



Commentary on Romans

“The Gospel of God”

Chapter 6

By

Mark McGee

Romans 6:1-4

"What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it? Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? 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." Romans 6:1-4

In the [last part of our study](#) we saw that

- the Law entered that the offense might abound
- where sin abounded grace abounded more

And

- as sin reigned in death
- grace reigns through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord

We now move to Chapter Six of Paul’s letter to the Romans where the apostle asks and answers a very important question.

Verse 1

“What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?”

τι ουν ερουμεν επιμενουμεν τη αμαρτια ινα η χαρις πλεοναση

τι ουν ερουμεν (*ti oun eroumen*) “what then will we say”

επιμενουμεν τη αμαρτια ινα η χαρις πλεοναση (*epimenōmen tē hamartia hina hē charis pleonasē*) “shall we continue in sin that grace may abound” .. *epimenōmen* means “continue on with persistence” .. *pleonasē* means “superabound, abounding in number, more than enough” ..

Paul asked the question based on his previous statement –

“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

The offense (sin against God) has been part of our (the human race) experience since the Garden of Eden. However, the offense increased (abounded) when God gave His Law to His people, Israel. “But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more.” The Greek word used in Romans 5:20 for “abounded much more” is *hupereperisseusen*. It means “to abound more exceedingly.” Even though sin abounded (*pleonasē*), grace abounded more exceedingly. God’s grace is always greater than the offense.

Why would Paul even think to ask that question? It's probably because he had heard the question many times through the years as he preached the Gospel of Grace. Paul's audience was vast and varied and he would have heard every conceivable question from Jews and Gentiles by the time he wrote to the Romans.

How did he answer the question?

Verse 2

"Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?"

μη γενοιτο οτινες απεθανομεν τη αμαρτια πως επιζησομεν εν αυτη

μη γενοιτο (*mē genoito*) "never may it be" .. "may it not come to pass" .. this is the same phrase Paul used in Romans 3:4, 6, 31 .. it is a strong denial .. as we will see later in our study,

Paul used the same phrase several other times in Romans (e.g. 6:15; 7:7, 13; 9:14; 11:1, 11) ..

οιτινες απεθανομεν τη αμαρτια πως ετι ζησομεν εν αυτη
(*hoitines apethanomen tē hamartia pōs eti zēsomen en autē*)
“who we died to sin how still shall we live in it” .. *apethanomen*
means “die off, die away from” .. the word emphasizes the
idea of ‘separating’ from something .. that something is
‘sin’ (*hamartia*) .. *zēsomen* means “to live, be alive” ..

Paul responded to the question with his own question. How in the world could we who have been changed so radically by the grace of God want to continue to live in opposition to God’s will for our lives? How can we who “died” to sin continue to “live” in it?

What did Paul mean by the use of the word ‘sin’? Was he talking about individual ‘acts’ of sin that a Christian might commit or the sin nature that is totally depraved? Here’s how Greek professor Kenneth Wuest answered that question –

"A rule of Greek syntax settles the question. Here the article points back to a previously mentioned sin defined in its context. The reference is to sin reigning as king (5:21). There sin is personified since it reigns as a king. But one cannot conceive of acts of sin reigning as king in the life of a person. They are the result of some dominant factor reigning as a king. That can only be the evil nature still resident in the Christian. And here is the key to the interpretation of the entire chapter. Every time the word 'sin' is used in this chapter as a noun, it refers to the evil nature in the Christian." Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament, Volume I, p 91, Eerdmans, 1973

Verse 3

"Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?"

*η αγνοειτε οτι οσοι εβαπτισθημεν εις χριστον ιησουν
εις τον θανατον αυτου εβαπτισθημεν*

η αγνοειτε οτι οσοι εβαπτισθημεν εις χριστον ιησουν (*ē agnoeite hoti osoi ebaptisthēmen eis Christen lēsoun*) “or are you unaware that as many as have been baptized into Christ Jesus” .. *agnoeite* means “to be ignorant, not to know” .. *ebaptisthēmen* means “to dip, sink, submerge” .. it is a verb that is aorist/indicative/passive .. It is something that was done to us in the past .. we can look at it as an historical event that we can remember .. the indicative mood indicates past action with the significance that it happened ..

εις τον θανατον αυτου εβαπτισθημεν (*eis ton thanaton auto ebaptisthēmen*) “into the death of him have been baptized” .. *thanaton* means “physical or spiritual death” ..

The words ‘baptize’ and ‘baptism’ are used many times in the New Testament, but they are ‘transliterations’ of the Greek rather than ‘translations.’ The Greek words for baptize, baptized and baptism are — *baptizó* and *baptisma*. The word *baptismos* was used for ceremonial washings of articles.

The words themselves come from the word *bapto*, which means 'to dip.' Ancient Greeks used the word for dipping something into a solution. The word *baptizó* was also used for dipping something into a solution, but the usage of *baptizó* was a permanent change through 'immersion'.

One example comes to us from the Greek poet and physician Nicander of Colophon. He lived a couple of hundred years before Paul wrote Romans. Nicander wrote a recipe for making pickles and used both words, *bapto* and *baptizó*. The first step in making a pickle was dipping (*bapto*) the vegetable into boiling water. The next step was immersing (*baptizó*) it into a vinegar solution. *Bapto* started the process. *Baptizó* finished it – making the change permanent. Once the vegetable went through the boiling and vinegar, it was not the same. It had changed into something else and would be that something else until eaten.

Dr. Kenneth Wuest defined the word *baptizó* as "the introduction or placing of a person or thing into a new environment or into union with something else so as to alter its condition or its relationship to its previous environment or condition.' And that is its usage in Romans 6." (*Romans in the Greek New Testament*, Eerdmans, p 96, 1955)

What Paul addressed in Romans 6 was the change in relationship of a sinful human being to an angry God. Those who God 'immersed' into Jesus Christ are 'immersed' into Christ's death. That is how God changes our relationship with Him. We who were enemies of God are made His children through that supernatural process.

We often think of baptism as being dipped or submerged into water. However, the words (e.g. baptism, baptize, baptized) are used in several other contexts as well –

- Baptism into Moses .. 1 Corinthians 10 (saved from destructive water)
- Noah-like baptism .. 1 Peter 3:20-21 (saved from destructive water)
- Ceremonial Jewish cleansings .. Hebrews 9:10 ('washings' is the Greek word *baptismois*)
- Baptism of John .. Mark 1:4-8
- Baptism of repentance .. Mark 1:4
- Baptism of Jesus .. Matthew 3:13-17
- Baptism of Holy Spirit .. Mark 1:8
- Baptism of fire .. Matthew 3:11-12
- Baptism of suffering .. Matthew 20:22-23; Mark 10:35-39
- Baptism into Body of Christ .. 1 Corinthians 12:13
- Baptism for the dead .. 1 Corinthians 15:29
- Baptism into Christ .. Galatians 3:27
- Baptism into Christ's death .. Romans 3:23
- One Baptism .. Ephesians 4:5

Paul used the phrases “baptized into Christ Jesus” and “baptized into His death” in Romans 6:3. We need to be careful not to read a ‘water baptism’ interpretation into these Bible verse before studying them carefully. The job of the student is to observe everything in the text, ask questions, develop answers, and make interpretations and applications prayerfully.

Jesus told His disciples to baptize new disciples “in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (Matthew 28:19). Jesus was speaking of water baptism in that context because that’s what people do. The Apostle Peter used water to baptize Cornelius and his family. The Apostle Paul used water to baptize the jailer and his family in Philippi (Acts 16:33). However, only God baptizes (immerses, submerges) a new believer into Christ and into His death.

Let’s continue with the context to search for information that will help us interpret the powerful truth of being baptized into Jesus Christ and into His death.

Verse 4

“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.”

συνεταφημεν ουν αυτω δια του βαπτισματος εις τον θανατον ινα ωσπερ ηγερθη χριστος εκ νεκρων δια της δοξης του πατρος ουτως και ημεις εν καινοτητι ζωης περιπατησωμεν

συνεταφημεν ουν αυτω δια του βαπτισματος εις τον θανατον (*sunetaphēmen oun autō dia tou baptismatos eis ton thanaton*) “we were buried therefore with him through baptism into death” .. *sunetaphēmen* means “bury with” .. the word is also aorist indicative passive in the Greek (see above)

..

Paul is now diving into what I call ‘deep doctrinal depths’. This truth that Christians who were ‘baptized’ into Christ were ‘baptized’ into His death is a supernatural event. There is nothing ‘natural’ about this event in our lives. Remember the definition of the word ‘baptized’ — “dip, sink, submerge, immerse.” Christians are people who were ‘immersed’ into Christ’s death and ‘buried with’ Christ through being ‘immersed’ into His death. This supernatural work of God in the sinner’s life is the ‘change agent.’ While water baptism is a ‘picture’ or ‘figure’ of what has happened to a believer, Paul referred to the supernatural immersion that occurred at the moment of salvation. When they confessed with their mouth the Lord Jesus and believed in their heart that God had raised Him from the dead, they were saved (Romans 10:9) — they were ‘buried’ — ‘united’ — with Christ into His death.

ινα ωσπερ ηγερθη χριστος εκ νεκρων δια της δοξης του πατρος (*hina hōsper ēgerthē christos ek nekrōn dia tēs doxēs tou patros*) “so that just as was raised up Christ out from the dead by the glory of the Father” .. *ēgerthē* means “to waken, raise up” .. *ek* means “from out of” and suggests from the interior outwards .. *nekrōn* means “corpse, dead body, lifeless” .. *dia* means “because of, on account of, through” .. *doxēs* means “praise, honor, glory” .. *patros* means “one who commits life” ..

