

Sunday, June 1

Pastor Steve reviewed Romans 6:1-11. First, he mentioned Romans 3:20, 4:13-14 and 5:1, which talk about justification by faith in Christ, not works. The message: all men (and women) are sinners. Then he read Romans 3:5-8, noting that some people were rationalizing that if grace was a result of sin, then they should sin to see more grace.

“God’s grace is so wonderful there’s a temptation to say, ‘I can sin all I want because God loves me so much,’” Steve said. Then, after reading the first five verses of chapter 6, he added, “How long can a dead carcass sin? People hearing this knew they had sinned this week. They had unkind thoughts or did other things.”

He said there were two concepts he wanted us to chew on this week: 1) we are united to the death of Christ right now, 2) we are united to the life of Christ right now. Christianity is not enlightenment, nirvana, or a religion like Islam, which demands working to get to God. If we don’t appreciate life in Christ, we can suffer defeat.

“You don’t know things about Christ or you don’t know them very well,” Steve said. “Paul knew that Bible-believing, born-again Christians are subject to having wrong ideas. This is an example of people perishing (even though) they are united with Christ. You are united to the death of Christ, too. This is real, not symbolic.”

The message of death resonates through Paul’s letter, he said. Paul says the reason we shouldn’t go on sinning is because we are dead to sin. He isn’t trying to create some Zen-Buddhist idea that theorizes that since we’re dead we can’t sin; he wanted people to appreciate that they are united with Christ in His death.

Then comes concept #2: We are also united with Christ in His life. Not only are we dead, but Jesus was raised from the dead so we might walk in newness of life. It is a new way of living. In Galatians 5:17-21, Paul reviews a long list of sins, such as sexual immorality, strife, jealousy, and envy, and warns that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

“It looks like you have experienced a change and are supposed to want to live a new way,” Steve said. “You should not want to sin. Yet holy living will not get you to heaven. What it means to be a Christian is you’re dead to sin, but alive with Christ. His death was death to sin. You are united to that death.”

This means we received a newness of life, Steve said. Now we have to walk in it.