

UNASHAMED

A study of the book of Romans

I am not ashamed of the **GOSPEL**, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes. Romans 1:16

April 25, 2021
Romans 6:1-14

⁶ What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? ² By no means! We are those who have died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? ³ Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? ⁴ 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.

⁵ 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. ⁶ For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body ruled by sin might be done away with,^[a] that we should no longer be slaves to sin— ⁷ because anyone who has died has been set free from sin.

⁸ Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. ⁹ For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him. ¹⁰ The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God.

¹¹ In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus. ¹² Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. ¹³ Do not offer any part of yourself to sin as an instrument of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer every part of yourself to him as an instrument of righteousness. ¹⁴ For sin shall no longer be your master, because you are not under the law, but under grace.

COMMENTARY

6:1. As is often the case in Romans, we can hear the voice of Paul's opponents in this verse. Using this style allowed Paul to quote the objections he probably had heard often when he preached the gospel in synagogues. The superabundance of grace, which Paul described in the previous chapter, raised a question that he already had addressed (see Rom. 3:8, 3:31). If it is true that where "sin multiplied, grace multiplied even more" (as Paul said), does this not seem to invite more sin? Where then is the motive to live ethically?

6:2. Paul rejected the invalid inference (v. 1) with the strong expression absolutely not. Phillips aptly translated it, "What a ghastly thought!" Paul argues that believers have died to sin. He does not mean that our sin nature was eliminated at the cross or at the moment of our conversion or baptism. Instead, as he says elsewhere, God "rescued us from the domain of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of the Son He loves" (Col. 1:13). Having experienced such a transfer, dare we go on living in sin?

6:3. In defense of his claim that believers have died to sin, Paul points out that through baptism we were baptized into Christ Jesus and His death. Here Paul began to descend into important details. The death Christians die to sin is a reality because we have been baptized into His death. The key to understanding Paul's theology is his insight that being a believer in Christ means being united with Christ. A believer is identified with the object of his or her belief. For the Christian a mysterious but undeniable new relationship begins at the moment of confession. A union of believer and Lord occurs, thus we participate in His death and are freed from sin.

6:4. Believers are symbolically buried with Christ through baptism and raised with Him from the dead in order that we may walk in a new way of life. This makes clear the absurdity of the idea that we can continue in sin so that grace may multiply (v. 1).

6:5. Though believers have not yet experienced resurrection, we are assured this future reality by the fact that Christ, in whose death we share, has been raised from the dead.

6:6. Our old self (lit "old man") is everything that we were before we became Christians. By contrast, the new self is what we are once we become Christians (Eph. 4:22-24; Col. 3:9-10). The new self is not perfect. We still sin because we have indwelling sin in our mortal bodies (Rom. 7:13-25), but we are in the process of renewal (Eph. 4; Col. 3).

Thus we have the answer to the question about whether a Christian can still live in sin. We cannot live as we once did because the old self was crucified with Him (Christ). In Christ the believer is a new creation (2 Cor. 5:17).

6:7. Sin (personified) has no claim over a dead person and can claim no loyalty from him. The Greek verb “dikaioo” means to justify or to declare righteous. The legal aspect of these terms also involves relational concepts, for judges must promote an individual’s relation to society by judging fairly. These two concepts carry over into Paul’s letters, especially Romans and Galatians, as he explains how to have a right relationship with God. At the point of faith God declares the believer to be righteous (Rom. 3:30–4:9; 5:1; Gal. 2:16-17; 3:8,11,24; 5:4), free from the penalty of sin and in a right relationship with God.

6:8-9. It was because of our sin that death fixed its grip on Jesus, but He arose to live forever. Death no longer rules the believer, for we died with Christ who no longer dies.

6:10. Jesus went through an irreversible transformation in His death and resurrection. Believers also undergo an irreversible transformation: we die to the old self (v. 6) at conversion and thereafter live as new creatures (2 Cor. 5:17). Like Jesus, the believer lives to God .

6:11. This is the first command in the Book of Romans This verse is the ultimate conclusion to the truth being expressed here. The words “consider yourselves” are central. Paul was not describing an ideal or a possibility but a reality based on the gospel. We must accept the full reality of the Christian life. And what is this reality? Having been united with Christ in His death and resurrection, Christians too must realize we are dead to sin. The hold of sin is broken in Christians’ lives. We have a freedom we previously did not have. The balance of the sin problem has shifted decisively in our favor because of the death, resurrection, and presence of Christ in believers’ lives.

