

ROMANS

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to Romans chapter 6 as we continue our study through the Word of God.

As we have seen over the last several weeks of our study through Romans, Paul is taking us from sinners to saints you may say!

We started out with Paul's opening salutation in Romans 1:1-7.

Then Paul's introduction in Romans 1:8-17.

From there we moved into the first main section on condemnation where Paul shows that the whole world is guilty before God, Romans 1:18-3:20.

He showed us that the unrighteous heathen is condemned before God by creation as the heavens declare the glory of God! (Romans 1:18-32)

Then he showed how the self-righteous moralist is condemned by his conscience as God has placed in the heart of all of us what is right and what is wrong. (Romans 2:1-16)

And then he showed how the super religious person is condemned by the commandments of God because it is not just the outward observance of these commandments, which we can't keep, but the inward as well. What is in our heart, like lust! (Romans 2:17-29)

And thus, Paul concludes this by making this powerful statement in Romans 3:23, "**for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.**" You see, it doesn't matter how close you get, you are falling short of what God requires, and that is perfection.

Not a very uplifting section but a very important one. You see, we must see our sin and that we can do nothing to cleanse us from our sin before we come to the Savior, to Jesus for the forgiveness of our sins!

Paul has spoken on condemnation and now Paul shares with us this wonderful news of justification or that we are justified before God. All our sins have been cast as far as the east is from the west to be remembered no more. And this justification is revealed from heaven apart from the works of the Law, it is a grace gift! (Romans 3:21-5:21)

Tonight we will begin a section on sanctification that will cover Romans chapter 6 through Romans chapter 8. And please keep in mind that there is a big difference between justification and sanctification. J. Vernon McGee tells us,

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."

- J. Vernon McGee, Thru the Bible, Vol. IV, p. 681

Paul put it like this in I Thessalonians 4:3-8, "**For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality; that each of you should know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, not in passion of lust, like the Gentiles who do not know God; that no one should take advantage of and defraud his brother in this matter, because the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also forewarned you and testified. For God did not call us to uncleanness, but in holiness. Therefore he who rejects this does not reject man, but God, who has also given us His Holy Spirit.**"

There is no record of our sin at all because it has been paid in full by the blood of Jesus – ***JUSTIFICATION!***

God is working in us, making us more like Him, purging out the garbage in our lives and it is a life-long process – ***SANCTIFICATION!***

Now, tonight, as we begin Romans chapter 6, keep in mind that what Paul is going to say is born out of what Paul said in chapter 5 of Romans, "**Moreover the law entered that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more, so that as sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.**" Romans 5:20-21.

In other words, we are saved by grace through faith and not by the Law through works!

And here is the problem for some. They feel if you just speak of grace as the means of salvation and not works, people are going to go wild and sin and sin and sin!

They feel that a salvation by grace through faith permits a person or encourages them to live a life of sin!

Paul is anticipating that question and he is going to answer it. Which tells me, what we hear today about this foolishness, Paul must have heard as well and had to deal with it.

With that said, let's begin reading in verse 1 of Romans chapter 6 and see what the Lord has for us this evening as we study through His Word!

ROMANS 6

VERSES 1-2

I don't know about you, but it seems that common sense has seemed to have left this nation!

And the reality is, common sense has also been lost in the church. People love to use the grace of God to justify their wicked behavior.

An example of this is seen in the life of a Russian monk named Gregory Rasputin who lived in the early part of the last century. He believed, lived and taught that sinning and repentance leads a person to more of God's grace and thus, he lived a very wicked life, believing this was the way to obtain salvation, the grace of God!

Others feel that grace is not sufficient to keep people living holy lives and thus you must put people under the restraints of the Law!

Both views are wrong! Grace is grace, unmerited favor given to us by God; you can't add anything to it for if you do, it is no longer grace!

And the question here that Paul is speaking of, a question that some may have is this, ***“Should Christians go on living like fallen creatures because after all if the more we sin the more abundant God’s grace is in our lives - let’s sin it up so that we will be drenched in God’s grace.”***

Again, common sense would tell us that is so wrong! And yet, since we have lost common sense, at least some have, we think that the more we sin the more of God’s grace we see!

And please understand Paul is not saying that we, as Christians, are now sinless. Not at all!

