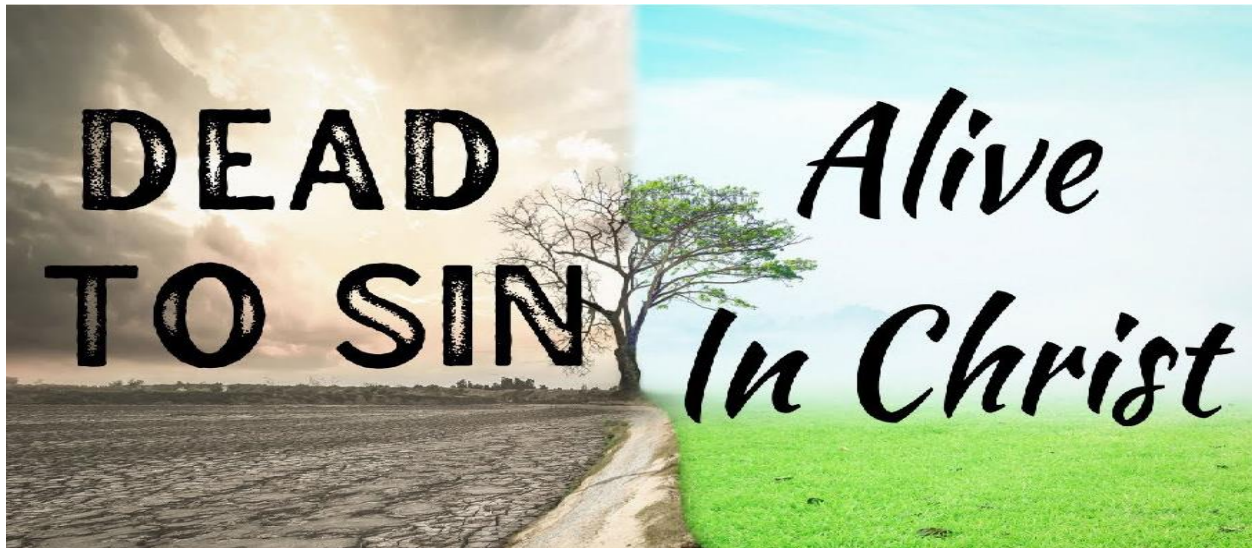


Ministry of Grace Church

Romans 6:1-7 - Sermon Notes



Background

In the previous chapter, Paul informed us that as a result of Adam's sin, we are all sinners condemned to death, and we are not made righteous by obeying the Law or any other set of rules nor are we made righteous by performing any works of obedience. He also said that not only does the presence of the Law not serve to make us more righteous; it actually makes our sinfulness more obvious, making us appear even more sinful. So, what are we supposed to do to escape this sentence of death? Paul has shown us that when we believe God's promises (in our case, that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, died to pay for our sins and rose again from the dead), by His grace, God chooses to declare us righteous (covering any and all of our sins - past, present, and future).

And, because God has declared us to be righteous, reconciling us to Himself, Paul says:

And not only this, but we also boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation. (Romans 5:11)

We can brag about our God and what He has done for us. Do you see that? We can brag about what God has done for us! And when we are declared righteous by His grace, He receives the glory. He gets the credit, not us! Paul also said:

Now the Law came in so that the transgression would increase, but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more, (Romans 5:20)

He has made it very clear that obeying the Law does not make us righteous in God's eyes. In fact, the whole purpose of the Law was not to make us righteous, but to show us how unrighteous we really are. The only way we can be righteous in God's eyes is by His grace. A quite natural reaction for a Jewish Christian living in Rome, or any legalistic Christian today, would be, "Well then, if all of my sins have been paid for and that glorifies God, and the more I sin the more that grace is demonstrated, then I can sin all I want, because God receives even more glory for it, and -- I will

still be found righteous!” But, before we go on, I want to hear what you think. Should we continue to sin so that God will receive more glory? Why, or why not?”

