

Text: Rom 6:1-5

What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? ² By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? ³ Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? ⁴ We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.

⁵ For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his.

Pray

Main Point

You cannot continue to sin since your old self died

Introduction (300)

Hook

As a husband I want to love my wife. I trust that this is the desire of all husbands here.

Now as a husband I still act selfishly and I need to ask for forgiveness from my wife. And I have found that when I ask for forgiveness our relationship is stronger for it. Our love is stronger for it.

Now imagine if I planned, and if I was proactive in acting selfishly. Acting selfishly deliberately to annoy my wife in order to set me up to ask for forgiveness.

Because, as we know, forgiveness grows our love for one another. Imagine if that was my plan to love my wife.

Totally absurd. This is a terrible, backwards plan. Anyone can see right through that flawed logic.

General passage introduction

Yet this is the sort of argument Paul is dealing with in this passage.

A good thing is trying to be reached by evil means. But even worse than that. Evil actions are being justified by a good goal.

Glorifying God is a good thing. In fact it is the ultimate thing a Christian must do.

God is glorified when his grace is displayed as he saves sinners. True and Amen.

But then here comes the flawed logic: if I want to glorify God, I should actively plan to sin so that his Grace is displayed....

I am supposed to be proactive in Glorifying God, what better way than to be proactive in sinning...?

Outline

This flawed logic is what Paul is addressing in this passage. Paul's answer is clear. NO. By no means. Absolutely not.

And he explains why in the rest of chapter 6. Today we will just go to verse 5 where Paul explains that **You cannot go on sinning since your old self Died.**

This is the main theme of this passage: You cannot go on sinning since your old self died.

To develop this, we are going to look at three parts:

1. You Died to Sin
2. You Died in Christ
3. You Died to Rise

This theme is fitting as we think about baptism. These truths. These miracles. These transformations have taken place in the life of our brother Jimmy. And in baptism, these truths are proclaimed, as we will see.

Part 1 – You Died to Sin

Exposition

Background – Where the question comes from

So let us begin with our first point: You cannot go on sinning since you died to sin.

Let us look at verse 1 and 2.

¹What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? ²By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it?

So there is the flawed argument as explicit as we can make it:

¹What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound?

Paul has been ministering the Gospel far and wide and this seems to be the classic response he gets when sharing the Gospel of Grace.

Antinomian response to the gospel (application)

Have you had a similar response when you have shared the Gospel?

In a way it is a good sign. At the very least that question shows that whoever you are talking to have understood that we are not saved by our works. Our works cannot add any merit to our salvation. We are saved by Grace alone through the work of Christ alone.

Let us quickly trace Paul's explanation of the Gospel to this point to understand why he takes the time to address this question here.

Background - Condemnation

First, all humans deserve divine punishment.

"None is righteous, no, not one;" Is the summary of the human race in verse 10 of chapter 3.

Humans are stuck in the presence of sin, they are under the power of sin and they deserve the penalty for their sinful actions.

Humans are rightly condemned for their sinful acts. Humans deserve eternity in Hell. We all deserve eternity in Hell.

This is the raw reality about the human race, and we will be pushed to despair when realise this in our own lives. Our thoughts, desires and actions only confirm our desperate state. Our lives in the present is being destroyed by sin.

Death, condemnation, and destruction are the outcomes of sin. But just like a drug addict we continue to come back for more until our life is completely destroyed.

A tragic picture, but a picture of reality. Paul wants us to feel how hopeless we are in the face of sin, so that when he explains the way of escape, it is clear what we are escaping from. What we are being saved from.

Background - Justification

In verse 21 of chapter 3 Paul begins to explain how we are saved from sin. It is a definitive turning point in the letter and the beginning of a hope built on the firm foundation of God's Work not ours.

In verse 21 and 22 of chapter 3 we read:

²¹ But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it— ²² the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe.

The righteousness of God is a gift. Received by faith. Received by believing the promises God has made.

Paul explains that by faith we can be freed from the penalty of sin. That Jesus paid the price in full for our sins. Not only our past sins but also our future sins. His blood on the cross was the payment we owed. He willingly paid that debt in our place.

