condemned by our sin. Jesus justified us. We were fighting a battle we could never win on our own.

Jesus gave us His Spirit. We were separated from God. Jesus adopted us into His family. And now there is absolutely nothing that can separate us from His love.

Nothing. Not your past. Not your failures. Not your addiction. Not your anxiety. Not your divorce. Not your mistakes. Not your doubts. Not the thing you did last night. Not the thing you did ten years ago. Nothing.

Because if your salvation depended on you, you'd lose it. If it depended on your performance, you'd fail. If it depended on your strength, you'd quit. But it doesn't. It depends on Jesus.

And Jesus doesn't fail. Church, some of you have been living like prisoners even though the prison door is standing wide open. Some of you have accepted Christ but continue carrying guilt He already paid for. Some of you are trying to earn a love you've already been given. Some of you have been fighting battles alone that God never intended you to fight alone.

Today is the day to stop living beneath what Christ died to give you. You have been released to live.

Released from condemnation. Released from shame. Released from sin's authority. Released to walk in freedom. Released to walk with your Father. Released to live the life God created you for. But before we leave today, I have to ask the most important question of all.

Not "Are you a good person?" Not "Do you come to church?" Not "Were you raised Christian?"

Not know about Him. Do you know Him? Have you surrendered your life to Him?

Because all of the promises we've talked about today belong to those who are in Christ. And maybe you're sitting here today realizing you've never truly given your life to Him.

Maybe you've been playing church. Maybe you've been trusting your own goodness. Maybe you've been running from God for years. Maybe this is your very first time hearing the gospel.

Can I tell you something? You are not here by accident.

God loves you. Jesus died for you. Jesus rose again for you. And today He is inviting you into His family.

So with every head bowed and every eye closed...

If that's you today, if you're ready to stop running, ready to surrender your life to Jesus, ready to receive His forgiveness and His grace, I want to invite you to pray with me. The prayer doesn't save you. Jesus saves you. But if this reflects the desire of your heart, pray this with me:

"Jesus, I know that I am a sinner. I know I cannot save myself. Today I turn from my sin and place my trust in You. Thank You for dying on the cross for me. Thank You for rising from the dead. Forgive me. Make me new. Be the Lord of my life. Teach me to follow You. Thank You for adopting me into Your family. Thank You for loving me even when I didn't deserve it. Today I surrender everything to You. In Jesus' name,

Amen."

With every head still bowed for just a moment...

If you prayed that prayer and meant it, if today was the day you surrendered your life to Christ, would you just slip your hand up so we can celebrate what God is doing in your life?

Church, can we celebrate every person making that decision today?

Because heaven is celebrating.

And because of Jesus, they too have been released to live.

Released to Live Notes

Pastor Cam

- Because of Jesus, we have been released to _____
- The difference is this: before Christ, sin was our _____. After Christ, sin is our _____.
- We are a slave to whatever we _____

I use A LOT of scripture in this sermon, too many to list out for the notes so just put the following:

“Turn to Romans 6 to follow along with Pastor Cam”