Paul is speaking of habitual sin and should we continue in that so that grace may abound! And Paul says, ***“Of course not!” “Perish the thought!” “God forbid!”*** Or to put it in our vernacular, ***“What are you, nuts?”***

Paul says we have, ***“died to sin”*** and it is in the past tense meaning a specific point when that occurred, and it speaks of the day we were saved, it was then that we were dead to sin, or should be!

Keep in mind that we were once dead in sins, (Ephesians 2:1), but now we are dead to sin. In other words, sin no longer has power over us; it is not lord of our life. It doesn't mean that sin is gone, it is not extinct, we just are not slaves to it, under its power!

I think one of the problems today is that we think that the Bible is a ***“Self-Help”*** book and thus, when it comes to sanctification we just need to push on, try harder, work more, it is all about determination.

But it really is not about determination or self-help but transformation and the Lord enabling us to live accordingly. Yes, we must surrender, but we surrender to Him!

Paul put it like this in Romans 12:1-2, **“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”**

Transformation not determination! May we remember that.

VERSES 3-4

Paul is saying that we all should understand this truth, and he uses baptism to illustrate his point.

The word **“baptized”** or **“baptism”** means “to immerse or overwhelm something.” And when you look at how it is used here, it has to mean immersion.

Paul is saying that when we are saved we are identifying ourselves with Christ and as He was buried in the tomb, we are buried in the waters of baptism. It is a picture of death, the death of the old life so that as we come out of the waters of baptism, resurrected you might say, we begin a new life in Christ.

Paul put it this way in II Corinthians 5:17, **“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.”**

And in Galatians 2:20 Paul tells us, **“I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.”**

Now here is where some get confused. Please do not think that baptism is needed for salvation. That is not Paul's point. Paul is only using it as an illustration of what takes place in a person's life once they are saved and it is a visual picture of a spiritual truth.

I believe we should be baptized in water, the Lord commands us to, but it doesn't save us!

Let me illustrate it like this and if you are struggling with baptism being essential for our salvation, this hopefully helps. We are told,

A woman came up to him and asked him to baptize her 9-year-old daughter. Ron was reluctant to do so without finding out whether the girl really understood what was happening, so he began to question her and to teach her about the reality behind the water baptism.

He was gesturing as he talked to her, and noticed the shadow of his hand as it fell on the sand. So he said to the little girl, "Do you see the shadow of my hand in the sand? Now that is just the shadow; the hand is the real thing. And when you came to Jesus, when you believed in Jesus, that was the real baptism. You were joined to him, and what happened to him happened to you. Jesus was alive; then he died, was buried, and then he arose from the dead. And that is what happened to you when you believed in him."

He pointed to the shadow on the sand and said, "When you go down in the water and are raised up again, that is a picture of what has already happened."

The girl immediately caught on and said, "Yes, that is what I want to do because Jesus has come into my life."

- R. Kent Hughes, Romans – Righteousness from Heaven, pp.122-123

The outward expression of baptism identifies you with Christ, it is a picture of what He has done in your life. The reality is Jesus folks, don't substitute the reality with a picture!

And so, Paul's point here is simple. Should we continue in sin so that grace may abound? ***“Certainly not! Of course not!”*** We need to walk in the newness of life that is found in Christ Jesus our Lord!

VERSES 5-10

Now verse 5 is better translated **“Since we have been united together in the likeness of His death . . .”** and not **“For if . . .”**

Also, that phrase **“united together”** is a botanical term and it speaks of growing together, growing together in Christ, that our life is entwined with His!

Remember what Paul said in Galatians 3:27, **“For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.”**

And Jesus said in John 15:5-7, **“I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned. If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you.”**

Thus, apart from Christ, separated from Him, we are lifeless, we will die spiritually, there will be no fruit born in our lives.

But, in Him we will have abundant life, we will be alive spiritually speaking, and there will be abundant fruit born in our lives. Stay attached to The Vine, Jesus Christ!

Also, keep in mind that God is a superior Trinity; Father, Son and Holy Spirit. While man is an inferior trinity; body, soul or mind and spirit.

When man was created his spirit was on top controlling his soul or mind with the body on the bottom. But when Adam sinned, when man sinned, his spirit died, and now his soul or mind is controlled by his body appetites, his flesh!

