

ROMANS 6:1-11 "If Anyone Is In Christ, He Is A New Creation"

In our text last week we saw the contrast of our old nature in Adam, which results in death, with our new status and new nature in Christ, which by faith in Him, results in eternal life.

This is what is stated in Rom 5:18-19 "Consequently, just as the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men, so also the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men. 19 For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous."

In both cases we have representatives who stood in our place and gave us, or put to our account, what it is they accomplished on our behalf.

Adam, as our first representative, failed and in his sin we became sinners. We were deemed by God dead, outside of a relationship with our Lord, and like Adam we are condemned to die both physically and spiritually.

Before we ever personally sinned we were already declared by God as sinners, who inherit from our first representative, the sentence of guilty, because we are born in Adam, given his sin nature, which will inevitably sin because we are under sin's control and power and we love it.

This is why Jesus could say in Joh 3:19 "This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil."

However, our second representative, who was promised to Adam in Gen. 3:15, would come into this world and restore our relationship with God. He did in fact come and as our representative, like Adam, stood in our place and accomplished, unlike the first Adam, perfect obedience.

And as our sacrifice for sin He gave us, or put to our account, the righteousness of Christ, but only as we receive it by faith.

This is the beauty of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Though Adam's sin and ensuing sin nature were imputed to us, put to our account, Christ's righteousness, received by faith, is now imputed to us or put to our account. One has been exchanged for the other.

We actually possess it by faith and will one day in Paradise possess it in full in the presence of our God and Savior.

And Paul in his excitement over this glorious news shows how sin cannot overcome the grace given us in Christ. He says in Rom 5:20 "But where sin increased, grace increased all the more, ..."

Can sin ever be so sinful that Christ's grace can't break through? Of course not! With men this may be impossible but with God all things are possible.

And so Paul ends with amazing grace on his lips and gives great hope to all who would repent of their sin and embrace this Gospel of grace in Christ. But, then he begins the next part of his letter with a question in regards to this grace and the way we are to live in it.

Rom 6:1 "What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase?"

Charles Hodge suggests that the Greek infers it this way..... "What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may be more conspicuously displayed?"

What kind of question is this? And why would Paul even ask it?

1) It's a question aimed at the Old nature of Adam; that nature which will find any excuse to sin and rebel against his creator. 2) It's a question which Paul felt compelled to ask under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit because there may have been those who went beyond the asking and were actually doing what he suggests.

William Barclay in his commentary on Romans says this argument springs from the great saying at the end of the last chapter: "Where sin abounded, grace superabounded."

Barclay say's the argument goes something like this. "The objector says to Paul: 'You have just said that God's grace is great enough to find forgiveness for every sin. Paul says, that is so.

The objector: 'You are, in fact, saying that God's grace is the most wonderful thing in all the world.' Paul say's, that is so.

The objector: Well, if that is so, let us go on sinning. The more we sin, the more grace will abound. Sin does not matter, for God will forgive anyway. In fact, we can go further than that and say

that sin is an excellent thing, because it gives the grace of God a chance to operate....

...."The conclusion of your argument, Paul, is that sin produces grace; therefore sin is bound to be a good thing if it produces the greatest thing in the world."

And of course Paul answers his own question in verse 2 by saying, "By no means! [Or as the NAS puts it, May it never be] We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer?"

But someone might argue that Paul is living in an unrealistic theoretical world when it comes to such an attitude toward sin. 'Paul, of course no one would ever use God's grace as an excuse to sin, right?' Wrong!

Everyone of us has been tempted and may have fallen in to that temptation when we thought, 'well I can do this or that this once. After all God will certainly forgive me.'

It's not a matter of 'does it happen?', it's a matter of it being diametrically opposed to God's grace.

Let me give you an example from scripture where Paul was confronted with such an attitude. In fact, it was an incident in the church at Corinth. Keep in mind that the two letters written to the Corinthian church were penned between A.D. 54-55. The letter written to this Roman church was penned in A.D. 55.

This incident was probably fresh in Paul's mind when he was writing to the Roman church.

1Co 5:1-7 "It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that does not occur even among pagans: A man has his father's wife. 2 And you are proud! Shouldn't you rather have been filled with grief and have put out of your fellowship the man who did this? 3 Even though I am not physically present, I am with you in spirit. And I have already passed judgment on the one who did this, just as if I were present. 4 When you are assembled in the name of our Lord Jesus and I am with you in spirit, and the power of our Lord Jesus is present, 5 hand this man over to Satan, so that the sinful nature [Or that his body; or that the flesh] may be destroyed and his spirit saved on the day of the Lord. 6 Your boasting is not good. Don't you know that a little yeast works through the whole batch of dough? 7 Get rid of the old yeast that you may be a new batch without yeast--as you really are. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed."