Discussion

Romans 6:1-3

What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase? May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it? Or do you not know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?

The expression “What shall we say then?” is called a debater’s phrase. This is a Rabbinical way of teaching which Paul no doubt learned under the teaching of Gamaliel (see [Acts 22:3](#)). The process involves the teacher asking a question like this one, then encouraging debate before giving the answer.

As is typical of Paul, he states the anticipated objection very plainly, “Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase?”

What Paul is really asking is, “Should we continue to live a sinful, ungodly life like we did before we were saved so that God will receive even more glory by forgiving us as an even worse sinner than we already were?”

As you can see in the next verse, his response is an emphatic, “May it never be!” This is a familiar expression with Paul. It is translated from the Greek words *mē genoito*. *Mē* is a particle of negation, meaning “not.” *Genoito* is a form of *ginomai*, meaning “to begin to be” or “to cause to come into existence.” In this expression *genoito* is expressed in the very rare optative mood (there are fewer than 70 examples of the optative mood in the entire New Testament). A literal translation of these two words is “May it not be!” In today’s vernacular we might say “No way!”

Paul is proclaiming that we should never even consider continuing our sinful ways, especially if we are using the cheap excuse of “I’m doing it because I know that God’s grace will increase, and He will get more glory.” Paul carries this even further by asking, “How shall we who died to sin still live in it?” In other words, if we have, indeed, died with respect to sin, how can we possibly live in a sinful manner any longer?

In order to understand this better, it might be helpful to consider what the concept of death really means. We think of death simply as “absence of life,” whereas in reality it means, “separation from life.” By looking at it this way, perhaps you can understand what Paul is saying. If we who have been separated from sin (because God has cast our sins as far from us as the east is from the west) we cannot possibly be continually in its presence anymore.

Before we were saved, we had no choice but to continually live in a sinful manner. We were controlled by our sin nature. But, because our sins have been paid for and our sin nature has been crucified with Christ, we now have a choice as to how we live.

So, we see that this verse and the following are an amplification of what was said in the previous verse.

... How shall we who died to sin still live in it? ([Romans 6:2](#))

Do you see that? Paul tells us that we died to sin. But what does he mean by that? He means that we have been separated from our natural propensity to sin (our sin nature). And now he tells us that when we were baptized into Jesus Christ we were baptized into his death.

The word from which we get “baptize” is *baptidzo*, which means, “to immerse, to submerge, or to place into.” Some people interpret Paul’s writing here as only referring to the placing of believers into the body of Christ. The problem with this is that this verse doesn’t say we were baptized into the body of Christ, rather that we were baptized **into Christ**. Now, in **1 Corinthians 12:13** Paul does say that we (Christians) were baptized into one body, but there he is referring to the use of spiritual gifts, which were not given to us for any personal benefit, but for us to minister to the body of Christ.

Here, I believe Paul is talking about “believers’ baptism,” that act in which we were immersed in water. This baptism does not in any way save us. As Paul has told us previously in this letter, we are saved by believing in God’s promise and by God subsequently declaring us righteous; not because we did something (like getting baptized) but because we believed his message. Well, if this baptism doesn’t save us, then what does it do? It is a public proclamation of our identification with Jesus Christ. It is a proclamation that we have died to sin, and it no longer rules over us, He does.

By identifying with Jesus through baptism, we identify with both his death and his resurrection. The current verse talks about the first half of this. When we were baptized, we were baptized into (identified with) his death; therefore, with Christ we have died to sin and do not have to let it control us.

There is some comfort to be taken in this passage of scripture. The mere fact that Paul is arguing so strongly regarding sinfulness after salvation is proof in itself that we do not stop sinning when we get saved. If that were the case, Paul would simply tell these Roman Christians (and us) that the presence of sin indicates the lack of salvation. But he does not say that!