Therefore, when we receive Jesus as Lord and Savior we are *“born again”* and our mind is no longer controlled by our bodily appetites or our flesh because it has been crucified and we are now controlled by our spirit.

Of this Jesus said to Nicodemus, **“. . . ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.’ Nicodemus said to Him, ‘How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born?’ Jesus answered, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, “You must be born again.” The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit.’”** John 3:3-8.

Thus, the old man, the old life was placed on the cross with Christ and crucified, and the body of sin is put out of business, it is done away with, we are no longer slaves to it.

We love to build up the flesh today and yet, the Bible tells us that the flesh is good for nothing, there is no good thing that dwells in our flesh!

Then what are we to do with this flesh nature that we drag along with us? Paul tells us in Galatians 5:24, “**And those who are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.**” We are to put that flesh nature to death; and once you do, don’t allow that flesh nature to be resurrected!

Now in Romans 6:6, when Paul speaks of the “**old man**” many believe that is speaking of the “*old nature.*” Therefore, if that were true, when we come to Christ and that old nature was crucified with Christ, it is dead and gone now! We only have that new nature with us.

John MacArthur put it like this, “The old you died, there isn’t any old nature anymore. There isn’t an old nature and a new nature fighting it out in you. Our old man was crucified and buried with Christ and you were raised with a new nature. . . . You’re not a spiritual schizoid.”

I don’t think that the “**old man**” and “*old nature*” are the same thing. I don’t think he is right on this.

In Ephesians 4:22 we are told that this term, “**old man**” is, “**that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts.**”

First of all, our old nature does not grow corrupt because it is already corrupt!

And if you read through Ephesians 4:22 you can clearly see that Paul is speaking of our old conduct, the things we did and not the “*old nature.*”

My pastor summarized it like this. He wrote,

Let me use the illustration of an old steam powered train. You have the locomotive (the old man, with his evil desires), next you have the coal car (the old nature, which fuels the old man), and finally you have the body of the train (my physical body).

Before I knew Jesus my sinful nature (which I received from Adam) was fueling the evil desires of my old man which in turn used the body to satisfy those desires by moving the body in the direction that the old me wanted it to go.

If you take away the locomotive, the coal car has nothing to feed and the train becomes inoperative.

The same is true with the old man. Take him away and the old nature has nothing to fuel and therefore the body, as the instrument of sin, is rendered inoperative.

- Pastor Phil Balmaier, Romans 6:6

And yes, there is a battle that goes on because we still have that *“old nature”* in us and it tries to resurrect itself. Thus, we must take in the Word of God and apply the Word of God to our lives asking that the Holy Spirit work in us and give us the ability to walk according to the high calling by which we have been called!

Martyn Lloyd-Jones offers a helpful illustration of the believer's relation to his old sinful disposition. He pictures two adjoining fields, one owned by Satan and one owned by God, that are separated by a road. Before salvation, a person lives in Satan's field and is totally subject to his jurisdiction. After salvation, a person works in the other field, now subject only to God's jurisdiction. As he plows in the new field, however, the believer is often tempted by his former master, who seeks to entice him back into the old sinful ways. Satan often succeeds in temporarily drawing the believer's attention away from his new Master and his new way of life. But he is powerless to draw the believer back into the old field of sin and death. (We have been delivered from the tyranny of Satan, but not the temptation of Satan.)

Now that phrase “**has been freed from sin**” in verse 7 can literally be translated, “**has been justified or declared righteous.**”

That is what God has done for us if we receive the free gift of life that is found in Him!
Don't be a slave to sin but be free in Christ!

And in verse 8, this should be translated “**Since we have died with Christ.**” not “**Now if.**” Since we have identified ourselves with the death of Christ, knowing also that He was raised from the dead, it gives to us assurance that we too have been raised with Him!

It is as Paul said in I Corinthians 15:20-22, “**But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive.**”

If death has no dominion over Jesus, we can have assurance it will have no dominion over us! The new man does not just have life, but eternal life, everlasting life!

Thus, this new life that God has given to us we live unto God.