Jesus Christ, lifeless in the tomb, was ‘wakened’ from death through the supernatural work of His Father in Heaven! God the Father promised He would raise His Son from the grave and He did it through and to the credit of His great ‘glory.’

ουτως και ημεις εν καινοτητι ζωης περιπατησωμεν (*houtōs kai hēmeis en kainotēti zōēs peripatēsōmen*) “so also we in newness of life should walk” .. *kainotēti* means “freshness, newness” .. *zōēs* means “life, spiritual and physical” .. *peripatēsōmen* means “walk around, conduct oneself” ..

Paul tells us clearly that we share in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Those of us who were submerged into Jesus were submerged into His death. That means we were buried with Him through God submerging us into ‘death.’ In the same way, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, “even so we also should walk in newness of life.”

That’s why Paul answered the question in verse 1 the way he did —

“What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? Certainly not!”

That’s why Paul asked the question he did —

“How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?”

God’s supernatural work in our lives ‘changes’ us dramatically and eternally! Our relationship with God is changed. Our conduct, our behavior, the way we ‘walk around is changed. Everything about us is changed and changed permanently!

Who should receive the ‘glory’ for that change? God – Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Other Commentaries

"Let the thought be abhorred, of continuing in sin that grace may abound. True believers are dead to sin, therefore they ought not to follow it. No man can at the same time be both dead and alive. He is a fool who, desiring to be dead unto sin, thinks he may live in it." Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary

"What shall we say then?.... The apostle here obviates an objection he saw would be made against the doctrine he had advanced, concerning the aboundings of the grace of God in such persons and places, where sin had abounded; which if true, might some persons say, then it will be most fit and proper to continue in a sinful course of life, to give up ourselves to all manner of iniquity, since this is the way to make the grace of God abound yet more and more: now says the apostle, what shall we say to this? how shall we answer such an objection? shall we join with the objectors, and say as they do? and shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? that is, shall we persist in a vicious way of

living with this view, that the grace of God may be magnified hereby? is it right to commit sin on such an account? or is this a fair inference, a just consequence, drawn from the doctrine of grace? To be sure it was not, the objection is without any ground and foundation; sin is not "per se", the cause of the glorifying God's grace, but "per accidens": sin of itself is the cause of wrath, and not of grace; but God has been pleased to take an occasion of magnifying his grace, in the forgiveness of sin: for it is not by the commission of sin, but by the pardon of it, that the grace of God is glorified, or made to abound. Moreover, grace in conversion is glorified by putting a stop to the reign of sin, and not by increasing its power, which would be done by continuing in it; grace teaches men not to live in sin, but to abstain from it; add to this, that it is owing to the want of grace, and not to the aboundings of it, that men at any time abuse, or make an ill use of the doctrines of grace; wherefore the apostle's answer is." Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible

“It is well to bear in mind Dr. Lightfoot’s remarks on the importance of keeping the strict aorist sense as opposed to that of the perfect (i.e., the single past action as opposed to the prolonged or continued action) in passages such as this. “St. Paul regards this change—from sin to righteousness, from bondage to freedom, from death to life—as summed up in one definite act of the past; potentially to all men in our Lord’s passion and resurrection, actually to each individual man when he accepts Christ, is baptised into Christ. Then he is made righteous by being incorporated into Christ’s righteousness, he dies once for all to sin, he lives henceforth for ever to God. This is his ideal. Practically, we know that the death to sin and the life to righteousness are inchoate, imperfect, gradual, meagerly realised even by the most saintly men in this life; but St. Paul sets the matter in this ideal light to force upon the consciences of his hearers the fact that an entire change came over them when they became Christians—that the knowledge and the grace then vouchsafed to them did not leave them where they were—that they are not, and cannot be, their former selves—and that it is a contradiction of their

very being to sin any more. It is the definiteness, the absoluteness of this change, considered as an historical crisis, which forms the central idea of St. Paul's teaching, and which the aorist marks. We cannot, therefore, afford to obscure this idea by disregarding the distinctions of grammar; yet in our English version it is a mere chance whether in such cases the aorist is translated as an aorist" (On Revision, p. 85). These remarks will form the best possible commentary upon the passage before us. It may be only well to add that the change between the position of the first Christians and our own involves a certain change in the application of what was originally said with reference to them. Baptism is not now the tremendous crisis that it was then. The ideal of Christian life then assumed is more distinctly an ideal. It has a much less definite hold upon the imagination and the will. But it ought not therefore to be any the less binding upon the Christian. He should work towards it, if he cannot work from it, in the spirit of Philippians 3:12-14." Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers

"... to be baptized into the death of Christ, is to have fellowship with him in his death, or to have the efficacy of his death sealed up to us; and that is the blessed privilege of as many as are baptized or planted into Christ; they are not only partakers of the merit of his death for justification, but of the efficacy of his death for mortification." Matthew Poole's Commentary

"But death and burial are not the end of the story. In God's redemptive plan burial is followed by resurrection. 12 As Christ was raised from the dead in a manifestation of the Father's glorious power, so also are we raised to an entirely new way of living. 13 The cross has as its ethical purpose a change in conduct. The Greek expression translated "a new life" is better rendered "a new sphere which is life." Apart from Christ people are dead in their sins (Eph 2:1). But raised from the dead through faith in Christ, they enter an entirely new sphere of existence. They are alive in Christ. As Jesus promised, "I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full" (John 10:10). Although contemporary use has tended to trivialize the expression "born again," the

vibrant reality of new life in Christ is still portrayed most graphically by the metaphor of spiritual birth. The lives of believers are to be as different from their preconversion days as life is from death." Robert H. Mounce (2012) *New American Commentary Vol 27: Romans*. B&H Publishing Group.

"6:1–8:39. Paul moves from demonstrating the doctrine of justification, which is God's declaring the believing sinner righteous (3:20–5:21), to demonstrating the practical ramifications of salvation on those who have been justified. He specifically discusses the doctrine of sanctification, which is God's producing actual righteousness in the believer ...

6:1. Shall we continue in sin. Because of his past Pharisaic experience, Paul was able to anticipate the major objections of his critics. He had already alluded to this criticism, that by preaching a justification based solely on the free grace of God, he was encouraging people to sin. (cf. 3:5, 6, 8) ...

6:4. buried with him. Since we are united by faith with Him as baptism symbolizes, His death and burial become ours." John MacArthur, The MacArthur Study Bible, Thomas Nelson, 2019, p 1551

"Paul has answered the question, 'Shall we as a habit of life continue to sustain the same relationship to the evil nature that we sustained before salvation?' by showing that his is a mechanical impossibility and for two reasons, first, the power of the sinful nature has been broken, and therefore the Christian is not compelled to sin, and second, the divine nature is imparted, and the Christian does not want to sin. When a person does not have to do something which he does not want to do, he simply does not do it." Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament, Volume I, p 98, Eerdmans, 1973

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. ROMANS 6:5-7

In the last part of our study we saw the Apostle Paul ask a powerful question:

What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? ROMANS 6:1

Paul asked that question based on his previous statement –

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

He answered his question directly and emphatically –

Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it? ROMANS 6:2

Paul then addressed the issue of being 'baptized' into Christ's 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.

We continue our study of Romans 6 beginning in verse 5.

Verse 5

For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection.

ει γαρ συμφυτοι γεγοναμεν τω ομοιωματι του θανατου αυτου αλλα και της αναστασεως εσομεθα

ει γαρ συμφυτοι γεγοναμεν τω ομοιωματι του θανατου αυτου (*ei gar sumphutoi gegonamen tō homoiōmati tou thanatou autou*) “if for united we have become in the likeness of the death of him” ... *ei* is the ‘if’ of a fulfilled condition – ‘in view of the fact,’ (Wuest) .. *sumphutoi* means “grown together, congenital, united with” (KJV uses “planted together) .. the compounding of the words *sum* and *phuó* means ‘to grow up together with’ .. it is a picture of two living things having a vital union with each other .. *gegonamen* means “come into being, come about, happen” and is a verb (perfect, indicative, active) that speaks of a complete action of the past that has continuing results .. *homoiōmati* means “that which is made

like something, resemblance of something, a similitude" .. *thanatou autou* speaks to the physical 'death' of Jesus Christ. *αλλα και της αναστασεως εσομεθα* (*alla kai tēs anastaseōs esometha*) "certainly also of the resurrection we will be" ... *anastaseōs* means "rising up, standing up again, resurrection" .. *esometha* means "I exist, we exist" ..

Greek language expert Spiros Zodhiates wrote – "Paul in this passage is speaking about baptism as a symbol of our voluntary death and burial even as in the case of the Lord Jesus Christ who died and was buried. If we are baptized unto the death of Christ, then we shall participate also, both here and hereafter, in the likeness of His life." (*The Complete Word Study Dictionary New Testament*, World Bible Publishers, 1992, p 1042)

This is a primary theme in Paul's letters. We are united with Christ in both His death and resurrection. That is the heart of the Gospel message. Simple, direct, true, powerful, life-changing.

Verse 6

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.