You will recall that Paul started this line of reasoning because there were some who claimed that we could sin all we want because it only makes the grace of God appear greater. It is clear from Paul’s argument that we have a choice to live a life characterized by sin or not. We will always sin because we have a sin nature, but we don’t have to let sin run our lives. We can control it through the power of the Holy Spirit. What Paul is teaching us through this section of the book of Romans is that we need to learn how to control our sin nature instead of letting it control us. The truth of the matter is that a Christian really does sin as much as he or she wants. However, the more mature a Christian gets in his or her faith, the less he or she wants to sin.

Romans 6:4

Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.

The word translated “newness” is *kainotēs*, which is derived from *kainos*, meaning “new.” *Kainotēs* refers to something completely new, not simply an experience similar to the past, but a qualitatively different one. Here it refers to a newness of life that is different in quality from the previous life that we had without Christ.

For Christians, baptism is a public declaration that a person has accepted Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. It is not part of the salvation process; it happens after salvation. This current verse and

those that follow describe a mode of baptism referred to as “immersion.” Though this is the mode of baptism that most closely identifies us with the death and resurrection of Christ, it is not the only form of baptism used by Christians today. For the sake of discussion in these verses, however, we will assume that Paul is talking about baptism by immersion.

Baptism involves the baptizer laying the person being baptized backwards into the water until he or she is completely submerged. Paul says that this person was, “**buried with him (Christ) through baptism into death.**” The person being baptized is then raised back up and allowed to stand. Paul says, “**so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.**”

What Paul means is that as we are laid back in the water, we are identifying ourselves with Christ’s death. We are demonstrating that we died with Christ. When we are raised back up, we are identifying with the resurrection of Christ, entering into a new kind of life, that is, eternal life. And Paul says, since we were raised from the dead, we should now walk in this new kind of life. This new life is to be qualitatively different than our former life. It is not to be characterized by sin because, as he said in verse two, we died to sin.

Romans 6:5-7

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, knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin; for he who has died has been justified from sin.

In this verse Paul declares that if we were united with Christ in death (by identifying with his death) then we shall also be united with him in His resurrection. The Greek word translated “united together” is *sumfutos*, which literally means “to germinate together” or “to spring up together.” He says that we are united together both in Jesus’s death and in His resurrection. It may seem strange that Paul would use an expression that means “spring up together” as a likeness to death. However, Jesus said this regarding his own death:

Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. (John 12:24)

So, Paul is saying that we have been intimately joined together with Christ in our planting (Christ’s death and our identification with that death) and, therefore, it is perfectly natural to assume that we will grow up together with a strong resemblance of each other. That’s why Paul says that “**we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection.**”

The Apostle John said a very similar thing about our resurrection body:

Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not been manifested as yet what we will be. We know that when He is manifested, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is. (1 John 3:2)

Some day we will have a resurrected body just like Jesus has now! But Paul, here, is not referring to the body as John is in his letter. Paul is telling us that because we have been planted together with Christ, portrayed by baptism, we should resemble Him even now, not physically but behaviorally. In fact, the very name “Christian” that we carry with such pride and joy means “one who is like Christ.”

Now, what is Paul talking about when he refers to “the old man?” He is referring to our sin nature, which we have inherited from Adam. You may recall what he said back in verse 19 of the previous chapter, “[For as through the one man’s disobedience the many were appointed sinners.](#)” The reason we were made sinners is because we inherited the sin nature from our father Adam. Paul refers to this sin nature as “[the old man,](#)” and he tells us here that our sin nature was crucified with Christ.

He talks about this old man in a couple of other places in the New Testament as well, and in each case admonishes us to “lay aside” or “put off” the old man.

[to lay aside, in reference to your former conduct, the old man, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, and to be renewed in the spirit of your mind, \(Ephesians 4:22-23\)](#)

[Do not lie to one another, since you put off the old man with its *evil* practices, and have put on the new man who is being renewed to a full knowledge according to the image of the One who created him— \(Colossians 3:9-10\)](#)

From these passages it is clear that Paul uses the expression “the old man” to indicate our sin nature, which was corrupted by the lusts and inclinations toward evil that existed in each one of us before we were saved.

