

Series: Romans

Text: Romans 6: 1-23

Title: How Shall We that Are Dead to Sin, Live in Sin?

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The apostle Paul ended speaking of Christ making his people righteous by his obedience, by saying, “*where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.*” (Rom 5: 20-21)

The Holy Spirit, knowing what sinners would conclude from that, moved Paul to ask the question they would ask,

Romans 6: 1: What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?

When the self-righteous hear that they cannot use the law to justify themselves, they turn to the law to sanctify themselves. But when they hear us declare that the believer is not under the law but under grace they ask absurd questions like, “Does that mean I can break the law all I want?” So the Holy Spirit moved Paul to ask the question that he knew the self-seeking man always asks when he hears the gospel of Christ, “*What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?*”

Also, there be some who hear that “*where sin abounded, grace did much more abound*” and they imagine that it means then we should sin so that grace may abound. Or when they hear we are not under law they imagine we are under no law at all. The Holy Spirit takes care of those false notions by moving Paul ask, “*What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?*” The answer God gives Paul to write is a very important statement,

Romans 6: 2: God forbid. How shall we, that ARE dead to sin, live any longer therein?

Proposition: Before God, all for whom Christ died and rose again ARE dead to sin and ARE alive unto God. Therefore, before God, before the law, it is impossible for a believer to live in sin. Also, since Christ reigns in the believer, sin shall not have dominion over us, so it is impossible for a believer to apostatize and/or live in sin.

DEATH AND LIFE PICTURED IN BAPTISM

Romans 6: 3: Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into [unto] his death? 4: Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into [unto] death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should [shall] walk in newness of life.

All Christ’s people were in Christ and really did what Christ did. Therefore, all Christ’s people are dead to sin and we are alive unto God. This is what we pictured and confessed when we were baptized. When we are baptized, when we go under the water, we are confessing that we died in Christ and were buried in Christ. When we come up out of the water, we are confessing that we are risen in Christ to newness of life.

When a Pharisee speaks of “*newness of life*” he turns from Christ back to the moral law given at Sinai and focuses on the sinner’s works. That is not Paul’s message here. Paul is proving that before God because we ARE dead to sin and ARE risen to newness of life it is impossible for a believer to live in sin before the law of God. Also, by the reign of Christ within us, we cannot live in sin.

Notice, it says at the end of verse 4, “*like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also [shall] walk in newness of life.*” Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory, the power, of the Father. (Eph 1: 19-23) Then he says, “*EVEN SO*”—even by the same glory, the same power of God—“*we also [shall] walk in newness of life.*” In the last few verses of Ephesians 1, the Holy Spirit declares that the same power that raised Christ from the dead also raises his redeemed from the dead in the new birth. That is what he is declaring here in this verse in Romans 6.

In the ceremonial law on the day of atonement, when the high priest went into the holiest of holies to make atonement by sprinkling the blood on the mercy seat, he also wore a gold plate engraved with “*HOLINESS TO THE LORD.*” (Ex 28: 36; 39: 30) The high priest typified Christ Jesus our great High Priest. Christ is both the righteousness and the sanctification of God’s elect. He is our Justifier and our Sanctifier. Believers look nowhere for justification and sanctification but Christ. The same as our justification is by our death in Christ, our arising to and walking in newness of life is by Christ living in us.

Galatians 2: 20: I AM crucified with Christ:

There is Christ our Justifier. Notice, the reality of it. Paul says, “I AM crucified with Christ.” That is what we saw in Romans 5 concerning headship. We who are Christ’s were really in Christ and really did what Christ. When he was crucified, I was crucified with him. Then he speaks of Christ our Sanctification.

Galatians 2: 20...nevertheless I live; yet not I, but CHRIST LIVETH IN ME: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live BY THE FAITH OF THE SON OF GOD, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

Remember, when we read “by the faith of” it does speak of our “faith in Christ.” It speaks of Christ’s faithfulness. Paul say that he lives, yet it is not by his old man of flesh that he lives, but Christ lives in him. And the life he now lives in the flesh

he lives by Christ faithfully ruling and reigning within him. We do nothing by our old sinful fleshly man. God creates a new man, a new spirit, within his child in the new birth when Christ is formed within us. When Christ is in you, Christ reigns in you making you do what he would have you to do and sin no more had the reign over you. That is how the preservation of Christ's people is sure. That is one reason why Paul called "Christ in you, the hope of glory." (Col 1:27) This is why the Holy Spirit uses Paul to give us this guarantee in our text, "*that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also [shall] walk in newness of life.*"

THE OLD DESTROYED BY CHRIST, THE NEW ALIVE BY CHRIST

Romans 6: 5: For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also *in the likeness of his resurrection*: 6: Knowing this, that our old man IS crucified with *him*, that the body of sin might be [IS] destroyed, that henceforth we should [shall] not serve sin. 7: For he that is dead is freed [JUSTIFIED] from sin. 8: Now if we BE dead with Christ, we believe that we SHALL ALSO live with him: 9: Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. 10: For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. 11: Likewise reckon [IMPUTE] ye also yourselves TO BE DEAD INDEED UNTO SIN, BUT ALIVE UNTO GOD THROUGH JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD.