ΤΟΥΤΟ ΓΙΝΩΣΚΟΝΤΕΣ ΟΤΙ Ο ΠΑΛΑΙΟΣ ΗΜΩΝ ΑΝΘΡΩΠΟΣ ΣΥΝΕΣΤΑΥΡΩΘΗ ΙΝΑ ΚΑΤΑΡΓΗΘΗ ΤΟ ΣΩΜΑ ΤΗΣ ΑΜΑΡΤΙΑΣ ΤΟΥ ΜΗΚΕΤΙ ΔΟΥΛΕΥΕΙΝ ΗΜΑΣ ΤΗ ΑΜΑΡΤΙΑ

ΤΟΥΤΟ ΓΙΝΩΣΚΟΝΤΕΣ ΟΤΙ Ο ΠΑΛΑΙΟΣ ΗΜΩΝ ΑΝΘΡΩΠΟΣ ΣΥΝΕΣΤΑΥΡΩΘΗ (*touto ginōskontes hoti ho palaios hēmōn anthrōpos sunestaurōthē*) "this knowing that old of us self was crucified with him" ... *ginōskontes* means "to know, recognize, perceive" .. it is present tense, participle, active voice .. this knowledge is active in our lives as Christians and plays a vital role in our new life in Christ .. *palaios* means "old, not new or recent, former, obsolete" .. the word was used for a garment when it was 'worn out' and no longer good for wearing .. *hēmōn* is a first-person pronoun (I, we, us) .. *anthrōpos* means "man, mankind, human" .. *sunestaurōthē* is

a combination of *sun* and *stauroó* and means "to crucify together with" .. the combination of the two words carries the meaning of "is crucified as he was." That's a powerful idea when we look at the Cross and see our 'old man' crucified 'with' Christ. It is a personification of sin to say that it was 'alive,' but was put to death on the Cross.

Being placed "into Christ" includes our 'old man' being placed into Christ's death on the Cross. That is certainly a supernatural event. It is not something we can see by natural means, but we can see it 'by faith' in what God says about what happened to us when we believed on the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation. Being 'crucified together with' Jesus means our 'old man' was crucified.

Paul used the term 'old man' three times in his letters:

- Romans 6:6
- Ephesians 4:22
- Colossians 3:9

Romans 6:6 addressed the 'old man' as having been 'crucified' with Christ.

Ephesians 4:22 addressed 'putting off' the 'old man' "which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts."

Colossians 3:9 addressed not 'lying' to a Christian brother or sister "since you have put off the old man with his deeds."

Who is the 'old man'?

'Our old man' ... describes who we were in Adam prior to conversion. Romans: Exegetical Guide To The Greek New Testament, John D. Harvey, B&H Academic, p 151

Our old self died with Christ, and the life we now enjoy is a new divinely given life that is the life of Christ Himself. John MacArthur, The MacArthur Study Bible, Thomas Nelson, 2019, p 1552

ινα καταργηθη το σωμα της αμαρτιας του μηκετι δουλευειν ημας τη αμαρτια (*hina katargēthē to sōma tēs hamartias tou mēketi douleuein hēmas tē hamartia*) “so that might be annulled the body of sin that no longer are enslaved we to sin” .. *katargēthē* means “to abolish, render inoperative, make of no effect, annul” .. Paul used the word earlier in his letter to the Romans:

For what if some did not believe? Will their unbelief make the faithfulness of God without effect? Romans 3:3

Do we then make void the law through faith? Certainly not! On the contrary, we establish the law. Romans 3:31

For if those who are of the law are heirs, faith is made void and the promise made of no effect. Romans 4:14

Paul used it again in Romans 7 and also used it in his letters to 1 & 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians and 2 Thessalonians. Out of the 27 times the word is used in the New Testament, Paul used it 26 times. You may find a study of the word in Paul's writings useful in understanding what God has annulled (abolished).

The New American Commentary speaks of it as being 'reduced to a condition of absolute impotence and inaction, as if it were dead.' (Volume 27: Romans. B&H Publishing, 2012)

What is being 'done away with' in Romans 6:6 is the "body of sin" – *to sōma tēs hamartias* .. *sōma* means "body" and is used for both physical and spiritual (mystical) ..

The idea of 'the body of sin' is an interesting one. It would appear to be a 'spiritual' body rather than physical since those who are saved continue to have a viable physical body. The 'body of sin' impacts our physical body, of course, but is not the same as our physical *soma*. Meyer's NT commentary explains it this way –

The old man had such a body; and this σῶμα was to be destroyed, put out of existence by the crucifixion with Christ; consequently not the body in itself, but in so far as it is the sin-body, becoming determined by sin in its expressions of life to sinful πράξεις (Romans 8:13).

hamartias means “sin, failure, forfeiture because of missing the mark” .. every human being ‘misses the mark’ set by God and something has to be done about it.. every human being is separated from God because of sin (missing the mark) and something has to be done about it .. what was done about it was Jesus died on the Cross .. what did that accomplish?

that we should no longer be slaves of sin.

We are no longer ‘slaves’ (δουλευειν – *douleuein*) of sin (αμαρτια – *hamartia*). The word *douleuein* is a present tense verb, so the idea is of being ‘enslaved.’ The word was used of people who were the property of another – owned by another – for the purpose of serving the owner (master). Before we became Christians, we were ‘slaves of sin.’ After becoming Christians, we are no longer ‘slaves of sin.’ Why is that?

Because our old man was crucified with Christ, “that the body of sin might be done away with.”

Praise God that we are no longer ‘slaves to sin!’

Verse 7

For he who has died has been freed from sin.

ο γαρ αποθανων δεδικαιωται απο της αμαρτιας

ο γαρ αποθανων δεδικαιωται απο της αμαρτιας (*ho gar apothanōn dedikaiōtai apo tēs hamartias*) “the one for having died has been freed from sin” .. *apothanōn* means “die off, die away from” .. *dedikaiōtai* means “declare righteous, show to be righteous” ..

Our spiritual ‘freedom’ comes to us through God’s declaration of our righteousness in Christ. That reminds us of what Paul wrote previously in his letter to the Romans –

Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin. But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus. Romans 3:20-26

And the gift is not like that which came through the one who sinned. For the judgment which came from one offense resulted in condemnation, but the free gift which came from many offenses resulted in justification. For if by the one man's offense death reigned through the one,

much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.) Therefore, as through one man’s offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man’s righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life. Romans 5:16-18

απο της αμαρτιας means we are freed “from sin.” We are no longer under its domination and control.

The early Church Fathers have an interesting take on this –

God set a limit to man’s sin by interposing death and thus using sin to cease, putting an end to it by the dissolution of the flesh, which should take place in the earth, so that man, ceasing at length to live in sin and dying to it, might begin to live in God. Irenaeus, Against Heresies 3.23.6

He is set free, he is delivered, he is classed of all sin, and not sin in word and deed only but also of all irrational movements of the mind. Basil, Concerning Baptism 1.2

This he says of every man, that as he that is dead is henceforth freed from sinning, lying as a dead body, so must he that has come up from baptism, since he has died there once for all, remain ever dead to sin. If then you have died in baptism, remain dead, for any one that dies can sin no more; but if you sin, you mar God's gift. After requiring of us then heroism (Gr. philosophy) of this degree, he presently brings in the crown also, in these words. Chrysostom, Homily 11 on Romans

It is my own view that while Christians have been freed from the 'domination, power and control' of sin (the old man under bondage to sin), we often continue to choose to sin against God. That seems obvious from the many challenges we see from the apostles to Christians to live in a way worthy of their holy calling. We also see that in what Jesus Christ said to five of the churches in Revelation 2-3.

If it were not for the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, we could not respond successfully to the challenges of Scripture. Because of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, we can respond successfully to the challenges. We owe everything to Jesus – who died and rose again.

Other Commentaries

*In verses 1-4, Paul has brought out two major facts; first, that when God saves a sinner, He separates him from the indwelling sinful nature, which cleavage is so effective, that the believers is not compelled to sin anymore; he has been permanently delivered from its power, when at the same time that nature is left in him permanently; second, that God at the same time has imparted the divine nature, which gives him both the desire and the power to do God’s will. Now, in verses 5-10, he repeats these great truths in the event that some of his readers may not have caught their full implications as presented in verses 2-4. Kenneth Wuest, *Romans In The Greek New Testament*, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1955*

All this can be asserted, knowing as we do that ‘our old man’ = our old self, what we were before we became Christians—was crucified with Him. Paul says συνεσταυρώθη simply because Christ died on the cross, and we are baptised into that death, not because “our old

man” is the basest of criminals for whom crucifixion is the proper penalty. The object of this crucifixion of the old man was “that the body of sin might be brought to nought”. τὸ σῶμα τῆς ἁμαρτίας is the body in which we live: apart from the crucifixion of the old self it can be characterised as ‘a body of sin’. It may be wrong to say that it is necessarily and essentially sinful—the body, as such, can have no moral predicate attached to it; it would be as wrong to deny that it is invariably and persistently a seat and source of sin.

Expositor’s Greek Testament

By the old man is meant, that corrupt and polluted nature which we derive from Adam, the first man: see Ephesians 4:22 Colossians 3:9,10. The old and new man are opposites; as then the new man is the image of God repaired in us; so the old man is a depravation of that image of God, and a universal pollution of the whole man. Is crucified with him; by virtue of our union with him, and by means of his death and crucifixion: see Galatians 2:20.

Matthew Poole’s Commentary

If it is true that we have been united with Christ in his death 15 —and we have—it then follows that we are also united with him in his resurrection. 16 As he was raised victor over death, so also are we set free from the bondage of sin. Death precedes life in the realm of the Spirit. Since it is true that we are “one with Him by sharing in His death” (Weymouth), then certainly 17 we are one with him by sharing in his resurrection life. New life in Christ follows death to sin as certainly as Christ’s resurrection followed his crucifixion. Robert H. Mounce (2012). New American Commentary Vol 27: Romans. B&H Publishing Group.