Paul tells us that this sin nature was crucified with Christ so that the body of sin might be destroyed. There has been much debate over what exactly is being referred to by the expression “body of sin,” but I believe that it is simply a personification of our sin nature just as “the old man” is. And, if our old man was crucified with Christ, then he died just as Christ died. If our old man is dead, then we can no longer be a slave to him. We are free from him! We are now free to make our own decisions about whether we sin or not. Here’s what I mean:

Before we were saved, we were slaves to sin because of our sin nature. As slaves to sin we did not have a choice of whether we sinned or not. Now that we are saved, however, we are no longer slaves to the old man, and we are free to live without being controlled by sin. In other words, before we were saved, we had no choice but to sin. Now that we are saved, we can choose whether to sin or not to sin. And even though we do continue to sin, we have that choice, and Paul tells us that we should not serve sin anymore.

Here's another way of looking at it. Paul just told us that since our old man (our sin nature) was crucified with Christ, we should not serve sin. Here, he is telling us that before our salvation we were not willingly serving sin but we were under bondage as a slave to sin. We had no choice but to obey our sinful lusts because of our sin nature. That is, we had no free will when it came to deciding whether we would obey our sinful nature or not, we had to!

So, let me say this one more time. Since our old man was crucified with Christ and is now dead, we are no longer forced to be a slave to our sin nature or to sin. We are now freed from that slavery. Do you see the point? We no longer have to obey our sinful impulses. We now have a choice. That is, we can choose to obey God or to obey our sin nature. Before we were saved, we did not have this choice.

Does that mean that we always choose to obey God? Unfortunately, the answer is no. All too often, we choose to obey our sin nature instead of obeying God. That, as Paul taught us in the previous chapter, is where grace comes in. Even though we follow our own desires instead of God’s moral law, we have been declared righteous, and we need not fear the wrath of God. But ... we should

not continue in our sinful ways. Our sin nature has been crucified so we have a free will to choose good over evil.

So What?

We believe in eternal security with regard to our salvation. In other words, we believe that you cannot lose your salvation. One of the misconceptions about eternal security is the notion that we can now sin all we want without repercussion. Eternal security is clearly taught in the Bible, especially by Paul. If we earned this righteousness by something we have done, then we can “unearn” it by doing something else. Paul teaches something entirely different. He says,

“but to the one who does not work, but believes upon Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness.” (Romans 4:5)

Since salvation is a gift of His grace, then He can’t take it back because He is, “the same yesterday, today, and forever.” (Hebrews 13:8)

Jesus, Himself taught eternal security. He said, “My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish—ever; and no one will snatch them out of My hand. “My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father’s hand. (John 10:27-29)

You can’t even unsave yourself. You cannot snatch yourself out of Jesus’s or the Father’s hand. Clearly, this salvation is eternal. And Paul just as clearly argues against us giving sin a free reign, because we have died to sin.

In fact, since God has declared us to be righteous, Paul says we have an obligation to stay away from a life of sinfulness. We also should be motivated by an intense sense of gratitude to God for wiping out our sin debt. This, in itself, should cause us to want to live an obedient life that will testify to God’s grace! So, I ask you, “How should Christians live, in sinful selfishness or in grateful obedience?

We all battle the lusts of our sin nature, and these lusts are constantly being inflamed by the world system that we live in. But we don’t have to let sin control us. Let’s all pray that the Holy Spirit of God will give us victory over our sin nature, and in return let’s give God the glory and praise that He deserves.

Let me ask you, my Christian friend, Does the kind of life you are living now differ significantly from the kind of life you lived before you were saved? It should! And -- Are you walking in this new life in a manner that is worthy of Jesus Christ, the One you have identified with in baptism? If we are going to bear His name, then we should also bear His resemblance, acting like Him as well!

As Christians, we all have to decide to either serve our sin nature (the old man) or serve God. We cannot serve two masters. We must choose one or the other.

Let’s pray.