

Wednesday Evening Bible Study

March 22, 2023

Series - *The Life and Writings of the Apostle Paul*

The Letter to the Romans

The Righteousness of God

Text – Romans 6:1 - 14 - *Sanctification*

Introduction

When President Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863, and especially later, in 1865, when the thirteenth amendment abolished the institution of slavery completely, freedom was suddenly thrust upon a group of people that had never known liberty. At first, they celebrated the fact that they were free to go where they wanted and do as they pleased but eventually they realized the weight of their new freedom. They were now forced to make decisions that they never had to make before. How would they earn a living? Where would they live? What would they do? Many, particularly those that were older, decided that they didn't want to leave the only life that they had known. Many simply didn't know what to do with their freedom.

We see a similar problem with those who have been liberated from the bondage of the Law. Grace was a new concept for most. What would they do with their newfound freedom?

Paul, having thoroughly proven his argument that justification is purely an act of God's grace, will now deal with the next logical objection. If we are under grace and not under the Law, are we free to sin? Since all our sins are forgiven can we now do whatever we want to do? Has God now changed His attitude toward sin? There are many today who hold the position that grace frees us to live according to the desires of our flesh, and that any attempt to bridle the flesh is a form of legalism. Paul will refute that idea completely in this passage. Though we are free from the penalty of sin in Christ, we are not free to sin. Many churches have completely abandoned preaching against sin. Grace will teach us to live holy and separated lives:

"For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world;" (Titus 2:11-12)

"For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another." (Galatians 5:13)

The word "sanctification" does not appear once in Paul's Letter to the Romans, but here in this chapter, Paul will begin to explain the process of sanctification in the life of a believer. Sanctification means to be "set apart" for God. It has to do with transformation, growth, and fruit-bearing. Verse 22 states:

"But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life." (Romans 6:22)

We had absolutely nothing to do with our salvation save believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, but we can take part in our sanctification by yielding to the will of God and being filled with the Spirit of God. Notice the words that indicate personal action on our part in this passage: continue (v. 1); live (vs. 2, 8); walk (v. 4); serve (v. 6); reckon (v. 11); obey (v. 12); yield (v. 13)

Note what J. Vernon McGee states about the difference between Justification and Sanctification:

Now let me put it like this: justification is an *act*; sanctification is a *work*. Justification took place the moment you trusted Christ—you were declared righteous; the guilt was removed. Then God began a work in you that will continue throughout your life. I believe in instantaneous salvation, but sanctification is a lifelong process. In other words, justification is the means; sanctification is the end. Justification is *for* us; sanctification is *in* us. Justification *declares* the sinner righteous; sanctification *makes* the sinner righteous. Justification removes the *guilt* and *penalty* of sin; sanctification removes the *growth* and the *power* of sin.

God is both an exterior and interior decorator. He is an exterior decorator in that He enables us to stand before Him because He has paid the penalty and removed the guilt of sin from us. But He is also an interior decorator. He moves into our hearts and lives by the power of the Holy Spirit to make us the kind of Christians we should be. God does not leave us in sin when He saves us.

This does not imply that sanctification is a duty that is derived from justification. It is a fact that proceeds from it, or rather, both justification and sanctification flow

from being in Christ, crucified and risen. The sinner appropriates Christ by faith for both his salvation and his sanctification. We're told in 1 Corinthians 1:30:

*"But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption."*¹

Warren Wiersbe gives us the following comparison between the justification portion of Romans and the chapters dealing with Sanctification:²

Romans 3:21–5:21

Romans 6–8

Substitution: He died for me

Identification: I died with Him

He died *for* my sins

He died *unto* sin

He paid sin's penalty

He broke sin's power

Justification: righteousness imputed (put to my account)

Sanctification: righteousness imparted (made a part of my life)

Saved by His death

Saved by His life

I. The Problem (vs. 1 – 2)

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

Paul is raising a hypothetical question here. Since there is theoretically more grace where there is more sin than why shouldn't we just keep on sinning so grace could keep abounding.

Paul answers his own question with an emphatic, "No!"

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

Since our sin was imputed to Christ, and Christ died for our sin, then we are dead to sin. Christ died in our place, so positionally, our old sinful flesh is dead also.

Justification saved us from the penalty of sin, but sanctification will work to deliver us from the power of sin. Someday, praise God, we will be delivered from the very presence of sin.

¹ McGee, J. V. (1991). *Thru the Bible commentary: The Epistles (Romans 1-8)* (electronic ed., Vol. 42, pp. 103–104). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

² Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *The Bible exposition commentary* (Vol. 1, p. 531). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

II. The Picture (vs. 3 – 5)

In verses 3 – 5, Paul uses the illustration of baptism to demonstrate that we have been symbolically buried with Christ but have risen to walk in newness of life.

"Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?" (Romans 6:3)

Baptism identifies us with the Lord Jesus Christ. It is a public demonstration that we have placed our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. It is important to note that only immersion pictures this accurately. When we are submersed into the water it is a picture of Christ's burial, and when we come up out of the water it is a type of His resurrection. It is also apparent that only believers could be acceptable candidates for baptism, as lost people and infants cannot possibly understand and identify with the true meaning of baptism.

***"Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."
(Romans 6:4)***

Baptism does not save anybody, but it effectively pictures outwardly what has taken place in the heart.

"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." (2 Corinthians 5:17)

This tremendous spiritual truth is illustrated in the miracle of the resurrection of Lazarus (John 11). When Jesus arrived at Bethany, Lazarus had been in the tomb four days; so, there was no question about his death. By the power of His word ("*Lazarus, come forth!*") Jesus raised His friend from the dead. But when Lazarus appeared at the door of the tomb, he was wrapped in grave clothes. So, Jesus commanded, "*Loose him, and let him go!*" He had been raised to walk "*in newness of life.*" In John 12, Lazarus was seated with Christ at the table, in fellowship with Him. Dead—raised from the dead—set free to walk in newness of life—seated with Christ: all these facts illustrate the spiritual truths of our identification with Christ as given in Ephesians 2:1–10.³

³ Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *The Bible exposition commentary* (Vol. 1, p. 531). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

"For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection:" (Romans 6:5)

The word "likeness" means picture, figure, or image. Baptism pictures the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. 2 Peter calls baptism a "like figure":

"The like figure (ἀντίτυπος - antitypos) whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ:" (1 Peter 3:21)

III. The Principle (vs. 6 – 10)

"Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." (Romans 6:6)

The word "destroyed" here does not mean annihilated, but rather, rendered inactive, or made of no effect.

The idea here is that our old, sinful nature was crucified with Christ, and we now have a new nature because of the indwelling Holy Spirit of God. (Ephesians 1:13) The old man loves sin, but the new man wants to yield to God. We must decide daily to crucify the desires of the old man. Remember, sanctification is a lifelong process. Again, it must be emphasized that the process of sanctification is not automatic. We must yield our will to the will of God. It requires action on our part.

"That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts;" (Ephesians 4:22)

*"Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds;"
(Colossians 3:9)*

"I am crucified with Christ: 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." (Galatians 2:20)

There is a very important truth in Galatians 2:20. Though there are many ways to kill yourself, you cannot crucify yourself; but if you have identified with Christ through faith, you have been positionally crucified in Him. Now you are told to live the crucified life through faith.

"For he that is dead is freed from sin." (Romans 6:7)

A dead man has no desires of his own. All his passions are gone. The desire to sin has been removed.

"Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him:" (Romans 6:8)

The picture does not end with death, however. Since Christ did not stay in the tomb, neither should we. We can rise with Christ to a new life of sanctification and service.

"Knowing 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." (Romans 6:9 -10)

IV. The Practical (vs. 11 – 14)

"Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." (Romans 6:11)

"For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." (Romans 8:13)

"Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry:" (Colossians 3:5)

"Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof." (Romans 6:12)

In the earlier verses of this chapter, Paul wanted us to “know” some things, and then “reckon” some things. Now he calls upon us to yield our wills to the will of God.

Sin was our master. We had no choice but to sin before we were saved. According to Romans 14:23, anything that is not of faith is sin, and since we were not believers, we did nothing in faith. Now, however, we have the indwelling Holy Spirit of God, and we have the choice to yield to His will. We have a new master, and we do not have to obey the old ruler.

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God." (Romans 12:1-2)

"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." (Romans 6:13)

Not only do we need to yield our entire lives to the Lord, but we also need to yield each individual aspect of our lives to the Lord. The word "members" has to do with the parts of our body. Our tongues, hands, feet, eyes, ears, minds, and every other part of our body needs to be continuously yielded to God. Since you are a new creature, every part of you needs to be a new creature as well.

"For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace." (Romans 6:14)

The Holy Spirit of God must be the guide of our lives, and grace needs to be the motivator. We have a lot of people trying to pull us away from God. The flesh is constantly resurrecting itself and must be put to death daily. Paul said, *"I die daily"* (1 Corinthians 15:31). The world is also trying to get us to conform to its mold. And let's not forget about Satan. He hates everything about God, and he would love to get us to turn our backs on the will of God by doing our own thing.