Is crucified – Is put to death, as if on a cross. In this expression there is a personification of the corrupt propensities of our nature represented as “our old man,” our native disposition, etc. The figure is here carried out, and this old man, this corrupt nature, is represented as having been put to death in an agonizing and torturing manner. The pains of crucifixion were perhaps the most torturing of any that the human frame could bear. Death in this manner was most lingering and distressing. And the

apostle here by the expression "is crucified" doubtless refers to the painful and protracted struggle which everyone goes through when his evil propensities are subdued; when his corrupt nature is slain; and when, a converted sinner, he gives himself up to God. Sin dies within him, and he becomes dead to the world, and to sin; "for as by the cross death is most lingering and severe, so that corrupt nature is not subdued but by anguish." (Grotius.) All who have been born again can enter into this description. They remember "the wormwood and the gall." They remember the anguish of conviction; the struggle of corrupt passion for the ascendancy; the dying convulsions of sin in the heart; the long and lingering conflict before it was subdued, and the soul became submissive to God. Nothing will better express this than the lingering agony of crucifixion: and the argument of the apostle is, that as sin has produced such an effect, and as the Christian is now free from its embrace and its power, he will live to God. Barnes' Notes on the Bible

'Absolved,' the same word that is used elsewhere for 'justified.' The dead man is no longer liable to have the charge of sin brought against him. This is the general proposition, the major premise, adduced in proof of what had gone before, viz., the particular proposition that he who is ethically dead is no longer the slave of sin. Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers

The corrupt nature, called the old man, because derived from our first father Adam, is crucified with Christ, in every true believer, by the grace derived from the cross. It is weakened and in a dying state, though it yet struggles for life, and even for victory. But the whole body of sin, whatever is not according to the holy law of God, must be done away, so that the believer may no more be the slave of sin, but live to God, and find happiness in his service. Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary

For he that is dead, is freed from sin. This is not to be understood of a natural or a corporeal death; for this is the effect of sin, and is inflicted by way of punishment for it, on

Christless persons; so far is it from being an atonement for sin, as the Jews (t) fancy; besides, there are many persons, who as they die in their sins, they will rise in them; though a natural death is alluded to, when persons are free from those laws and obligations to service and duty they are under whilst living: but here it is to be understood of a spiritual or mystical death, and of persons who are dead to the law, by the body of Christ; dead to sin by the sacrifice and grace of Christ; who are baptized into the death of Christ, and in imitation of him: such are 'freed from sin'; not from the being of it; nor from the burden of it; nor from a continual war with it; nor from slips and falls into it; no, not even freed from it, in the most solemn services and acts of religion; but they are freed from the dominion of it, from servitude to it, and also from the guilt of it, and from obligation to punishment on account of it: they are, as it is in the Greek text, and as the Vulgate Latin and Arabic versions read, 'justified from sin'. Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible

6, 7. Knowing this, &c.—The apostle now grows more definite and vivid in expressing the sin-destroying efficacy of our union with the crucified Saviour.

that our old man—'our old selves'; that is, 'all that we were in our old unregenerate condition, before union with Christ' (compare Col 3:9, 10; Eph 4:22-24; Ga 2:20; 5:24; 6:14).

is—rather, 'was.'

crucified with him—in order.

that the body of sin—not a figure for 'the mass of sin'; nor the 'material body,' considered as the seat of sin, which it is not; but (as we judge) for 'sin as it dwells in us in our present embodied state, under the law of the fall.'

might be destroyed—(in Christ's death)—to the end.

that henceforth we should not serve sin—'be in bondage to sin.' Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary

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. For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God. Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

ROMANS 6:8-11

We continue our study of Romans 6 beginning in verse 8.

Verse 8

Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him

ει δε απεθανομεν συν χριστω πιστευομεν οτι και συζησομεν αυτω"

ει δε απεθανομεν συν χριστω (*ei de apethanomen sun christō*) "if now we died with Christ" .. *ei* is a conditional conjunction (followed by verb) and can mean "forasmuch as, in view of the fact that" .. *apethanomen* is a verb that is aorist indicative active .. it indicates a past action, something that was completed in the past .. *sun* means "together with, joined close-together in tight identification" .. *christō* is Christ ..

πιστευομεν οτι και συζησομεν αυτω (*pisteuomen hoti kai syzēsomen autō*) "we believe that also we will live with him" .. *pisteuomen* means "have faith in, trust in" .. *syzēsomen* means "to live together with" .. it's a verb that is future indicative active .. *autō* means "him" .. "with him" is a personal pronoun that dative of respect ..

Something very special happens at the moment a sinner is forgiven and saved. Paul emphasized in verse 5 that "if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be *in the likeness* of *His* resurrection." Paul went on to write in verse 6 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." In verse 7, Paul wrote that the person "who has died has been freed from sin." In verse 8, Paul began to repeat some of the same truths but in a slightly different way. "Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him."

Becoming a believer in Christ, a disciple of Christ, means that we are “united with Him” in His death and in His resurrection. That union means we are no longer slaves to sin (because we have been freed from sin) and that we will also live together with Him. That is a most extraordinary truth!

One Greek expert explained it this way –

We will live with respect to Him. That is, the believer’s new life imparted to him at the moment of believing is Christ. We will live by means of Him. The believer derives his spiritual life from Christ in that sense. Paul is not speaking here of the believer’s fellowship with Christ here or in eternity. How long does the believer derive his spiritual life from the Lord Jesus? As long as He lives. Paul says He died once for all, and that death over Him will never again exercise lordship. Thus, the believer will be sustained in spiritual life for time and eternity, since Christ is his life. KENNETH WUEST, ROMANS, WM. B. EERDMAN’S PUBLISHING COMPANY, 1955

This reminds me of what Paul wrote in his letter to the Galatians –

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. GALATIANS 2:20

Verse 9

knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him.

“ΕΙΔΟΤΕΣ ΟΤΙ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ ΕΓΕΡΘΕΙΣ ΕΚ ΝΕΚΡΩΝ ΟΥΚΕΤΙ ΑΠΟΘΝΗΣΚΕΙ ΘΑΝΑΤΟΣ ΑΥΤΟΥ ΟΥΚΕΤΙ ΚΥΡΙΕΥΕΙ”

ειδοτες οτι χριστος εγερθεις εκ νεκρω (*eidotes hoti christos egertheis ek nekrōn*) “knowing that Christ having been raised up out from the dead” .. *eidotes* means “be aware, behold, consider, perceive” .. it comes from the word *eídō* which means “to see with physical eyes” .. remember

that Paul saw the risen Christ (Acts 9; 1 Corinthians 15) .. he was an eyewitness .. *egertheis* means "to waken, to raise up" .. it is a verb that is aorist participle passive .. someone or something acted upon Jesus Christ to raise Him from the dead at a past time .. *ek* is a preposition that means "out from, from out of" .. the idea is of something or someone exiting from an interior location to an outer location .. *nekrōn* means "dead, dead body, corpse" .. Jesus died on the Cross .. His dead body was placed in a tomb .. Jesus was dead, then rose from the dead ..

ουκετι αποθνησκει (*ouketi apothnēskei*) "no more dies" .. *ouketi* means "no longer, no more" .. *apothnēskei* means "to die, to die off" .. Jesus would no longer die off after He rose from the dead ..

θανατος αυτου ουκετι κυριευει (*thanatos autou ouketi kurieuei*) "death him no longer rules over" .. *thanatos* means "death" and was used for both physical and spiritual death .. *ouketi* means "no longer, no more" .. *kurieuei* means "have authority over, rule over, have dominion over" .. it is the idea

of a property owner exercising rights over, having mastery (control) over something .. the word comes from *kurios* (lord, ruler) ..

Christ's resurrection broke forever the tyranny of death. That cruel master can no longer exercise any power over him. The cross was sin's final move; the resurrection was God's checkmate. The game is over. Sin is forever in defeat. [ROBERT H. MOUNCE (2012). NEW AMERICAN COMMENTARY VOL 27: ROMANS. B&H PUBLISHING GROUP.

Verse 10

*For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all;
but the life that He lives, He lives to God.*

“ο γαρ απεθανεν τη αμαρτια απεθανεν εφραπαξ ο δε
ζη ζη τω θεω”

ο γαρ απεθανεν (*ho gar apethanen*) “that which for he died” .. *apethanen* means “to die, to die off” ..

τη αμαρτια απεθανεν εφραπαξ (*tē hamartia apethanen ephapax*) “to sin he died once for all” .. *hamartia* means “miss the mark, to fail, sin, loss) .. *apethanen* means “to die, to die off” .. *ephapax* means “once for all, one time” .. Jesus died one time and in so doing died for all who would become His followers ..

Christ died to sin in two senses: 1) in regard to sin's penalty—He met its legal demands upon the sinners; and 2) in regard to sin's power—forever breaking its power over those who belong to Him. And His death will never need repeating. THE MCARTHUR STUDY BIBLE, THOMAS NELSON, 2019, P 1552

ο δε ζη ζη τω θεω (*ho de zē zē tō Theō*) "that which however he lives he lives to God) .. *zē* is a verb that is present indicative active and means "to live, I live" .. the subject (Christ) is doing the action .. He lives by and through His own power .. Someone else acted upon His dead body (the Holy Spirit, Romans 8:11) .. However, Jesus lives by His own power following the resurrection from the dead .. death no longer has any power over Jesus ..