Evidently, some people in Corinth felt they had liberty in Christ to continue to sin with the idea that it wasn't that big a deal since in Christ we have forgiveness.

Unfortunately, in the church today, this attitude persists. You need only look as far as some of the recent tele-evangelists who have been caught in sin, and in one case, after one of them had been exposed, a relatively short time later he was caught again in the same sin.

Psychology would say he was addicted to such behavior. Paul would say he abuses the grace of God. Get him out of your assembly until he repents before the living God and humbles himself before the Lord and the church, and confesses that he has "sinned" grievously.

Such a blatant attitude must be dealt with in a way that places emphasis on the fact that God's grace is not to be abused by so little regard for sin.

These are extreme cases, which demand extreme attention. But, even in our own lives we must not toy with the attitude that sin is okay because God's grace will cover it.

I don't mean to suggest that if we do sin that there is no forgiveness, but, if we are sensitive to the Spirit we will be grieved, even as the Spirit is, when we do sin and instead of a haughty or even a lax attitude toward sin we will be truly sorry and desire to turn away from sin instead of using grace to continue in it.

That's the point Paul is making. In fact Charles Hodge points out that "The most common, the most plausible, and yet the most unfounded objection to the doctrine of justification by faith is, that it allows men to live in sin that grace may abound.....

.... This objection arises from ignorance of the doctrine in question, and of the nature and means of sanctification. It is so preposterous in the eyes of an enlightened believer, that Paul deals with it rather by exclamations at its absurdity, than with logical arguments."

It doesn't even warrant Paul's time to deal with such an absurd idea that sin is actually good because it promotes the grace of God. But, as absurd as that idea is, sin, in general, is not something any believer should entertain as being okay in any way, shape or form.

William Barclay puts it into perspective. "It is a terrible thing to seek to trade on the mercy of God and make it an excuse for sinning. Think of it in human terms. How despicable it would be for a son to consider himself free to sin, because he knew his father would forgive. That would be taking advantage of love to break love's heart."

And when we add into the equation that our heavenly Father gave His Son as a sacrifice for our sin, and we abuse such a gift with the attitude that sin doesn't matter, we lose sight of the cost for Jesus to redeem us from our sin.

Rom 6:2 "By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer?"

How did we die to sin? That's an interesting question because it suggests that sin somehow is no longer the motivating force in our lives. It is as though Paul suggests that a new principle of life has taken over, therefore we can no longer live in it, or to put it another way, our lives are no longer characterized by sin.

So the question again..... How did we die to sin? Through the death of our Representative, Jesus Christ, who took our sin and gave us His righteousness.

1Pe 2:24-25 "He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed. 25 For you were like sheep going astray, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls."

To die to sin suggests a couple of things:

- 1) It suggests that we died to the penalty sin inflicts, eternal separation from God. Therefore, we must have been justified by this death. And of course this death was not ours personally, but the death of Christ on our behalf.
- 2) It suggests death from the power of sin with the express purpose of living apart from the penalty and power of sin.

This is what Paul is telling us in verses 3-11.

Rom 6:3 "Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?"

The word baptism is used here in a dual way. When we think of baptism we usually think of someone being baptized in the water out of thanks for so great a salvation.

But the word baptism, if used in this way only, would then mean that when we were water baptized into Christ we were at that time baptized into His death.

That would make salvation based on water baptism. No, Paul has something else in mind here. He is talking of a baptism which has substance. In fact, water baptism is an outward expression of an inward reality.

It's this reality Paul speaks of. We are literally baptized into Christ as we place our faith in Him as Lord and Savior. In other words, we are joined with Him and all that He accomplished for us.

The word baptism is better understood to mean *union* with something, *fellowship* with something or to be *identified* with something.

And so verse 3 could be understood as: "when you were united to Christ by faith you were *identified with* and *joined into* His death" in the sense that His death became yours as He stood in your place. It was as though you fully satisfied the penalty for sin even though you didn't personally do it.

It's kind of like trying to get into Fort Knox on your own. On your own you're turned away. But when you're accompanied by a 4 star General you are waved through because you are identified with him. You are united to him and because of that you are given the exact same privilege even though you're not a 4 star General.

It's all a matter of who you are identified with. And in the case of Christ we, by faith, are *identified* or *baptized* into Him and receive all of the privileges He has.

So, spiritually speaking, we are actually baptized into His death which means that we have died to sin and its penalty. Out of gratitude we demonstrate to the world through water baptism what that means in reality.

But if dying were all Christ accomplished then we would not be very wise in trying to be identified with a Savior who was still in the grave because then we would still be in our sin.