Background – New realm of authority

And Paul also explains that, by faith, we can be freed from the power of sin. Freed from the authority or dominion of sin.

At the end of chapter 5, Paul explains that ever since Adam sinned, the human race has been under the dominion of sin. Under the power of sin. Humans were sinners by nature and they sinned because that was how they normally acted. They were not able not to sin. They were compelled to sin. Nothing is done for the glory of God. Everything is done for the glory of self.

But those who believe in Christ are freed from that dominion. Paul explains that when a human believes in Christ, he or she is transferred from under the dominion of sin to the dominion of Christ. The dominion of sin no longer exists in the life of a Christian.

Christ is their master. Sin is no longer their master. They have gone from being in Adam to being in Christ.

Look there at verse 21 of chapter 5:

²¹ so that, as sin reigned in death [Sin had dominion over humans a dominion shown by the death of all] *, grace also might reign through righteousness leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.* [But in Christ, sin no longer reigns in our lives, that power, that authority is no more. Instead, God's grace is in control of our lives.]

These are glorious truths.

The penalty of sin is paid for.

The power of sin is removed.

The very enemies of God who spit in his face, slandered his name and actively ransack his creation are rescued. This is God's grace.

And the more we understand the seriousness of sin, the more we will understand the significance of God's grace.

We can see why Paul would say in Rom 5:20.

²⁰ Now the law came in to increase the trespass,[To show us how serious sin was] *but where sin increased, **grace abounded all the more,***

In answer to the question: No

So it is at this point that Paul addresses the question:

What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound?

² By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it?

You can feel the frustration in Paul's response?

Just like it would be absurd for a husband to justify his selfish behaviour with a pretext to love his wife, so it is absurd to try to justify sin using God's Glory.

You cannot build something with the very thing that destroys it.

You cannot build a fire by pouring water on it.

You cannot build a house by setting the wood on fire.

You cannot fix your car by driving it into the lamppost.

Sin is what God saved us from. Sin is the enemy, Sin is the prison. Sins are crimes against God. Sins are assaults against God.

Sin is not the friend we are no longer allowed to play with; sin is the child molester we have been rescued from.

So we hear Paul's clear and emphatic answer: *² By no means!*

Still in the presence of sin

But the question asked reveals something else about our relationship with sin. This question comes not from an unbeliever. (They need no excuse to justify their sin, and the glory of God is far from their mind.)

Why would a believer ask such a question if the penalty and power of sin have been removed?

This question reminds us of something significant about the intrinsic makeup of a Christian. Something significant about their new humanity, as it were.

It reminds us that a Christian still lives in the presence of sin, and still has a sinful nature.

Our Old self is dead. Praise God. The new self is alive. With the new self with are given a new nature able to please God, but at the same time we still have the sinful nature to contend with.

This is the reality of our new humanity.

We are going to see this further in these verses, but it is helpful to have this framework.

We are a new self with two natures. One nature which is able to please God and an another nature wanting to please self.

Your sinful nature wants to justify sin (Application)

And all Christians feel that pull. Feel that internal battle. Will I obey Christ or will I obey my desires?

Some use theological arguments to justify sin, like the people Paul is addressing:

My purpose is to glorify God. God is glorified when He forgives sin, therefore I will sin to glorify God.

But what other arguments do you make to justify your own sin, that when brought to the light are shown for the absurd logic they are?

We use many excuses to justify our sin.

Maybe it's

“I’m not hurting anyone, so it’s fine”

Or maybe it’s

“It’s not that bad, at least it is better than what I used to do, or better than what the others are doing”

Or maybe it’s

“As long as no one finds out it’s fine”

Our brains will accept these reasons, and others, not because they are logical, not because they are biblical, but because we want to keep on sinning. Our sinful nature wants to satisfy the desires of the flesh.

Don’t be deceived by your own flawed logic to justify sin.