Verse 11

Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

*ουτως και υμεις λογιζεσθε εαυτους νεκρους μεν
ειναι τη αμαρτια ζωντας δε τω θεω εν χριστω ιησου
τω κυριω ημων*

ουτως και υμεις (*houtōs kai humeis*) “so also you” .. *houtōs* means “so in this manner, in this way” ..

λογιζεσθε εαυτους νεκρους μεν ειναι τη αμαρτια (*logizesthe eautous nekrous men einai tē hamartia*) “consider yourselves to be dead indeed to sin” .. *logizesthe* means “reason, decide after consideration, reckon, count, conclude .. the word is a root for the English words “logic, logical” ..

It’s logical, based on what Jesus did for us, to reckon ourselves to be dead indeed to sin.

ζωντας δε τω θεω εν χριστω ιησου τω κυριω ημων
(*zōntas de tō Theō en Christō Iēsou tō kuriō muōn*) “living
however to God in Christ Jesus our Lord” .. *zōntas* means “to
live, I live” .. *tō Theō en* means “to God in the sphere of,
inside of” .. *Christō Iēsou tō kuriō muōn* “Christ Jesus our
Lord” ..

This is not a type of imitation on the part of a Christian. This is something that is a reality for a follower of Christ. We can consider (logically) ourselves to be dead indeed to sin because we live to God “in Christ Jesus our Lord.” We literally died to sin “in Christ.”

Jesus is more than just an example for people to follow. He is “life everlasting.” He was dead, but rose from the dead and in so doing “dies no more.” Death no longer has any power over Christ – “For *the death* that He died, He died to sin once for all; but *the life* that He lives, He lives to God.” Because of what Jesus did in dying to sin and rising from the dead, we can reckon ourselves “to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Other Commentaries

The new life with Christ will be the same which Christ Himself lives, a life inaccessible to death. The post-resurrection life of Jesus was not His old life over again; in that life death had dominion over Him, because He made Himself one with us in all the consequences of sin; but now the dominion of death has expired. EXPOSITOR'S GREEK TESTAMENT

He died unto sin – His death had respect to sin. The design of his death was to destroy sin; to make an atonement for it, and thus to put it away. As his death was designed to effect this, so it follows that Christians being baptized into his death, and having it as their object to destroy sin, should not indulge in it. The whole force of the motive; therefore, drawn from the death of Christ, is to induce Christians to forsake sin. BARNES' NOTES ON THE BIBLE

The death of Christ was settled and agreed to in the covenant and council of peace; it was spoken of by the prophets, and typified by sacrifices; Christ came into the world in order to die, and actually did die the death of the cross; in which the great love of God and Christ is expressed to us; and which is a fundamental article of the Christian faith: and when he died, he died unto sin once: he died to that, which we by nature are dead in, and could never make atonement for; which he himself never lived in, and which men naturally love to in; and which had he not died for, we must have died for to all eternity; and he died not for any sin of his own, or of angels, nor for the sins of every man, but for the sins of his people; it may be rendered, he died in sin: in the likeness of sinful flesh, in which he was sent; having as a surety sin laid on him, and bore by him, and for which he was wounded, bruised, and died: or rather to sin; that is, to make atonement for it, procure the pardon of it, take it away, and utterly abolish it: and this he did "once"; this is observed, in reference to the repeated sacrifices of the old law, which could never expiate or remove sin; and to show, that Christ's dying once

was enough, his sacrifice was fully satisfactory to the law and justice of God: but in that he liveth: which must be understood, not of his life as God, but as man; and that not on earth, but in heaven; where he lives with God, at the right hand of God, and by him, by the power of God: and he liveth unto God; to his glory, and to make intercession for us. GILL'S EXPOSITION OF THE ENTIRE BIBLE

We are to consider ourselves 'dead to the appeal and power of sin' (Phillips) and alive to God through our union with Christ Jesus. The very idea of responding positively to sin's invitation should strike the believer as morbid. For the Christian to choose to sin is the spiritual equivalent of digging up a corpse for fellowship. A genuine death to sin means that the entire perspective of the believer has been radically altered. **[ROBERT H. MOUNCE (2012). NEW AMERICAN COMMENTARY VOL 27: ROMANS. B&H PUBLISHING GROUP.**

*Christ was, indeed, never subject to sin, or himself infected with it, as we are; but he 'bore the sins of many;' 'the Lord laid on him the iniquity of us all.' He submitted for us to the condition and penalty of human sin; but, when he died, he threw off its burden, and was done with it for ever (cf. Hebrews 9:28, 'Unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time **without sin** unto salvation'). The purpose of thus describing the permanent life to God of the risen Christ is, of course, to show that the new life of us who are accounted to have risen with Christ must in like manner be permanent and free from sin. PULPIT COMMENTARY*

Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts. And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.
ROMANS 6:12-14

We continue our study of Romans 6 beginning in verse 12.

Verse 12

Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts

*μη ουν βασιλευετω η αμαρτια εν τω θνητω υμων
σωματι εις το υπακουειν αυτη εν ταις επιθυμιαις
αυτου*

μη ουν βασιλευετω η αμαρτια (*mē oun basileuetō hē hamartia*) “not therefore let reign sin” .. *mē* (not) is a negative adverb and joins with the present imperative verb *basileuetō* (reign, to be king) .. the construction means to “stop” something .. in this case, stop the reign of sin .. *oun* (therefore) looks back at the previous verses within the context (especially to 6:11) and states the logic of what Paul proposes in verse 12.

Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.
ROMANS 6:11

εις το υπακουειν αυτη εν ταις επιθυμιαις αυτου (*eis to en tō thnētō humōn sōmati*) “in the mortal of you body” .. the present imperative to “stop” sin is in our “mortal body” .. *thnētō humōn sōmati* means “flesh” that is “subject to death” .. every part of our flesh (e.g. skin, bones, ligaments, brain, heart, lungs, etc) is mortal (subject to death) ..

The Apostle Paul addressed the idea of sin and death “reigning” within us earlier in his letter to the Romans –

Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned— (For until the law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned according to the likeness of the transgression of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come. ROMANS 5:12-14

For if by the one man's offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.) ROMANS 5:17

Keep in mind what Paul wrote in the last verses of Chapter 5

—

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

We saw two types of "thrones" within us – sin and grace. Sin "reigns" in death, while grace "reigns" through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. Which will "reign" in our mortal bodies? That is what Paul addressed in verse 12.

The antithesis implied is not between reigning and existing, but between reigning and being deposed. WORD STUDIES IN THE NEW TESTAMENT, MARVIN R. VINCENT, CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS, 1887

The sinful nature is a dethroned monarch. The believer has the responsibility of keeping it from mounting into the throne of his heart, the place which the Lord Jesus should occupy. ROMANS, KENNETH WUEST, WM B. EERDMANS PUBLISHING COMPANY, 1955

that you should obey it in its lusts

εις το υπακουειν αυτη εν ταις επιθυμιαις αυτου

εις το υπακουειν αυτη εν ταις επιθυμιαις αυτου (*eis to hupakouein autē en tais epithumiais autou*) "for the to obey the lusts of it" .. *hupakouein* means "to listen, attend to, obey under hearing, obey what is heard" .. *epithumiais* means "passionate desire, longing, lust" ..

We see the word first used in the New Testament by Jesus –

... and the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things entering in choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful. Mark 4:19

Jesus shared an important insight to the source of our lusts –

You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it. JOHN 8:44

Paul also connected the “lusts of the flesh” to the domination of Satan in his letter to the Ephesians –

And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others. EPHESIANS 2:1-3

When Paul wrote the Romans to “not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts,” the apostle was pointing back to the Garden of Eden where the terrible reign of sin began. That’s why the “therefore” is there for. We must remember the immediate context because it is the key to living out the Christian life in our mortal bodies.

Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Romans 6:11

Sin is personified as a sovereign ruler who would make us obey the cravings of our bodies that are destined for death. But in Christ we have died to sin. Sin no longer has the authority to enforce its demands. Death has severed the relationship. ROBERT H. MOUNCE, NEW AMERICAN COMMENTARY VOL 27: ROMANS, B&H PUBLISHING GROUP, 2012

Verse 13

And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.

μηδε παριστανετε τα μελη υμων οπλα αδικιας τη αμαρτια αλλα παραστησατε εαυτους τω θεω ωσει εκ νεκρων ζωντας και τα μελη υμων οπλα δικαιοσυνης τω θεω

μηδε παριστανετε τα μελη υμων οπλα αδικιας τη αμαρτια (*mēde paristanete ta melē humōn hopla adikias tē hamartia*) "neither yield the members of you as instruments of unrighteousness to sin" .. *mēde paristanete* means "neither present, place beside" .. *paristanete* is present active imperative and is the idea of placing something at someone's disposal habitually, putting at the service of someone .. *melē* means "part belonging to the whole, member of" .. *hopla* means "tool, implement, implement of war, weapon" .. *adikias*

means “injustice, unrighteousness” .. *hamartia* means “missing the mark, failure, sin” ..

This is Paul’s second imperative. First, he wrote “do not let sin reign in your mortal body.” Next, he wrote “And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin.” These both work together. Christians should not allow sin to exercise kingly power (reign) in their mortal body and they should not place members of their body at the service of unrighteousness to fail by missing the mark (sin). These “members” would include the will as well as emotion that leads someone to “present” their “members” as “weapons.” What then should Christians do with members of their mortal bodies?