And so Paul continues.....

Rom 6:4 "We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life."

We are not only baptized into His death, we are baptized or joined into His resurrection. Just as Christ overcame the grave, and therefore has fully purchased life eternal for us, we indeed have life eternal because of our union with Him and His resurrection.

But notice what the end of verse 4 says. So that "we may live a new life." To have life and not live in it is a contradiction in terms. Just as saying, that 'I have life but I'm not breathing or have a heart beat' is a contradiction in terms.

It would have been absurd for Lazarus, when called from his grave by Jesus and given his life back again, to have remained in the tomb and told the Lord he couldn't come out because he was dead. After all he had grave clothes on and he was presently residing at 131 Tombstone Ave.

But, he was no longer dead, he was given life and the only thing for a live person to do is live.

We were created for life but we lost it in the Garden of Eden. Now that we've been given life in Christ we are to walk in the newness of that life.

This is the hope given in verse 5.

Romans 6:5 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,

If we're identified with His death, then it certainly follows, as day follows night, that we must be identified with His resurrection, His life. And a glorious life that is.

It is as though we have been clothed with His righteousness. He has taken our filthy grave clothes, and instead of cleaning them up and putting them back on us He burns them and gives us His white garments.

This is what Jesus meant when he tells us in Mat 9:17 "Neither do men pour new wine into old wineskins. If they do, the skins will burst, the wine will run out and the wineskins will be ruined. No, they pour new wine into new wineskins, and both are preserved."

The prophet Isaiah records these words in Isa 1:18 "Come now, let us reason together," says the LORD. "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool."

The fulfillment of that is found in Gal 3:26-27 "You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, 27 for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.

We are clothed with the righteousness of Christ, with the glory of the One who died and rose on our behalf and who gave us the victory over the penalty and the power of death.

And so Paul continues...

Rom 6:6 "For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, [Or be rendered powerless] that we should no longer be slaves to sin--"

That old self is the old man or the old nature we have in Adam whose power has been destroyed at the cross. That old nature of death was once our master. That master has been vanquished. We have a new Master. His name is Jesus, the Lord God Almighty.

Some would suggest that Paul means to say that the old self no longer exists because it has been overcome in Christ. The scriptures don't teach that. What they teach is that the power of death no longer has a hold on us.

Paul speaks of this to these Roman Christians in Rom 7:22-25 "For in my inner being I delight in God's law; 23 but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members. 24 What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? 25 Thanks be to God--through Jesus Christ our Lord!..."

We have a new nature. But, the reality is that there is a war waging in our members precisely because that old man, though crucified at the cross of Jesus Christ, still exists in this present world.

Defeated to be sure, but a reminder of Adam's curse, and is used by God to allow us to show our allegiance to Him by choosing to live in that new nature, by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Outside of Christ our sin nature lives to please itself, and like a grenade, it constantly destroys in a way that keeps us on the throne of our lives; but it's a throne perched in hell.

In Christ we no longer are enslaved to that sin nature because Christ destroyed its power in our lives. We were once slaves to sin. In Christ we are freed from sin. The problem however is that sometimes we choose to put the chains back on because of their familiar and often times comfortable feel.

But soon, we are reminded by the Holy Spirit how those chains bind and squeeze and drain us of the life-giving fellowship only the living Christ can give us.

Rom 6:8-9 "Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. 9 For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him."

And it no longer has mastery over us unless we allow it to. The question is whose slave will we be? The slave of sin or the slave of the Master who has given us life?

Rom 6:10 "The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God."

Christ's death covers it all, but it was never designed to cover us as an excuse to sin

Jesus is living, and living unto the glory of the Father. And as imitators of Christ we too should be living unto the glory of the Father. In every area of LIFE we must LIVE in the Spirit, not demonstrate the death shown in sinful behavior we were delivered from.

And so Paul concludes.... Rom 6:11 "In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus."

Paul again reminds us how we are to do this. It's a proper understanding and appreciation of what we have in Christ as we use the means for growing in this life.

There's nothing like life and living in it. Not to so is a contradiction in terms. Don't live a contradiction. Show the world who you belong to and lift up the name of Christ.

I like what F.F. Bruce says in regards to verse 11.... "You must also consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ

Jesus. This is no game of 'let's pretend'; believers should consider themselves to be what God has in fact made them. It is no vain exercise but one which is morally fruitful...

..... the Spirit has come to make effective in them what Christ has done for them, and to enable them to become in daily experience, as far as may in the present conditions of mortality, what they already are in Christ Jesus and what they will be fully in the resurrection life."

Let me end with an exhortation and a call to action by Paul.

2Co 5:17-20 "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! 18 All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: 19 that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. 20 We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us....."