Of this Spurgeon said, “If God has given to you and me an entirely new life in Christ, how can that new life spend itself after the fashion of the old life? Shall the spiritual live as carnal? How can you that were the servants of sin, but have been made free by precious blood, go back to your old slavery?”

You see, it wouldn't make sense to go back to the old life.

Now, of this new life in Christ Paul tells us in Ephesians 4:17-24, **“This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind, having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart; who, being past feeling, have given themselves over to lewdness, to work all uncleanness with greediness. But you have not so learned Christ, if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus: that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.”**

Also, in Colossians 3:9-10 Paul tells us, **“Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him.”**

You are a new creation in Christ – not resuscitation but a transformation, thus, live accordingly!

And keep in mind that when Paul says that Jesus Christ died to sin, it means that He not only died to *THE PENALTY OF SIN*; but He also died to *THE POWER OF SIN!*

And, again, that is what resurrection life is all about, that abundant life we have in Christ, what He has done for us and now we must walk accordingly.

Remember when the friend of Jesus died in John chapter 11. He was in the tomb for four days and then Jesus cried out to him, ***“Lazarus, come forth!”*** and he did.

The problem for Lazarus, as he came to the door of the tomb, was that he was wrapped in grave clothes.

And Jesus commanded them to, “*Loose him, and let him go!*”

In a sense, he was raised in the newness of life. The problem was that he couldn't walk in the newness of life until the graveclothes were removed!

Now you may be thinking, “How do we get our graveclothes off? How can we walk in that newness of life?”

That is what Romans chapters 6 through 8 are all about, the *SANCTIFICATION* process!

VERSES 11-12

The Greek word that Paul uses here for “reckon” is an accounting term. And the idea here is that we have to put this into our account by faith that we are dead to sin and alive in Christ!

Why is that? Because we still have these bodies of flesh and the flesh nature does try to resurrect itself and control our lives from time-to-time.

Thus, by faith I believe the old life was put to death and we wait for the redemption of our bodies when this flesh nature will be done away with, when this corruptible body has put on incorruption and this mortal body has put on immortality. It simply means to believe that what God says in His Word is really true in your life - it's a settled fact!

Now I do understand that there are some who feel once they come to Christ they sin no more! Foolishness and it is not true. First of all, if you feel that way you are pretty prideful! In other words – *SIN!*

Yes, we are dead to the old life, but it does not mean we will not sin. Martin Luther put it like this, “You can’t stop birds from flying around your head, but you can stop them from building a nest in your hair.” How true that is!

Sin and temptation are all around you, there is nothing you can do about it, but you can keep it from nesting in your mind!

Paul put it this way in Romans 8:18-23, **“For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope; because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body.”** We wait for that day!

And in Romans 6:12 Paul continues this thought of not letting sin reign or have control of our lives. Don’t be in bondage to the sin you have been set free from!

Don’t let sin reign in your body as it did before you were saved. How often we forget that because we try to accomplish the work in our flesh, or we just don’t believe it, or we just don’t care or don’t know the truth.

D. L. Moody used this true story to illustrate this point. He spoke of a black woman from the south following the Civil War who was set free from slavery but was confused about her condition and she asked, “Now is I free, or been I not? When I go to my old master he says I ain’t free, and when I go to my own people they say I is, and I don’t know whether I’m free or not. Some people told me that Abraham Lincoln signed a proclamation, but master says he didn’t; he didn’t have any right to.”

Here’s the deal. Don’t listen to what the Devil is saying to you, what the world is saying to you, what sin is saying to you, listen to Jesus who said, **“Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.”** John 8:36. Praise the Lord for that, we are free!

Tragically, many Christians have been set free legally speaking from their slavery to sin, and yet, they are unsure of that truth and their walk is difficult.

How can we walk in that new life? Paul is going to give us some practical help in living in that freedom that Jesus has given to us!

VERSES 13-14

Here is the key to walking in freedom, don’t present the various parts of your body to the service of sin. I think the New Living Translation puts this idea across for us very nicely as it says, **“Do not let sin control the way you live; do not give in to its lustful desires. Do not let any part of your body become a tool of wickedness, to be used for sinning. Instead, give yourselves completely to God since you have been given new life. And use your whole body as a tool to do what is right for the glory of God.”**

Think about this for a minute. Tools or weapons can be used for good or for evil, thus, use them for good or you will incur a self-inflicted wound if you use these weapons, your body for evil!