αλλα παραστησατε εαυτους τω θεω (*alla parastēsate heautous tō Theō*) “but present yourselves to God” .. *alla* means “but” and is a strong contrast with the *mēde* (neither) .. notice that the word *parastēsate* is used a second time in this verse, however, the tense is different .. the first use of the word was present active imperative which was the idea of

habitual action .. stop being in the habit of presenting your members .. the second usage is aorist active imperative .. the idea is to do something now and completely .. the first time was a negative action (“do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin”) .. the second time is a positive action (“present yourselves to God”) once and for all .. “Put yourselves at once, and once for all, at the disposal of God” (Wuest) .. decide that God is King of your life and act accordingly .. present the members of your body to His service and His service alone ..

ὡσεὶ ἐκ νεκρῶν ζωντάς (*hōsei ek nekrōn zōntas*) “as out from the dead living” .. *hōsei* means “out from and to” in the sense of from the interior to the exterior .. it has the idea of exiting from some place .. *nekrōn* means “the dead, a corpse, that which is subject to death” .. *zōntas* means “to live” .. Paul emphasized the amazing change that had occurred in the lives of God’s people .. they were dead, but are now alive .. that should elicit a positive reaction from us ..

Christians should present themselves to God once and for all as those who have exited from “the dead to live.” As Paul wrote the Ephesians – “And you *He made alive*, who were dead in trespasses and sins” (Ephesians 2:1). And the Colossians – “And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses” (Colossians 2:13). That’s why Paul wrote just a couple of verses earlier – “Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 6:11). We were spiritually dead, but because of what Jesus accomplished in His death and resurrection we are now spiritually alive. That fact alone should cause us to “present” ourselves to God once and for all.

και τα μελη υμων οπλα δικαιοσυνης τω θεω (*kai ta melē humōn hopla dikaiosunēs tō Theō*) “and the members of you as weapons of righteousness to God” .. *dikaiousunēs* means “justice, righteousness” ..

The members of our body are weapons. That includes our brain, our heart, our hands, our feet, our eyes, our ears, our tongue – to name several. How Christians use their bodies as weapons is a choice each of us has to make on a daily basis. We can present the members of our body instruments of unrighteousness to sin or instruments of righteousness to God. Which seems more reasonable based on what God has done for us?

Paul spelled out in practical terms what it means to transfer our obedience from sin to God. We are no longer to place any part of our bodies at the disposal of sin to be used as an instrument of unrighteousness. ROBERT H. MOUNCE, 2012, NEW AMERICAN COMMENTARY VOL 27: ROMANS. B&H PUBLISHING GROUP

Verse 14

For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.

αμαρτια γαρ υμων ου κυριευσει ου γαρ εστε υπο νομον ἀλλά υπο χαριν

αμαρτια γαρ υμων ου κυριευσει (*hamartia gar humōn ou kurieusei*) "sin for you not will rule over" .. *kurieusei* means "to be lord of, have authority, rule, have dominion over" .. it is the type of rule or authority that an owner would express about something that belonged to them .. another literal rendering is "shall not lord it over" ..

ου γαρ εστε υπο νομον ἀλλά υπο χαριν (*ou gar este hupo nomon alla hupo charin*) "not for you are under the law but under grace" .. *hupo* is often used with the idea of being under the authority of someone or something ..

This is one of my favorite verses in Romans. It states in one brilliant sentence what Paul has been explaining from the previous chapters. Christians are NOT under the authority of the LAW but under the authority of GRACE. That’s what sets us apart from other people – Jew and Gentile. Not that we’re better than other people, but that we have a *saving* relationship with God. Every person in the world is under the authority of the Law until they believe the Gospel, which is the power of God to salvation – “for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek” (Romans 1:16).

Here are some other translations of Romans 6:14 –

For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace. ESV

For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under the Law but under grace. NASB

For sin will no longer be a master over you, since you are not under Law [as slaves], but under [unmerited] grace [as recipients of God's favor and mercy]. AMP

... for (then) the sinful nature will not exercise lordship over you, for you are not under law but under grace.

WET

The way Paul addressed this issue demonstrates that while sin still wields some power in a Christian's life, it is not our ultimate authority. That authority is the grace of God. Christians, unlike unsaved people, can choose to live in a way where sin does not rule over them. That was Paul's call to Christians in Rome and it is God's call to us today. We are called to live differently than people who have not been saved.

Christians can choose to NOT let sin reign in their mortal bodies to obey the lusts of the flesh. Christians can choose NOT to present members of their bodies as instruments of unrighteousness to sin. Christians can choose to present themselves to God as being alive from the dead and members of their bodies as instruments (weapons) of righteousness to God. Sin no longer has dominion over Christians. Why? Because we are NOT under the authority of the law. We are under the authority of the amazing grace of Almighty God!

Believers no longer live under the condemnation of the law but with the realization that God by his grace has placed them in a totally new relationship to himself. ROBERT H. MOUNCE (2012) NEW AMERICAN COMMENTARY VOL 27: ROMANS. B&H PUBLISHING GROUP

The strongest motives against sin, and to enforce holiness, are here stated. Being made free from the reign of sin, alive unto God, and having the prospect of eternal life, it becomes believers to be greatly concerned to advance

thereto. But, as unholy lusts are not quite rooted out in this life, it must be the care of the Christian to resist their motions, earnestly striving, that, through Divine grace, they may not prevail in this mortal state. Let the thought that this state will soon be at an end, encourage the true Christian, as to the motions of lusts, which so often perplex and distress him. Let us present all our powers to God, as weapons or tools ready for the warfare, and work of righteousness, in his service. There is strength in the covenant of grace for us. Sin shall not have dominion. God's promises to us are more powerful and effectual for mortifying sin, than our promises to God. Sin may struggle in a real believer, and create him a great deal of trouble, but it shall not have dominion; it may vex him, but it shall not rule over him. Shall any take occasion from this encouraging doctrine to allow themselves in the practice of any sin? Far be such abominable thoughts, so contrary to the perfections of God, and the design of his gospel, so opposed to being under grace. What can be a stronger motive against sin than the love of Christ? Shall we sin

against so much goodness, and such love? MATTHEW HENRY'S CONCISE COMMENTARY

... for ye are not under the law, but under grace—The force of this glorious assurance can only be felt by observing the grounds on which it rests. To be 'under the law' is, first, to be under its claim to entire obedience; and so, next under its curse for the breach of these. And as all power to obey can reach the sinner only through Grace, of which the law knows nothing, it follows that to be 'under the law' is, finally, to be shut up under an inability to keep it, and consequently to be the helpless slave of sin. On the other hand, to be 'under grace,' is to be under the glorious canopy and saving effects of that 'grace which reigns through righteousness unto eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord' (see on [2205]Ro 5:20, 21). The curse of the law has been completely lifted from off them; they are made 'the righteousness of God in Him'; and they are 'alive unto God through Jesus Christ.' So that, as when they were 'under the law,' Sin could not but have dominion over them, so now that they are 'under grace,' Sin cannot but be subdued

under them. If before, Sin resistlessly triumphed, Grace will now be more than conqueror. JAMIESON-FAUSSET-BROWN BIBLE COMMENTARY

"What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? Certainly not! Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness? 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." ROMANS 6:15-17

We continue our study of Romans 6 beginning in verse 15.

Verse 15

“What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? Certainly not! “

τι ουν αμαρτησομεν οτι ουκ εσμεν υπο νομον αλλ υπο χαριν μη γενοιτο

Paul asked his readers a second question in this section of his letter. His first question was 16:1 – “What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?” The answer was – “Certainly not!” He spent several sentences expounding on the first point, then turned to the second question – “What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace?” His answer was the same as the first – “Certainly not!”

τι ουν (*ti oun*) “what then” .. the first part of Paul’s question pointed back to the logic of his answer to the first question.

αμαρτησομεν οτι ουκ εσμεν υπο νομον αλλ υπο χαριν
(*hamartēsōmen hoti ouk esmen huο nomon all hupo charin*)
"shall we sin because not we are under law but under
grace" .. the sin nature in every person is powerful, always
looking for a way to continue in sin, even when they know
what God did for them through Christ's sacrificial death on the
Cross ..

Paul made strong arguments in his letter to the Romans about
Christians no longer being under the Mosaic Law. They were
under God's grace. So, how does that work? First question:
shall we continue in sin so that grace may abound? No!
Second question: shall we sin because we are not under law
but under grace? No!

There is no getting around what Paul was telling the Romans.
We don't continue in sin for any reason because there is no
good reason to continue in sin!

μη γενοιτο (*mē genoito*) "never may it be" .. No way! Certainly not! Not on your life! .. we have many ways of exclaiming a similar thought and feeling in English ..

"What then? shall we sin ... – The apostle proceeds to notice an objection which might be suggested. "If Christians are not under the law, which forbids all sin, but are under grace, which pardons sin, will it not follow that they will feel themselves released from obligation to be holy? Will they not commit sin freely, since the system of grace is one which contemplates pardon, and which will lead them to believe that they may be forgiven to any extent?" This Consequence has been drawn by many professing Christians; and it was well therefore, for the apostle to guard against it." BARNES' NOTES ON THE BIBLE, 1834

"Just because the believer now is set free from the law, does not mean that he can sin with impunity. There is a new propelling and compelling deterrent to sin, divine love, produced in the believer's being which causes him to hate sin and obey the Word of God (Gal. 5:13, John 14:21-24).

KENNETH WUEST, WORD STUDIES FROM THE GREEK NEW TESTAMENT, ROMANS, 1955

"Grace does not free us to do anything we want. It does not provide the opportunity to live apart from all restrictions. Freedom is not the exercise of unlimited spontaneity. It means to be set free from the bondage of sin in order to live in a way that reflects the nature and character of God. The rhetorical question probably arose among Jews who felt that to be released from the jurisdiction of law would encourage the removal of all moral restraint. The answer to that fearful expectation is, By no means!" **ROBERT H. MOUNCE, 2012, NEW AMERICAN COMMENTARY VOL 27: ROMANS, B&H PUBLISHING GROUP**

Verse 16

“Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one’s slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness?”