Whatever reasoning you may use, when the question comes up in your mind “should I go on sinning since... x,y or z. Remember Paul’s words: ² *By no means!*

The change is definitive

In answer to the absurd logic of glorifying God by sinning, Paul gives a rhetorical question:

How can we who died to sin still live in it?

This statement becomes the topic sentence as Paul discusses how Christians are to live in this sin infested world. How, although we have been transformed, we still need to fight our sinful nature.

We need to notice two things about this statement.

First is the definitive nature of the change. *we who **died** to sin.* Not we who slept to sin, or went on holiday from sin, or turned away from sin. We who died to sin

As we know all too well, death is definitive. And here, Paul wants us to remember the old self is dead. It cannot and will not continue to live. It cannot come back to life. Our change from being in Adam to being in Christ is irreversible.

The change is definitive.

Died to the power of sin, not the presence of sin

The second thing to note is what we have died to. We have *died to sin*.

Paul is not referring here to the penalty of sin or to the presence of sin, but to the power of sin. He is saying we have died to the authority and dominion of sin.

He is not talking of the act of sinning, but the controlling driving force of sin in the lives of those in Adam.

Christians have not died to the presence or the temptation to sin.

The exhortations further in chapter 6 make it clear that a Christian will continue to be tempted to sin and will keep doing acts of sin. Because we will be tempted, we must take charge and take action to resist sin. In verse 11 and 12 He says

¹¹ So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

¹² Let *not sin* therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions.

Your sinful nature is still present, but you are dead to the dominion, to the power, to the authority of sin. Sin is no longer your master. Sin is no longer your king.

Application

You are a new person – you cannot go back

(Application)

So if you are a Christian, you have been changed completely, and there is no going back. It is impossible to go back.

Think of a seed. A seed may be tossed and driven by the wind. A seed may be picked up by birds and dropped anywhere.

But when a seed is buried and dies it stops behaving like a seed. It has become a tree, never to return a seed.

Now it may feel the presence of the wind and of birds, but it is not under the power of either of these. The tree may sway, but it is never tossed and driven by the wind again. The birds may land on it, and even build a nest, but they cannot transplant the tree.

Just like the seed died and become a tree, we too have died to sin. We have been transformed, and our relationship to sin is fundamentally different.

Yes, we feel the presence of sin, but we must not confuse that for the power of sin. We feel the windstorm in our lives, and sometimes we let a nest of sin be formed, and these must be addressed.

But like a tree experience wind and birds in a fundamentally different manner to that of a seed, so your experience is fundamentally different to sin, now that you have died to it.

Gospel plea

This change happens the moment we believe in Christ. The moment we accept by faith the gift of God.

Today, when we baptise Jimmy, it is a proclamation that this change has happened in his life. That he has been rescued from the penalty of sin and freed from the power of sin and that he looks forward to the day when he will also be free from the presence of sin.

But what about you?

Do you feel the guilt of sin and the weight of shame on your shoulders? Accept Christ, and He will cover the debt you owe and remove the guilt and shame.

Do you feel trapped in an endless cycle of destructive behaviour? Accept Christ and he will rescue you from the clutches of sin.

Do you feel despair as you see your life slip by? Knowing death is just a matter of time? Accept Christ and he will give you life and life eternal.

Link

Baptism illustrates two specific aspects of what it means to accept Christ. Two specific parts of this transformation. Facets of what it means to be In Christ.

First, being immersed speaks of the death and burial of Christ.

Which brings us to our second section of our study: You cannot go on sinning, since you died in Christ.

Part 2 – You Died In Christ

Exposition

Baptism short hand for conversion

Look at verse 3 and the start of verse 4:

³ Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? ⁴ We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death

First, it is important to note that Paul is using “baptism” here as a shorthand to refer to a person being converted.

He is **not** saying that people are saved by being baptised.

He is using “baptism” to refer to one who believes in Christ and has chosen to follow him.

Different “short-hands” are used in scripture to denote believer. Sometimes it is one who has faith (one who believes), or one who is baptised by the Spirit, or one who has repented, or those who have been included into the church, or as in this case ‘one who is baptised’.