What do I mean by parts of our body being used for evil? Don't let your eyes see things that are evil, don't let your ears hear things that are evil, don't let your mind wander to evil thoughts, don't use your hands for evil, don't run to evil and-so-on.

It is amazing the bondage that the flesh can place us in. Let me share this with you and you will clearly see what I mean.

In the fourteenth century two brothers fought for the right to rule over a dukedom in what is now Belgium. The elder brother's name was Raynald, but he was commonly called "Crassus," a Latin nickname meaning "fat," for he was horribly obese.

After a heated battle, Raynald's younger brother Edward led a successful revolt against him and assumed the title of Duke over his lands. But instead of killing Raynald, Edward devised a curious imprisonment. He had a room in the castle built around "Crassus," a room with only one door. The door was not locked, the windows were not barred, and Edward promised Raynald that he could regain his land and his title any time that he wanted to. All he would have to do is leave the room.

The obstacle to freedom was not in the doors or the windows, but with Raynald himself. Being grossly overweight, he could not fit through the door, even though it was of near-normal size. All Raynald needed to do was diet down to a smaller size, then walk out a free man, with all he had before his fall.

However, his younger brother kept sending him an assortment of tasty foods, and Raynald's desire to be free never won out over his desire to eat. Some would accuse Duke Edward of being cruel to his older brother, but he would simply reply, "My brother is not a prisoner. He may leave when he so wills." But Raynald stayed in that room for ten years, until Edward himself was killed in battle.

That is exactly what Satan does. He puts things before us and we don't have to go down that path, we don't have to be locked in the prison of sin, but we desire it so much that it controls our lives and that bondage gets to be overwhelming to us.

Jesus has set us free, legally speaking, and we can walk in that freedom from sin whenever we want. But if you yield to your bodily appetites to serve sin, you will live a life of defeat, a life of discouragement, a life of imprisonment!

It is as Psalm 1:1-3 says, "**Blessed is the man Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, Nor stands in the path of sinners, Nor sits in the seat of the scornful; But his delight is in the law of the LORD, And in His law he meditates day and night. He shall be like a tree Planted by the rivers of water, That brings forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also shall not wither; And whatever he does shall prosper.**"

So don't present yourself as instruments of unrighteousness, don't team up with Satan. And the second key to walking in freedom and not remaining a slave to sin is to present yourself to God, let Him use your life instead of having your body be used as a weapon of evil, let God use it for good!

Do you see the two-step approach here? Crucify the old man, cut off any connection with the flesh life, do away with it. Now there is a void and that void is replaced with being used by God as His instrument to make beautiful music by so that the world might hear and be drawn to God.

It is as Jesus said in Matthew 6:22-24, **“The lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness! No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.”**

Who are our serving, who are you a slave to? You see, whoever it is will be manifested in your life. May it be Jesus!

Therefore, if you do these things then sin will not have control of your life, it will not be lord over you.

That doesn't mean you won't struggle, what it means is that which once controlled your life is no longer in control of your life, God is! You see, true freedom is not to live after the flesh, but after God!

And notice what Romans 6:14 tells us. It is not the Law that sets us free, the Law keeps us in bondage.

But a life lived in the grace of God is a life that is truly free! It is as Denny said, “It is not restraint but inspiration that liberates from sin; not Mount Sinai but Mount Calvary which makes saints.”

You see, the Law defines God's Standard, perfection! And it shows us how far short of that standard we are! But the Law can never give to us the freedom from sin that grace does! Grace, not the Law provides the freedom and the power to live over sin!

Thus, remember that God is working in us, the sanctification process, as John tells us **“Whoever abides in Him does not [habitually] sin. Whoever [habitually] sins has neither seen Him nor known Him. . . . Whoever has been born of God does not [habitually] sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot [habitually] sin, because he has been born of God.”**

I John 3:6, 9.

VERSE 15

Isn't this the same question Paul asked and answered in the beginning of this chapter regarding sin?

No, not at all. Wuest tells us, “The verb in verse 1 is in the present subjunctive, speaking of habitual, continuous action. The verb in verse fifteen is in the aorist subjunctive, referring to a single act.”