ουκ οιδατε οτι ω παριστανετε εαυτους δουλους εις υπακοην δουλοι εστε ω υπακουετε ητοι αμαρτιας εις θανατον η υπακοης εις δικαιοσυνην

ουκ οιδατε οτι ω παριστανετε εαυτους δουλους εις υπακοην δουλοι εστε ω υπακουετε (ouk oidate hoti hō paristanete heautous doulous eis hupakone douloi este hō hupakoēn) “not know you that to whom you yield yourselves as slaves for obedience” .. *paristanete* means to *place beside, to stand by, yield* .. *douloi* means *enslaved, without ownership rights, belonging to another* .. *hupakoēn* means *submissiveness to what is heard, compliance, obedience* ..

The idea of *yielding* is important. We are constantly yielding spiritually because we are spiritual beings. That was the first test in the Garden of Eden. God said humans would die if they disobeyed Him. Satan said they would not die if they disobeyed God. Would humans yield to God or Satan? Adam and Eve became slaves to sin and death as soon as they yielded to Satan's temptation and it has been that way through thousands of years of human history and misery. It is only because of the grace of God through faith in Jesus Christ that humans can now choose to whom they yield. Will it be sin to death or obedience to righteousness?

δουλοι εστε ω υπακουετε ητοι αμαρτιας εις θανατον η υπακοης εις δικαιοσυνην (*douloi este ho hupakouete etoi hamartias eis thanaton ē hupakoēs eis dikaiosunēn*) "slaves you are to him whom you obey whether of sin to death or obedience to righteousness" .. people are slaves "owned" by whom they obey .. if obedience is given to sin it leads to death .. if obedience to righteousness ..

"An apparent tautology, but one which really teaches a deep ethical truth. Don't you know that what you make yourselves that you become? The habit which you form ends by becoming your 'second nature.'" **ELLICOTT'S COMMENTARY FOR ENGLISH READERS, 1878**

"Paul answers the question of the man by showing that the believer has changed masters. The argument is based upon the meaning of the Greek word translated 'servants' ... The word is doulous, the most abject, servile term for a slave in the Greek language. The believer was a slave of Satan before salvation, but since he has been saved, he is a slave of the Lord Jesus. He has changed masters because he has a new nature, the divine, and the evil nature which compelled him to serve the Devil has had its power over him broken." **KENNETH WUEST, WORD STUDIES FROM THE GREEK NEW TESTAMENT, ROMANS, 1955**

... servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey, whether of sin unto death, or obedience unto righteousness: such who obey sin, are the servants of sin; they are at the beck and command of sin; they give up themselves to the service of it with delight and diligence, and are perfect drudges to it: this is a very unhappy situation; their service is very unreasonable; and they are rendered incapable of serving God, for no man can serve two masters; they are hereby brought into the drudgery of the devil; into a state of bondage, out of which nothing but grace can extricate them; into a very mean and contemptible condition, and even a deplorable one; for if grace prevent not, they will have the wages of sin paid them, which is death, for their obedience is 'of sin unto death'; which will lie in an eternal separation from Father, Son, and Spirit, in a sense of divine wrath, and in the company of devils and damned spirits: now this is added, to show the malignant nature and just demerit of sin, and to deter and dissuade persons from the service of it: on the other hand, such as obey the Lord, are the servants "of obedience unto righteousness": but why is not this

obedience, which is the obedience of faith to the Gospel, of Christ, and of the new man to God or Christ, said to be "unto life", as the antithesis seems to require? because though death is the fruit of sin, yet life is not the fruit of obedience, but the fruit of obedience is righteousness; by which is meant, nor a justifying one before God, but righteousness before men; or a course of living soberly and righteously, which is the effect of being under grace; and hence it appears, that true believers can make no such ill use of their privilege, as is suggested in the objection."

GILL'S EXPOSITION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT, 1748

Verse 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."

*χαρις δε τω θεω οτι ητε δουλοι της αμαρτιας
υπηκουσατε δε εκ καρδιας εις ον παρεδοθητε τυπον
διδαχης*

χαρις δε τω θεω οτι ητε δουλοι της αμαρτιας (*charis de tō Theō hoti ēte douloi tēs hamartias*) "thanks be however to God that you used to be slaves of sin" .. Paul is about to demonstrate the great spiritual benefit the Romans had from believing in Jesus Christ ..

υπηκουσατε δε εκ καρδιας εις ον παρεδοθητε τυπον διδαχης (*hupēkousatee de ek kardias eis hon paredothēte tupon didachēs*) "you have become obedient now from the heart to which you were handed over to the form of teaching" .. *paredothēte* means "hand over from, give over,

deliver over” .. *tupon* means “pattern, figure, copy, image” .. *didachēs* means “doctrine, teaching, what is taught” ..

A true believer obeys “from the heart” the teachings of Christ. God saved us by His grace for a purpose – that purpose is to obey Christ and do His will. All of us at one time were slaves of sin, but God demonstrated His great mercy toward us by *teaching* us the truth. We are able to respond to God’s teachings concerning grace and faith and obedience and that response should be to obey.

“We were delivered into the teaching (doctrine, didache) in that we were constituted in salvation so that we would obey it. Paul thanks God that whereas before salvation we were slaves of the evil nature, we were in salvation delivered (handed over paradidomi) to the teachings of grace so that we become slaves of righteousness.” **KENNETH WUEST, WORD STUDIES FROM THE GREEK NEW TESTAMENT, ROMANS, 1955**

"In the Gk. 'form' is a word for a mold such as a craftsman would use to cast molten metal. Paul's point is that God pours His new children into the mold of divine truth (12:2; cf. Titus 2:1). New believers have an innate and compelling desire to know and obey God's Word (1 Pet. 2:2)." THE MCARTHUR STUDY BIBLE, 2ND EDITION, THOMAS NELSON, 2019

"Christ is the type, the mould into which men are to be cast. The Gospel, as presented in Scripture, gives us three things. It gives us the perfect mould; it gives us the perfect motive; it gives us the perfect power. And in all three things appears its distinctive glory, apart from and above all other systems that have ever tried to affect the conduct or to mould the character of man.

In Jesus Christ we have in due combination, in perfect proportion, all the possible excellences of humanity. As in other cases of perfect symmetry, the very precision of the balanced proportions detracts from the apparent magnitude of the statue or of the fair building, so to a superficial eye

there is but little beauty there that we should desire Him, but as we learn to know Him, and live nearer to Him, and get more familiar with all His sweetness, and with all His power, He towers before us in ever greater and yet never repellent or exaggerated magnitude, and never loses the reality of His brotherhood in the completeness of His perfection. We have in the Christ the one type, the one mould and pattern for all striving, the 'glass of form,' the perfect Man.

And that likeness is not reproduced in us by pressure or by a blow, but by the slow and blessed process of gazing until we become like, beholding the glory until we are changed into the glory." MACLAREN'S EXPOSITIONS, 19TH CENTURY AD

"To obey "whole-heartedly" requires a willing abandonment to the truth of the message. Christian obedience is never coercive; it is always voluntary. The teaching was not entrusted to the converts but the converts to the teaching. Barrett points out that unlike the rabbis, Christians are not

masters of a tradition; “they are themselves created by the word of God, and remain in subjection to it.” 51 *The gospel message with all its ethical implications represents an existing body of truth into which new believers are brought by faith. The message is not brought to the converts but vice versa.”* **ROBERT H. MOUNCE, 2012, NEW AMERICAN COMMENTARY VOL 27: ROMANS, B&H PUBLISHING GROUP**

"And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness. I speak in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members as slaves of uncleanness, and of lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves of righteousness for holiness." ROMANS 6:18-19

We continue our study of Romans 6 beginning in verse 18.

Verse 18

"And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness."

ελευθερωθεντες δε απο της αμαρτιας εδουλωθητε τη δικαιοσυνη

ελευθερωθεντες δε απο της αμαρτιας (*eleutherōthentes de apo tēs hamartias*) "having been set free now from sin" ... *eleutherōthentes* means "to make free, exempt from liability, liberate, release from bondage" .. it's an aorist participle passive .. it is something done to someone at a past time .. God liberates us, He exempts us from liability, He releases us from bondage, God sets us free .. it's not something we can do for ourselves, it's not something we can do to ourselves .. God does it for us because we are incapable of releasing ourselves from the bondage of sin ..

εδουλωθητε τη δικαιοσυνη (*edoulōthēte tē dikaiosynē*) "you have become slaves to righteousness" ... *edoulōthēte* means "to bring under subjection, to become enslaved" .. the verb is aorist indicative passive .. it is something done to someone at a past time .. God brings those He saves under His subjection .. Christians are willing subjects of King Jesus because what happens to them is to free them from a terrible thing to a wonderful thing .. *dikaioσynē* means "justice, righteousness" .. subjection to King Jesus is not like subjection to the Roman Empire, it is a subjection that frees one from sin and death and to justice and righteousness ..

You will notice that verse 18 is similar to what Paul wrote in verse 16. Paul is restating this vital truth to help his readers understand how important this is for them as Christians. Paul used a rhetorical device in verse 16, then makes a strong truth claim in verse 18 to emphasize his point.

verse 16 – “Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one’s slaves whom you obey, whether of sin *leading* to death, or of obedience *leading* to righteousness?”

verse 18 – “And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.”