Faith, Spirit baptism, repentance, church membership, and baptism are all fundamental parts of the transformation of a human from a child of destruction to a child of God.

Baptism becomes the tangible physical time and place that makes out our conversion.

No unbaptised believer (Application)

As far as Paul is concerned there is no such thing as an unbaptised believer. There is no place for a prolonged time span between belief and baptism.

Now in our individualist culture we separate out belief and baptism, but that is foreign to what we see in scripture, and we must push back against our individualistic view of conversion.

If you believe in Christ as your Lord and Saviour, and have yet to be baptised it is good to ask yourself the question, why not? What is stopping you from being baptised? Getting wet is the first and easiest command Christ gives us. All other commands only get harder from there.

Union with Christ introduced

And when we are baptised, when we are converted, Paul says, we are linked to Christ.

That what Paul is getting at in verse 3 when he says [we] *have been baptized into Christ Jesus*. A theme carried throughout chapter 6.

At our conversion we were joint to Christ in a real way. We became united to him.

Illustration of union – Grafted Apple Tree

Now there this awesome thing orchardist can do. They are able to make one apple tree produce all sorts of different kinds of apples.

They do it by grafting or joining a branch from a different kind of apple to the main tree. With great skill, these grafted branch continues to grow on the main tree.

So you can have a granny smith branch grafted in, a pink lady, a galla and a golden delicious all on the same tree.

The one tree then produces all sorts of apples in different seasons. God's creation is truly awesome. One tree to feed the whole family.

Each branch grafted in is nourished and sustained by the same rootstock. And whatever the rootstock experiences this will affect the branches.

Nutrients, water and strength all come from the rootstock and are shared with the branches grafted in. The branches are united with the rootstock.

Now in the similar way, those who are baptised are united with Christ.

In Christ specifically in his death – Power of sin

Just like the branches experience many things from being grafted into the rootstock, Christians too experience many things when we are united with Christ.

The thing Paul wants to draw our attention to here is that we have been buried with him. That we share in his death.

So the question should come to mind: What happened at Christ's death that we share in? What is Paul getting at when he says that we “were buried with him into death”

Thankfully we don't need to guess. Paul elaborates on this in verse 9 and 10.

Look at Rom 6:9-10

⁹ We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. ¹⁰ For the death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God.

Christ died to sin, once for all.

Death, the wages of sin, no longer has dominion over Him.

At his death, Jesus died to the power or dominion of sin.

This is so vital to get our heads around.

It is only because Christ died to sin, that we can die to sin.

It is only because Christ is no longer under the power of sin, that we are no longer under the power of sin.

It is only because of the historic fact of Christ's death that we have died to sin.

Or let me put it this way.

Is it possible for Christ to die again?

Is it possible for sin to have dominion over Christ once again?

Is it possible for Christ to be under the power of sin again?

No, no and No! Certainly not : *[He]will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him.*

And so since we are united with him, grafted in to him, we too cannot be controlled by sin again.

Application

Sin does not force you to do anything

So remember that. Lean into that. Cing to that

You died in Christ therefore, sin has no power over you.

Now you may feel like you are controlled by sin, but that is a lie.

You may feel like you are under the power of sin, but that is not true.

Yes you will be faced with the temptation to sin. Yes Satan will want you to believe that your situation is unique, that you are helpless, and that there is no way of escape.

Don't believe those lies.

Fundamental to fighting sin is knowing that you are united with Christ. He died to the power of Sin, so you too are dead to the power of sin.

Whatever the sin is, big or small, you can resist it.

You have the ability to say no.

You have the power to say no.

You have been grafted in to Christ. You share in his victory over the power of sin.

You cannot go on sinning since you died in Christ.

Link

But our union with Christ is not merely about dying with him. It also involves being raised with him.

Which brings us to our third and final part: You cannot go on sinning since you died to Rise

Part 3 – You Died to Rise

Exposition

The Death has a purpose

Notice that our Death to sin and our death in Christ have a purpose. Death is not the end.

Look again at the start of verse 4 to verse 5

⁴ We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.

⁵ For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his.

