

ROMANS – LIVING BY FAITH
MAN’S RUIN & CHRIST’S REDEMPTION – Chapters 4-7

LESSON 18 – FREE TO SIN OR FREE FROM SIN – Romans 6:1-7

In this lesson, Paul moves from talking about the justification of the sinner to a discussion on the holy life of the saint.

For the Christian, the first five chapters of Romans really deal with the past. What we were...what we have become in Christ. Again...the key word there is justification.

Chapters 6-8 deal with the present life of the Christian and the key word for these three chapters is sanctification.

Sanctification – To be set apart for a specific purpose.

From the beginning of our study Paul has been talking about justification. He’s made it abundantly clear that we cannot justify ourselves. He told us in the first three chapters that without a relationship with Christ, we are all guilty in our sin before God.

Paul goes on in chapters 4-5 to explain that what we could not do for ourselves, God did for us through Jesus Christ our Lord. This work of God completed at the cross, is called justification. It is separate from any of OUR works and made available only through the grace of God.

Before Romans 6, Paul does not discuss the holy living of the Christian. The main focus of Romans chapter 6 is the relationship between justification and sanctification...the relationship between salvation and right living.

Justification is our position before God...our salvation if you will. Sanctification is becoming what we should become in Christ...our holy living.

So what about the present? If we are eternally saved, does that mean we can live any way we want? Some Christians seem to think so. Apparently there were some people in Paul’s day that thought so as well. So Paul addresses this question and talks about it here in chapter 6.

The Premise for This Teaching

Romans 6:1, “What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase?”

The question Paul is addressing here is, “Why not continue to sin so we can know the abundance of God’s grace?” In other words, if we increase our sinning...we give God the chance to increase His forgiveness.

There were some who were implying that Paul’s message of free grace actually encouraged people to sin...that his message gave sinners the best of both worlds. They could indulge themselves freely in this world and be totally right in the next world.

The Protest for This Teaching

Romans 6:2, “By no means!”

The J.B. Phillips New Testament actually says, “What a ghastly thought!”

“God’s grace is given for the very purpose of saving from sin, and only the most corrupt mind using the most perverted logic could argue that continuing in the sin from which he has supposedly been saved somehow honors the holy God who sacrificed His only Son to deliver men from all unrighteousness.”

- John MacArthur

The Principle for This Teaching

Romans 6:2, “We are those who have died to sin; how can we live in it any longer?”

This idea of being dead to sin now that we are Christians shows up nine times just in this Chapter alone.

“We are those who have died to sin” (2)

“Were baptized into his death” (3)

“We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death” (4)

“We have been united with him in a death like his” (5)

“Our old self was crucified with him” (6)

“Anyone who has died has been set free from sin” (7)

“We died with Christ” (8)

“Count yourselves dead to sin” (11)

“Offer yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life” (13)

What does Paul mean when he tell us that, “We’ve died to sin?” How can it be true that we’ve died to sin when our human nature is still drawn to it?

When Paul speaks of being dead to sin he is talking about something that has already happened...something that has already been done for us by Jesus. We need to be filled with the Holy Spirit each and every day so we won’t fulfill the lusts of the flesh.

“The moment a man has been justified by God, God says to him, in effect, ‘I am going to deliver you completely from the power of sin. Progressively I will deliver you until finally you are perfect and without blemish...’ ”

- Martyn Lloyd-Jones

So does all of this mean that we SHOULD never sin? That’s the real question. Well...the real answer is...YES.

1 Corinthians 10:13, “No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.”

The reality is however, that we will never be perfect this side of heaven and as a result we WILL sin.

1 John 1:9, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness."

The doctrine of Eternal Security was never intended to give us freedom to sin only to show us our freedom from sin. We who are in Christ have died to the reign of sin in our lives.

The Picture for This Teaching

Romans 6:3-5, "Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? 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. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly also be united with him in a resurrection like his."

After Paul's rebuke comes his instruction. Paul tells us that ignorance can be a major factor with us not having victory in Christ.

Paul uses baptism as the thing that identifies us with Christ. This is pictured through baptism into the body of Christ at the moment of salvation.

1 Corinthians 12:13, "For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink."

But Paul isn't just talking about spiritual baptism here. He is also using water baptism...that public symbol of our faith in God...as part of his discussion. Paul uses water baptism as an illustration of our true identification with Christ. The point Paul is trying to make is that being a Christian involves a real and personal identification with Jesus and that will manifest itself in how we live our lives.

When Paul talks about "a death like His" he is literally saying, "Christ's death was our death, His burial was our burial, His resurrection was our resurrection. He not only died for us...He died as us."

In verse 4 we see that, "we too may live a new life." Just think about some of the new things we have...a new heart, a new spirit, a new song, a new name, a new creation and a new self. How exciting it is to be a child of God!

The Power for This Teaching

Romans 6:6-7, "For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body ruled by sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin— because anyone who has died has been set free from sin."

This is an extremely important verse and we must understand what it means. Our "old self" means what we were before we were saved. In other words, Paul is referring to the person we used to be in our sin. He goes on to say that our "body ruled by sin" has been done away with and because of our relationship with Christ, we are not free to sin but instead are free from sin.