

Bibles???

The Word of God is the Absolute Truth and the Final Authority

Turn your bibles with me to Romans 6

We are continuing our verse-by-verse study through this life changing letter that the Apostle Paul wrote to the believers in Rome and to us today about the foundation of our faith.

As I have mentioned in some of our previous studies through Romans –

this is a lifechanging letter – because when a believer chooses to study and meditate on what the Holy Spirit inspired Paul to write and begins to grasp the fullness of what Paul is writing – as they begin to respond to God's grace and the work of the Holy Spirit, in their hearts, the life of that believer will be transformed.

Sin and death will no longer reign over our lives –

Grace and righteousness will reign over those who are in Christ.

This is justification – this is what we have been studying over the last few months in chapters 3-5

Paul has presented the case that man is not made right before God through his own deeds or by keeping the law, but simply through faith

Our salvation is not a matter of something we have earned, it is by “grace”, a free, underserved gift from God.

All we have to do is receive it.

Starting today – we are going to move into a new section of Romans – Paul is going to move from justification to sanctification.

This is the response to our justification – as we continue to walk in grace.

Let's pray...

Read Text –

I want to turn back to the last two verse of chapter 5 –

We ended with this last Sunday –

Paul writes

[Rom 5:19-20 NKJV] 20 Moreover the law entered that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more, 21 so that as sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

When God gave the Children of Israel the Mosaic Law

It was intended to simply reveal the diagnosis of man's brokenness.

Which is sin, buried deep in the heart of the human race because of the Fall.

It was intended to reveal the need for a Savior.

Individual sins are just symptoms of our deeper, fundamental brokenness.

As Paul says, the Law brings us face to face with the reality that the problem isn't sins.

It's SIN, the inability to consistently do what's right.

But Paul doesn't leave us in that depressing place.

Paul goes on to say that while we are overwhelmed by the abundance of sin, God is not about to be overwhelmed by it.

For where sin abounds, His grace super-abounds!

And I used the illustration of our sin being a dam – and it doesn't matter how high the dam gets – God's grace will overflow

And so as believers, we continue in grace.

Now, Paul as he is writing this letter – he anticipates pushback from people who are going to accuse him of teaching that the gospel of grace is just a license to sin.

There will also be people who will say – wait a minute, the more I sin, the more of God's grace will overflow.

So in their eyes – sin is good.

So Paul asks the question -

[Rom 6:1-14 NKJV] 1 What shall we say then? Shall we **continue in sin that grace may abound?**

There are two groups of people that would ask this question.

1. The first group are individuals who are looking for an excuse to continue in sin. To them, it doesn't matter how they live because in their twisted philosophy – God is going to forgive them no matter what. So they live the way they want to live. There is no transformation in their life because they never experienced grace.
2. The second group – the legalist who is afraid of “grace”, afraid of what it might do to people, perhaps letting them go wild. They are afraid that the person who trusts too much in God's grace, and not enough in their own good works, end up saying stuff like the first group.
So they will add to grace –
You have to keep the law.
You have to keep the rules.
You have to keep the sacraments.

Both groups are asking the same question.

Is the gospel of grace a free pass to continue living our old lives the way that we lived them, as long as we are justified?

The key word here is continue...

It carries the idea of habitual persistence.

That is to say, shall we habitually persist in sin, that grace may abound?

I want you to picture the prodigal son – choosing to continue to live his life where he wakes up every morning starving – filling his stomach the food that was meant for the pigs he had to feed - when his father's house is just a phone call away.

Which bring me to this illustration -

In 1973 – there was a bank robbery in Stockholm, Sweden

And during the bank robbery, several bank employees were taken hostage and for a few days they were placed in the bank vault by their captors.

And while the bank robbers were in negotiations with the police – something strange happened –

The victims became emotionally attached to their captors.

So much so – that when the government came in and tried to save them, they rejected government assistance and chose to remain captive, rather than be freed.

They actually defended their captors and the reasons why they were abducted.

They fell in love with them and some even refused to testify against their captors

By the way this is where we get the term Stockholm Syndrome

Now, we might shake our heads in disbelief and think –

How can these people be so dumb / What is wrong with them?