In other words, the question is, ***“What if I sin just a little, if I just dabble in sin? Since I am not under the Law that must be okay!”***

Paul is going to show us the problem with that kind of thinking, and some Christians feel this way, a kind of justification for their sin, “I am not perfect, just forgiven!” But Paul is going to show us we are not to think that way, we are to live holy lives, that is the goal! Don't play on the boarder of where God wants you to be, be in the center of His will for your life.

You see, once you open the door to sin it will be hard to close it!

VERSE 16

That is a powerful point that Paul is making here. Who are you in bondage to? Who are you a slave to? Is it the Lord and His Word or is it Satan and his false doctrine, his sin that he dangles before you!

Think about what we do, the temptations that bring us down! “I’m only going to try cocaine just this once!” “It is only one drink, it can’t hurt me!” “I only cheated on my wife one time, and we were having problems back then anyway!” “It is only one magazine and God made the body beautiful, so what is wrong with me looking at these women who aren’t wearing any clothes?”

And, obviously this list can go on and you can put in it any sin you are trying to justify.

In saying that let me now say this, once you open the door to sin it is hard to close! God said to Cain before he murdered his brother Abel, “. . . ‘Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door. And its desire is for you, but you should rule over it.’” Genesis 4:6-7.

In other words, God told Cain that sin is at his door and it wants to come in to control his life, it wants him to become a slave to sin. And the same is true of us. Thus, ***DON’T OPEN THE DOOR. DON’T LET SIN INTO YOUR LIFE!***

But we think we are so smart. We think we can handle it. We think it is not a big deal!

And we say, “I can’t believe that, maybe just a little peek!” and as that door opens up, it flies open! And for Cain, before Cain knew it, sin controlled his life, he was a slave to it and he murdered his brother Abel! And the same is true for us.

God says what He means, and He means what He says! Don't be a slave to sin but be a slave to God, be obedient to Him. Don't let the liberty you have in Christ put you into bondage!

VERSES 17-18

Paul speaks of us being slaves to sin in the past tense because now we are a new creation in Christ, the old things have passed away and all is now new in Him!

Maybe some of you remember the Bob Dylan song, "*Gotta Serve Somebody*." Let me just share with you a few words from this song because he does hit the nail on the head, we all have to serve somebody, and it is our choice who we are going to serve. This is how the song goes,

You may be an ambassador to England or France,
 You may like to gamble, you might like to dance,
 You might be the heavyweight champion of the world,
 You may be a socialite with a long string of pearls

But you're gonna have to serve somebody, yes indeed
 You're gonna have to serve somebody,
 Well, it may be the devil or it may be the Lord
 But you're gonna have to serve somebody.

And the song goes on, but I think you get the picture and the question is, "Who are you serving?"

Make no mistake about it, “History is filled with the stories of men who thought they could fight God and succeed; their ruined lives are evidence that it can’t be done. Friedrich Nietzsche was the philosopher who coined the idea that God was dead, and that Christianity was a despised religion of weaklings. Fighting God drove him insane, and he spent the last several years of his life in that condition. Sinclair Lewis won the Nobel Prize for literature, and fought against God in his book *Elmer Gantry*. The book was about an evangelist who was also an alcoholic and would sleep with any woman he could. Sinclair Lewis died a hopeless alcoholic in a clinic near Rome. Writer Ernest Hemingway lived his life of adventure and sin against God seemingly without consequences – until he blew his head off with a shotgun. Fighting against God just doesn’t work.”

Make no mistake about it, the way of the transgressor is hard. And once you open the door to sin, it will entrap you and destroy you! Presenting yourself to sin will drag you down into the whirlpool of sin and eventually down the drain.

Thus, don’t be a slave to habitual sin, don’t be a slave to occasional sin, you are free in Christ and thus, remain free! Continue to be obedient from the heart, an example of faith in action; for if we truly believe something we will act upon it, we will walk in it!

Remember, victory in the Christian life comes not in one major all-out battle, but in little everyday decisions to obey God that yield small victories which add up to a victorious Christian life.

VERSE 19

It has been estimated that during the first century in Rome about one-third of the population were slaves, 33%, so this was an illustration that was easy for the Romans to understand.