Before God, before the law, the old man in all God's elect was crucified according to the righteous demands of God's holy law when Christ was crucified. On the cross, when Christ declared "it is finished", *the body of sin* of each of God's elect was destroyed.

This does not mean our old man of flesh is dead. He is very much alive. It means before the law of God he is dead. The law can say nothing else to a man who has died under the law. Once he has paid the wages of sin which is death, the law has no more claims upon him. When Christ died, we died in him, so "*that henceforth we [shall] not serve sin. For he that is dead is [justified] from sin.*" (Rom 6:6-7) Before the law of God, by the righteous demands of the law, our old man is dead and our body of sin destroyed, and we are justified from sin. A dead man cannot serve sin. The law says he is freed from all the law's demands because he has paid the full wages of sin which is death. So "*henceforth we shall not serve sin.*" This is why we believe that all who Christ redeemed shall be given life and faith and live with Christ forever.

This good news for Christ's people is because Christ "*died unto sin once*" and "*death had dominion over him*" once. The only way death could have dominion over Christ and he could die was by Christ being made sin for his people. No other way!

Isaiah 53: 6: All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all... 11: He shall see of the travail of his soul, *and* shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.

2 Corinthians 5: 21: For he hath made him *to be* sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

Galatians 3: 13: Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed *is* every one that hangeth on a tree:

1 Peter 2: 24: Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.

Hebrews 9: 28: So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.

So the Holy Spirit declares that by him, we who are born of God and taught of God, know, "*that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.*" And since we really died in Christ and we really arose in Christ, "*if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him.*" By the Holy Spirit, we believe that each one who died and arose in Christ shall be brought under the preaching of the gospel and resurrected to newness of life in the new birth and at the end of this life be resurrected to live with Christ forever in glory.

Therefore, here is the greatest assurance we as believers are given by God. Since every child born of God was in Christ and did what Christ did, therefore, God imputes us to be what Christ really made us to be—dead unto sin but alive unto God. That is the true way God imputes. So, believer, this is God's gracious command especially to you—"Likewise"—he is saying since God imputes this to be so—"Likewise, reckon [impute] ye also yourselves TO BE DEAD INDEED UNTO SIN, BUT ALIVE UNTO GOD THROUGH JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD."

Please take the time to recognize how emphatically the Holy Spirit moved Paul to make this declaration to you and I who are born of God. "Docetism" was an heretical doctrine used by the Gnostics. The word means "to seem or seemingly." They said that because all flesh is sinful then Christ could not have been made flesh or else he would have been corrupted. They argued that the apostle John did not really mean Christ was made flesh when he wrote, "the Word was made flesh." Instead, the contended the Son of God was only made "to seem as if" he was made flesh. Therefore, everything else Christ was made, he only seemed to be made: it only seemed he was made under the law, it only seemed he was made sin, it only seemed he died and arose. And so God only treats the believer "as if" we are made righteous. The Gnostics also denied that a sinner is given a new nature in the new birth. They claimed being made a new man was merely by arriving at a certain level of

knowledge. Gnosticism is alive in our day, as we will see in our Thursday night messages, the apostle John was dealing with it in his.

But Paul never says that Christ was only “seemingly” made anything nor are we. Instead, the Holy Spirit of God made Paul go to great length to set forth plainly and clearly in no uncertain terms how God imputes consistently the same with Adam, with Christ and with us. With our first head, Adam, he said, “*By one man sin entered the world and death by sin*” and for that reason, God imputed sin to all Adam’s race so that “*death passed upon all men, for that*” in Adam “*all have sinned.*” (Rom 5: 12) With the last Adam, Christ Jesus, knowing our innocent Savior “*knew no sin*”, knowing “*he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth*”, Paul declared the only way Christ could be made sin was “*he hath made him sin, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.*” Then, because God laid on him the iniquity of all his people, God imputed sin to him. He was “*numbered with the transgressors*” because “*he bare the sin of many.*” (2 Cor 5:21; Is 53: 12) Likewise, consistent with how God imputed with both our heads, because “*our old man is crucified with him*”, because “*our body of sin is destroyed*” and because we are risen with Christ to newness of life, God imputes us to be what Christ made his people. Therefore, God commands you and I who believe, not to think it only seems as though that is how it is, but God commands us to impute the same also to ourselves even as God imputes to us—“*Likewise, reckon [impute] ye also yourselves TO BE DEAD INDEED UNTO SIN, BUT ALIVE UNTO GOD THROUGH JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD.*”