How can they be so naive???

Why would anyone do that???

But be careful –

Because the question that Paul is asking here in verse 1, “how can those who have been freed from sin, still desire to live in its captivity?”

How can those who have been set free, still desire to remain captives in their sin and their despair?

You see, the response from some believers is, “My sin is not that bad – I can stop if I wanted to”

Here is the thing church –

Many people fall in love with their captor (sin) – that when Christ brings freedom, it is rejected.

They chose to continue in sin rather than be set free.

2 Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?

Paul considers it utter foolishness to think that continuing in sin would be acceptable because when grace abounds, it effects a difference, a change in us.

Grace doesn't just forgive the debt our sins earned – it reaches inside us & removes the root cause of those sins.

It heals our brokenness and reverses the lingering effects of the Fall.

It begins the process of bringing us back to what God created us to be

So Paul's answer to the question that he anticipates them asking is –

There is absolutely no way that a believer who fully grasps grace would choose to live a life of persistence sin.

Here is the reason why church –

Apart from Christ – we were all alive in sin.

Sin reigned in our lives – that is what we looked at last week.

But now that we are in Christ – by His grace, we have become those who died to sin

And I had you make a note of the phrase we who died

And here is the reason why???

This is one of those areas where believers struggle.

“If we are dead to sin – why do I continue to sin?” And so they begin to question if they are really saved or not –

So here it –

In the scriptures, death does not mean extinction – it means separation.

We need to understand that principle.

The bible never teaches that when someone dies, they become extinct.

The bible teaches that when death happens, separation happens.

So when a person is now dead to sin and alive in Christ, it doesn't mean that sin has been extinguished in the life of the believer.

What it means is that the stranglehold, the reign that sin had in our lives has been forever broken and so – we are free not to be completely enslaved by sin and death.

The sin nature that we all had apart from Christ – it no longer has the power or the authority to keep making directives in our lives.

So – if we continue to live our lives as if we were slaves, we are in effect denying that Jesus has broken the power of sin and the penalty of sin.

And when we affirm this, we pervert grace.

We undermine the power of grace.

I love what an old dead guy wrote –

He said, holiness starts when justification finishes. And if holiness does not start, we have the right to suspect that justification never started either.

The Apostle John says the same thing -

[1Jo 3:9 NKJV] 9 Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God.

Again, the issue is continuing in the practice of sin.

3 Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? 4 Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

In verse 3, 6 and 9 in our text – Paul is going to use the word “know.”

It is an affirmation of a fact

How can you not know?

Know what?

That in Christ, the believer is dead to sin.

That Jesus has given us a new identity

Because of what Jesus did, we are no longer in bondage to sin and death.

We are accepted in Jesus

We are adopted in Jesus

We are identified with Jesus

And so Paul uses the example of baptism to demonstrate this

We had baptism this past summer

Baptism is a picture of death and resurrection

And just as Jesus died and rose again, so also we in the same way have died and risen again.

When one goes under the water, the believer is united together with the death of Jesus Christ

And when the person is taken out of the water, the believer identifies with Christ as Jesus rose from the grave.

And as a result of being given a new identity –

I had you make a note, we should walk in the newness of life.

Here is what Paul is saying –

If your life looks pretty much the same as your old life – then something's missing.

If our old life looks exactly like our new life – how do we explain Jesus and what Jesus is trying to do.

Paul understands that their will be believers who will not grasp the potential – they fail to step out of their old identity and into the new.

Following Christ ought to look different than those who don't.

5 For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be [in the likeness] of [His] resurrection,

Identifying with Christ is a package deal.

We die to self and live thru Him.

There is no just dying.

During the baptisms this past summer – I will pick on Irene because she is here.

When I lowered Irene into the water – I did not keep her under the water.

She was lowered into the water so that she would be brought back up.

Remember, baptism speaks of death to self and new life in Christ.

And so many times, we get so stuck in death that we actually fail to live in Christ.

After Friday comes Sunday

Our old nature was crucified with Jesus on the cross

But when Jesus rose from the dead – our brand new life in Jesus was born.