And here the idea is whatever you are rooted and grounded in; it will be hard to remove. Think of a tree that has just been planted, it is easy to uproot. But take that same tree some 15 years down the road and the roots are grounded, they are established, and it would be very difficult to remove that tree from the ground. That is what we are to be in the Lord, rooted and grounded in Him and not to sin.

It is as Jesus said, “**. . . ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin. And a slave does not abide in the house forever, but a son abides forever. Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.’**” John 8:34-36. Why go back to be a slave to sin when we are free in Christ!

The late Martyn Lloyd-Jones wrote, “As you go on living this righteous life, and practicing it with all your might and energy, and all your time. . . you will find that the process that went on before, in which you went on from bad to worse and became viler and viler, is entirely reversed. You will become cleaner and cleaner, and purer and purer, and holier and holier, and more and more conformed unto the image of the Son of God.”

And John MacArthur concludes by saying, “No one stands still morally and spiritually. Just as unbeliever’s progress from sinfulness to greater sinfulness, a believer who is not growing in righteousness, though never falling back altogether out of righteousness, will slip further and further back into sin. God’s purpose in redeeming men from sin is not to give them freedom to do as they please but freedom to do as He pleases, which is to live righteously.”

How true that is. ***FREE AT LAST! FREE AT LAST! THANK GOD ALMIGHTY I AM FREE AT LAST!***

VERSES 20-22

As you look back on the old life, how good was it? What fruit was born in it? What was the end result of that kind of life? It was bad, it wasn't good. There was no fruit that God would accept that was born in the old life. The old life leads to death!

Now that is not encouraging but Paul does not leave us there, he tells us in verse 22, **“But now having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life.”**

These should be very encouraging words to us. You see, what the bondage of sin couldn't do, Christ has done in us and we are free, we are fruitful in holiness and we have everlasting life!

And let me remind you of this because we can be fooled by the Devil. In a time of temptation, these truths can seem unreal – so we must rely on God's Word. When we are tempted, faith reminds us of the bitter fruit of sin when our feelings may forget that bitter fruit.

Remember what Paul said in Romans 6:17, **“But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered.”**

In other words, they believed the doctrine, the healthy teaching of God's Word that gave to them life. It set them free from the bondage of sin and it will keep them free from sin.

May we read and apply God's Word to our lives even during those difficult, tempting times!

VERSE 23

The Greek word for “**wages**” is OPSONION (op-so’-nee-on) and it speaks of rations for a soldier or a soldier’s pay.

If you want to be paid for your sinful life, the works of the flesh, the payment for you is death, eternal separation from God.

It is as Clarke said, “Every sinner earns this by long, sore, and painful service. O! What pains do men take to get to hell! Early and late they toil at sin; and would not Divine justice be in their debt, if it did not pay them their due wages?”

On the other end is the grace-gift, the free gift of God which is eternal life by grace through faith in Jesus Christ!

We all have choices to make but this one seems so obvious, why would I want to remain a slave to sin and be cast into Hell when I can be free in Christ and enter into eternity with Him?

It seems so obvious and yet, some will, and I guess what the Psalmist said is right, “**The fool has said in his heart, ‘There is no God.’**” Psalm 14:1. Or this can be translated, “**The fool has said in his heart, ‘No to God.’**”

Either way, they are fools for rejecting the free gift that God has for them in Christ, eternal life, freedom from sin, a new life in Christ! It doesn’t get any better than that!

It is as Paul said in Ephesians 2:8-9, “**For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.**”

Remember the question in Romans 6:15, “**What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? Certainly not!**”

Paul is very clear on this. As believers, we have a change of ownership. No longer do we belong to Satan, we belong to Jesus. And yes, we will have to fight against sin because there is a battle between our old master and our New Master. And if we are serving Jesus, it is not appropriate for us to go and work for our old master any longer!

One writer put it like this, “Sin pays wages also throughout your entire life in small measured payments or consequences. And then when you die in one last lump sum you receive the final payment for a life of service to sin - death (eternal death).” How true that is.

But what a glorious promise that we have from the Lord and let me leave you with these words we read tonight from Paul, **“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. For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, 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. For he who has died has been freed from sin. Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him.”** Romans 6:4-9. Amen!