That is stunning. That is awesome.

Just as Christ was raised from the dead, we too might walk in the newness of life and we too will be united in a resurrection like his.

Newness of life

When Paul says “Walking in a newness of life” he is referring to the moral life of a believer. He is talking about a life that is characterised by holy living, a life characterised by seeking to please God, a life characterised by obedience to his commands.

The very purpose of our salvation is for us to live like Christ lived. To be imitators of Christ. To be holy as he is holy. To walk in newness of life.

Now this would seem impossible in our own strength.
Futile to try on our own.

But we are united to Christ, so in the same way that he was raised from the dead to a new life, we too can live in the newness of life.

Christ died to rise, we too died to rise.

When we think about it this way, we can see how absurd it is to use God's glory as an excuse to sin. God is glorified as we walk like Christ.

Already of the resurrection

In these verses we see the already and not yet nature of how we share in the resurrection.

In verse 4, we see that we already share in the resurrection of Christ.

just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.

We already have a new heart able to love God

We already have a new name, now called the children of God

We already have a new spirit wanting to obey God

We already seek to live in a way that pleases God

We already are a new creature!

All this by the same power and glory that raised Jesus from the Grave.

No yet of the resurrection

And in verse 5, the emphasis is on something we look forward to. Something we anticipate. Something not yet fulfilled.

*⁵ For if we have been united with him in a death like his, **we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his.***

We are not yet free from the presence of sin

We are not yet free from the desire to sin

We are not yet free from the effects of sin, be it disease, sorrow, suffering, grief and death.

But one day we will be free from all the consequences of Sin.

And this is not wishful thinking.

Because we are united in Him,

because we have died in him,

because we have already (in part) experienced the resurrection,

Because of all these things, we are confident we will experience the resurrection in full one day.

We wait for that day with expectation.

Application

We look forward to the full resurrection

One day you won't have the capability to sin. One day you won't have the desire to sin.

You will still have a desire for joy, for pleasure, for happiness, for fulfilment and for satisfaction.

But you won't turn to sinful behaviour to find them, as we too often do today.

You will find joy and satisfaction in depth way beyond your imagination,

Because your joy and satisfaction will be perfectly found in God. In Him who is the author of perfect joy and satisfaction.

On that day you won't believe the lies that there is some good in sin. That there is some pleasure in sin.

You will taste real pleasure and real joy.

But until that day, we strive to walk in the newness of life.

We have the ability to seek and appreciate real pleasure, but too often we listen to the lies. The lies that sin will satisfy us. The lie that sin will give us real pleasure.

Do not buy those lies. Turn to God who gives us real joy and pleasure, and walk in the newness of life.

Conclusion

As we bring the study to a close, remember the question Paul was addressing. The question which plagues every one of us

“Can I continue to sin?” , “Can I continue in my lifestyle of sin?”

Whatever excuse or justification we give, even the justification that it could somehow bring glory to God, the answer is No! Certainly not!

You died to Sin. The change is definitive. There is no turning back. The old self is put to death. Sin is no longer your master, don't live as if it was.

And that death to sin is founded on the death of Christ. You died in Christ. You share in his death. His reality

becomes your reality. As sure as sin no longer has any sway on Him, so Sin no longer has a hold on you.

But you share in more than the death of Christ. You also share in his resurrection. Just as He died to rise, you too died to rise.

You have been given a newness of life, a new heart able to love and serve God.

The ability to imitate Christ and grow into his likeness.

That new heart is able to resist and fight sin, because sin is still present in this evil age. But we look forward to a day when there will be no more fighting, no more stumbling. One day we will enjoy real joy and real pleasure in the presence of the author of joy and pleasure.

Soon we will be baptising Jimmy.

When he is plunged into the water we are reminded that all Christians have been united in the death of Christ. All are free from the power and penalty of sin.

And when he is brought out to the water we are reminded that all christians are united in the resurrection of Christ. A resurrection which empowers us to live a new life for his Glory.

So in short, we cannot go on sinning since we died to sin, since we died in Christ and since we died to rise.

Let us pray,