Believer, this is God being righteous! This is Christ manifesting the righteousness of God which he came to do. Satan is a master deceiver. He convinces men, in the name of defending the glory of Christ’s innocent sinless person, to deny the righteousness of God which is the very thing Christ came to manifest. By seeing how “*God spared not his own Son but*” when sin was found on him, “*delivered him up for us all*” we know that God always does what is right. And it is righteous for God to give us life and God will do so! This was Paul’s message to turn the Colossians from looking back to Sinai to touch not, taste not, handle not “*as though*” their life was in these earthly elementary rudiments of the world. While he told them it was only “*as though*” their life was in this world, he declared the reality is,

Colossians 3: 2: Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. 3: For ye ARE dead, and your life IS hid with Christ in God. 4: When Christ, *who is* our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.

Also, be sure to understand, believers are not dead to sins influence, presence or effects in our old man of flesh. But before the law of God, we are dead to the guilt and condemnation of sin. Therefore, before God, before the law, it is impossible for us to commit sin or live in sin. Plus, with Christ abiding in us, it is impossible for sin to reign over us and have dominion over us.

Romans 8: 1: *There is* therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. 2: For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death....33: Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect? *It is* God that justifieth. 34: Who *is* he that condemneth? *It is* Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.

CHRIST’S LOVE FOR US IS OUR CONSTRAINT

Romans 6: 12: Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. 13: Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. 14: For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.

Christ’s love for his people manifest in this two-fold work—justification and sanctification—is our constraint to walk in newness of life. Like as believers do not look to the law of Sinai for justification, we do not look to the law of Sinai for sanctification. We depend upon Christ for both. Sin is in our mortal, fleshly body in our old man of sin. At times it brings us into captivity. So when he says “*sin shall not have dominion over you*” he does not mean that believers can now keep the law since we are born again. It means because Christ reigns in us, sin shall not reign over us anymore—“*Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body...for ye are not under the law, but under grace.*”

John Gill very truly declares, “This is not a precept, exhortation, or admonition,...though some read it as such, “*let not sin have dominion over you*”; nor does it express merely what ought not to be, but what cannot, and shall not be; it is an absolute promise, that sin shall not have the dominion over believers; and respects not acts of sin, but the principle of sin; and means not its damning power, though that is took away, but its tyrannical, governing power: “*it shall not lord it over you*”, as the words may be rendered; *for in regeneration, sin is dethroned; Christ enters as Lord, and continues to be so; saints are in another kingdom, the kingdom of Christ and grace; could sin reign again over them, they might be lost and perish, which they never can: now this is a noble argument why saints should use their members as weapons of righteousness for God and against sin; since they are sure of being conquerors, and are secure from the tyrannical government of sin over them.*”

Remember, the law of the bondservant and his loving master? That explains this. Our Master has loved us so greatly and has been so good to us and has laden us down with his full provision so much, that his love constrains us to live unto him. We are free from the law. We are free to go out just like the servant was free to go out when the seventh year came. But our Master loves us so and has provided for us so that we love our Master and want to serve him forever. This is what Paul means *when he says you are not under the law but under grace*—

Romans 6: 15: What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid. 16: Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? 17: But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. 18: Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.

Back in verse 7—"He that is dead is freed from sin"—the word "freed" means justified. Here in verse 18—"Being then made free from sin"—means to be set at liberty from that old slave master of sin. Therefore Paul gives a simple illustration of a master and a slave.

Romans 6: 19: I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness. 20: For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness. 21: What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death. 22: But now being made free from sin, [set a liberty] and become servants to God, ye HAVE your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. [guaranteed] 23: For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

The professing believer who can yield to sin to live in it and apostatize from Christ proves they are the servant of sin and never knew Christ and was never born of him. The believer who yields himself to God proves Christ reigns in him.

Galatians 5: 16: *This* I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. 17: For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the [sinful] things that ye would. 18: But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law. 19: Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are *these*; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, 20: Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, 21: Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told *you* in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. 22: But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, 23: Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. 24: And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. 25: If we live in the Spirit,[born of him] let us also walk in the Spirit. 26: Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another...7: 1: Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. 2: Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ. 3: For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing,

he

deceiveth

himself.

Amen!