6:12. Based on what we have embraced as true about our newfound status regarding sin, Paul commands us not to let sin reign in our mortal body so that we obey its evil desires. We are to cut our ties to sin. This command, coupled with the command to “count yourselves” in the previous verse, proves without doubt that the old self that was crucified with Christ was not the sin nature. Rather, it was the previous sinful lifestyle. Paul warns the believer here to cut the ties to the previous sinful lifestyle. Christ submitted himself to the reign of sin when He died in order that “grace might reign through righteousness” (Rom. 5:21). How could a believer allow sin to reign and obey its evil desires when Christ has already submitted to the reign of sin in death?

6:13. Finally, we are to consecrate ourselves to God and offer the parts of our body to Him as instruments of righteousness. Offer brings the language of sacrifice and worship to mind quickly. The predominant use of this word in the New Testament is to refer to “bystanders”—i.e., those who are constantly there by the side as a backdrop. The sense

seems to be to come and stand alongside God, offering what you have to Him as instruments of righteousness. We are to be at His disposal for the purposes of righteousness—body, mind, will, emotions, spirit. Paul is preparing to expound the whole concept of “offering” in verses 15-20 in terms of who one is enslaved to. It is all a matter of mastery—whether sin or righteousness is the master.

6:14. In conclusion, Paul reminds the Roman believers that the gospel they are hearing about is a gospel of grace. For those under the law, sin is the master, simply because the law has no power to enable one to resist sin. Law does an excellent job of pointing out failure, but it cannot empower one to keep from failing. Only one thing can: grace. Paul had already told his readers that grace will reign through righteousness to bring eternal life (Rom. 5:21), and the time for that in the individual’s life is once the identification with Christ’s death and resurrection has been made. Once the identification with Christ is made, it is the constant flow of grace into the life of the believer that “teaches us to say ‘No’ to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age” (Titus 2:11-12).

MAIN POINT

Sin is no longer your master, Christ is.

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

Did you do anything this week for someone who is difficult to love?

How did they respond? Did God teach you anything through that?

How did you make relationships a priority this past week?

In our time together, we will see how God’s love actually transforms us into new people with new identities. Through Jesus, the very core of who we are changes. As we embrace our new identity in Christ, we will come to see that sin is no longer our master. Christ is.

UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

How do we identify ourselves to others?

What are the first couple of questions you usually ask someone when you meet them?

What do those questions tell us about the way we think about ourselves and others?

In Romans, the foundational thing of importance about you is who you are in Christ. Why do you think knowing who you are in Christ is so important?

Like we've already talked about in our study, when we believe the gospel God changes our hearts. That means we are a different person on the inside. In the book of Romans, Paul says that when we believed in Jesus, our old self died and our new self no longer is a slave to sin.

- HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ ROMANS 6:1-14.

If our old self is dead, why do you think we still struggle with sin?

Will we ever stop struggling with sin while we are alive? Why is that important to recognize?

The struggle with sin is like a war. Have you ever felt that way? How have you tried to deal with that war inside you in the past?

Even though we are made new on the inside and you become God's temple, the enemy wants to tear the temple down. But it's important to remember that sin's dominion over us has been crushed; we are no longer slaves to sin even though we struggle. In light of that struggle, we must be prepared for the war.

We need to prepare for the war through spiritual disciplines, or habits that fortify our faith. One of those disciplines is prayer. How does prayer help us prepare for battle?

Another of these disciplines is Bible study. How are you making time in your life to regularly read and study the Bible?

Another of these disciplines is fellowship. Why is sharing our struggles and our victories with each other in a group important to help us prepare for spiritual battle?

These disciplines don't mean you won't struggle; struggle with sin is a life-long battle. But when we engage in these disciplines, we are recognizing the reality of the war and making ourselves ready for it.

NEXT STEPS

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

What is your personal goal for Bible study this week?

What is one practical way you are going to make prayer more of a priority for you this week?

Is there any specific temptation that our group can pray for you, that God would give you the strength to withstand it?

PRAYER

Pray to close your group. Mention in your prayer each person who shared a specific temptation. Pray for God's strength in them during that temptation.