6 knowing this, that our old man was crucified with [Him], that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. 7 For he who has died has been freed from sin.

When Paul uses the phrase old man here – he is not referring to me or the person sitting next to you.

He is referring to who we were in Adam – our sinful nature.

Now, it is very important that we grasp this – as believers, we don't have two natures.

The old man was crucified – we have one nature.

We have the new nature.

[2Co 5:17 NKJV] 17 Therefore, if anyone [is] in Christ, [he is] a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.

We have been born again

We have been freed from the dominion of sin in our lives.

The sinful nature has been broken.

What about the person who asks the question -

“If the believer has only the new nature & the sin nature has been put to death – why do Christians still struggle with sin?”

The problem isn't a lingering sin nature.

It's the habits our bodies have developed after years of making selfish choices.

8 Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, 9 knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him. 10 For [the death] that He died, He died to sin once for all; but [the life] that He lives, He lives to God.

Church – this is the abundant life.

The abundant life is not just death to the old life, it is new life in Christ.

When we realize what Jesus has done for you and me – our response is one of gratitude.

Our response is to realize that we have so much to be rejoice over.

Turn with me to Gal 3

[Gal 3:26-29 NKJV] 26 For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. 27 For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. 28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor

female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. 29 And if you [are] Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

You see what Paul is saying is that when someone's life has identified with the death and resurrection of Jesus – all of our natural distinctions go away because of our unity with Christ

11 Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord. 12 Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts. 13 And do not present your members [as] instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members [as] instruments of righteousness to God. 14 For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.

The key here is the word reckon.

And Paul is not using it – like they do in the South – “I reckon to be dead”

Paul is talking about appropriating that which we just read.

It means to count on something.

After six chapters in Romans, Paul finally gives us something to do.

We are to reckon something to be so.

We are to reckon this all to be true.

We are to reckon ourselves dead to sin and alive to God.

Dead to sin and alive to God

So how do we address the issue of sin in the life of the believer -

How to deal with sin –

Paul wants us to consider what he's just written. He wants us to remember what Christ has done for us, that through belief we were identified with Jesus' death and resurrection.

That is why he uses the word therefore.

Everything is based on what God has done.

Before Paul could give us the charge to not let sin reign – Paul had to first tell us how God hates sin and Jesus victory over sin. Romans 1-5

Paul doesn't want us battling sin until we know of God's remedy for sin.

We cannot lose sight of this.

So, in Christ, we do not have to give in to our fleshly desires because He has given us the power so that we are no longer slaves to sin.

If we allow sin to reign, then we will return to slavery.

Further, we need to present ourselves to God, not to sin. Notice again that sin is personified, described as a ruling master or king.

Do not present yourself to sin. Present yourself to God.

We are to be at God's disposal, not sin's.

When sin is our master, then we are not joined with Christ because when we joined with Christ we became dead to sin.

But praise be to God that grace has come.

Before Jesus came, the law showed us sin, made us its slave, and gave us no hope for release.

The law showed us that we are miserable sinners.

Jesus has come and now we are under grace, meaning that we have been set free from the law.

He sets us free and equips us to live righteously before Him.

Once dead to sin, it is unthinkable to continue our former practice of sin.

Let's pray...

To Receive Christ do the following:

Admit, "I am a sinner."

Confess and be willing to turn from your sin.

Believe, by faith that Jesus Christ died for you on the cross.

Receive, through prayer, Jesus Christ into your heart and receive eternal life.

Dear Lord Jesus,

I know that I am a sinner and need Your forgiveness. I believe that You died on the cross for my sins. Please forgive me for my sins and cleanse me by Your blood. I accept You by faith as my personal Lord and Savior. Give me a thirst for Your Word and Help me to follow You all of my days. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

CALVARY
S a n t a C r u z

Jesus did not die on the cross to make a bad person better or make a good person better - Jesus died on the cross to make a dead person alive – why would we go back???

[Num 6:24-26 NLT] 24 '

May the LORD bless you and protect you.

May the LORD smile on you and be gracious to you.

May the LORD show you his favor and give you his peace.'