Paul is looking deeply into supernatural power. Everyone is born into sin. They are subject to, slaves to, sin and death. How can they possibly obey righteousness when they are slaves to sin and death? They can’t! Only God can. He is the One who sets people free from sin and makes them slaves of righteousness.

Having been set free from the evil nature, the believer was constituted a slave of righteousness. KENNETH WUEST, WORD STUDIES IN THE GREEK NEW TESTAMENT, ROMANS, WM. B. EERDMANS PUBLISHING, 1955

Verse 19

“I speak in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members as slaves of uncleanness, and of lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves of righteousness for holiness.”

ανθρωπινον λεγω δια την ασθενειαν της σαρκος υμων ωσπερ γαρ παρεστησατε τα μελη υμων δουλα τη ακαθαρσια και τη ανομια εις την ανομιαν ουτως νυν παραστησατε τα μελη υμων δουλα τη δικαιοσυνη εις αγιασμον

ανθρωπινον λεγω δια την ασθενειαν της σαρκος υμων (*anthrōpinon legō dia tēn astheneian tēs sarkos humōn*) “in human terms I speak on account of the weakness of the flesh of you” .. Paul used human terms (*anthrōpinon*) to explain spiritual realities .. those included the idea of a master and slave .. it’s a way of personifying our sinful condition before

salvation and our freedom from sin after salvation .. *astheneian* means "frailty, without strength, weakness from handicaps" .. humans are handicapped spiritually, they are born with a spiritual handicap, sin leading to death ..

ωσπερ γαρ παρεστησατε τα μελη υμων δουλα τη ακαθαρσια και τη ανομια εις την ανομιαν (*hōsper gar parestēsate ta melē humōn doula tē akatharsia kai tē anomia eis tēn anomia*) "for as for you yielded the members of you in bondage to impurity and to lawlessness unto lawlessness" ... *parestēsate* means "to place beside, stand close beside, come up to and stand by, to present, to show, to yield" .. the verb is aorist indicative active, 2nd person plural, "you" yielded the members of your body to bondage .. *melē* means "member or limb of the body, a part belonging to the whole" .. *doula* means "enslaved, in bondage, owned by another" .. *akatharsia* means "uncleanness, impurity" .. *anomia* means "without law, lawless, iniquity" .. Paul used the term twice, "lawlessness unto lawlessness," to show that a life of lawlessness leads to continued and ever-growing lawlessness, sinners sin and continue to add to their

sinfulness .. that is the natural progression of being in bondage to impurity ..

οὕτως νῦν παραστήσατε τὰ μέλη ὑμῶν δούλα τῆ δικαιοσύνη εἰς ἁγιασμόν (*houtōs nun parastēsate ta melē humōn doula tē dikaiosunē eis hagianon*) “so now yield the members of you in bondage to righteousness unto sanctification” .. Paul called on Christians to yield the members of their body to become slaves to righteousness “unto sanctification” .. *hagianon* means “set apart for holy service, consecration, sanctification” .. this is the process of advancing in holiness before the Lord .. even as yielding members of your body in bondage to impurity leads from sin to more sin, yielding members of your body in bondage to righteousness leads to holiness, being set apart to serve God ..

This is powerful part of Paul’s teaching about why Christians should live differently than they did before they were saved. It makes no sense for a person who has been freed from sin to continue to live sinfully. We have a high calling in response to God’s gracious forgiveness of our sin.

Returning for a moment to the context of this portion of Romans 6, remember Paul’s questions – “What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?” (verse 1) and “Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? Certainly not!” (verse 15). Paul addressed an issue in the Roman church which continues to be an issue in today’s churches around the world.

Other Commentaries

Every man is the servant of the master to whose commands he yields himself; whether it be the sinful dispositions of his heart, in actions which lead to death, or the new and spiritual obedience implanted by regeneration. The apostle rejoiced now they obeyed from the heart the gospel, into which they were delivered as into a mould. As the same metal becomes a new vessel, when melted and recast in another mould, so the believer has become a new creature. And there is great difference in the liberty of mind and spirit, so opposite to the state of slavery, which the true Christian has in the service of his rightful Lord, whom he is enabled to consider as his Father, and himself as his son and heir, by the adoption of grace. The dominion of sin consists in being willingly slaves thereto, not in being harassed by it as a hated power, struggling for victory. Those who now are the servants of God, once were the slaves of sin. MATTHEW HENRY'S CONCISE COMMENTARY

But, freed from sin, ye have become servants of righteousness." This is not to be regarded as the conclusion from the two premisses, Romans 6:16-17 (Rückert, Reiche), because οὐν is not used, and because substantially the same thought was already contained in Romans 6:17. Paul rather expresses once more the happy change in his readers just described; and does so in a thoughtfully chosen antithetical form, no longer however dependent on ὅτι, but independent and thus more emphatic (hence a colon is, with Lachmann, to be inserted before ἐλευθ.). But he leaves the reader to draw for himself the conclusion, namely: this μὴ γένοιτο is therefore fully justified. MEYER'S NT COMMENTARY

I speak after the manner of men — He seems to mean that his reasoning was taken from the customs of men, and was accommodated to their apprehension; and that he used metaphors and allegories which were well known; because of the infirmity of your flesh — Dulness of apprehension, and weakness of understanding, flow from the infirmity of the flesh; that is, of human nature. Or, as some understand

the expression to mean, I recommend a duty to you, suited to human nature; yea, even to the infirmities thereof; that you should do as much for God as you have done for sin, and be as diligent in the service of Christ as you have been in the pursuit of your lusts. For as — In time past, while you were ignorant of the gospel, and many of you the slaves of heathen vice and idolatry; ye yielded your members servants to uncleanness — To various fleshly lusts which defiled you; and to iniquity — Or unrighteousness toward others; unto iniquity — Adding one iniquity to another; even so now — Being enlightened by the gospel to see the evil of such things, and the miserable consequences awaiting them; and being renewed by the influences of divine grace, it is but reasonable that you should be as ready to pursue a pious and virtuous line of conduct, and to do good now, as formerly you were to do evil; and become servants of righteousness unto holiness — BENSON COMMENTARY

Unto iniquity – For the purpose of committing iniquity. It implies that they had done it in an excessive degree. It is well for Christians to be reminded of their former lives, to awaken repentance, to excite gratitude, to produce humility and a firmer purpose to live to the honor of God. This is the use which the apostle here makes of it.

Unto holiness – In order to practice holiness. Let the surrender of your members to holiness be as sincere and as unqualified as the surrender was to sin. This is all that is required of Christians. Before conversion they were wholly given to sin; after conversion they should be wholly given to God. If all Christians would employ the same energies in advancing the kingdom of God that they have in promoting the kingdom, of Satan, the church would rise with dignity and grandeur, and every continent and island would soon feel the movement. No requirement is more reasonable than this; and it should be a source of lamentation and mourning with Christians that it is not so; that they have employed so mighty energies in the cause of Satan, and do so little in the service of God. This argument for energy in

the divine life, the apostle proceeds further to illustrate by comparing the rewards obtained in the two kinds of servitude, that of the world, and of God. BARNES' NOTES ON THE BIBLE

*This is a setting forth of what must follow in practice from the view that has been taken of the change in the Christian's position resembling the transference of bondservants from one master to another. They must devote their **members** ... to the service of the new master in the same way as they had done to that of the old one; the aims or results of the two services being also intimated. The old service was in giving themselves up to **uncleanness** (with reference to sins of sensuality), and generally to ἀνομία, **i.e. lawlessness**, or disregard of duty; and its result is expressed by a repetition of the latter word. For sin leads to nothing positive; lawless conduct only results in a habit or state of lawlessness; whereas the service of righteousness in itself leads to sanctification to the abiding result of participation in the holiness of God. "Qui justitiae serviunt, proficiunt; ἄνομοι, **iniqui**,*

sunt iniqui, nil amplius" (Bengel). Romans 6:19 PULPIT COMMENTARY

The result of the new 'bondage' was to be a steady course of purification; a process of self-denial, watchfulness, and diligent observance of the holy will of the God of Peace.
CAMBRIDGE BIBLE FOR SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

We've been studying the Book of Romans together for more than ten years. We published [the first study](#) on July 14, 2012. I was in my mid-60s at the time and a friend asked me how long I thought it would take to publish a commentary on one of the longest Books in the Bible. I smiled and told him I hoped to finish before I was 90. I think we'll beat that deadline, but it does demonstrate the size and scope of Paul's longest letter.

Many scholars believe Romans is Paul's most important writing. Here's how we introduced the series years ago:

*The **Book of Romans** is the 'mountain peak' of the Apostle Paul's inspired Writings. This great Book demonstrates the Power of God over sin and the astonishing efficacy of His Grace. Romans is Paul's triumphant exposition about the truly amazing Grace of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. It is through Romans that we learn about the sinfulness of sin and the Righteousness of God. We learn about the wrath of God revealed from Heaven against all sin. Paul writes about the extreme penalty for sin for all members of the human race and the extreme **payment** for sin by God's*

Son, Jesus Christ. It is in Romans that we see the horror of sin and the honor of the sinless Sacrifice of Jesus on the Cross. God is the Judge of sin. Jesus is the Propitiation for that sin. We learn through Romans that God frees sinning slaves to become forgiven saints. God is Sovereign in all the universe and the Source of all Truth.

One of the shortest outlines of the Book of Romans comes from Dr. J. Vernon McGee (no relation):

- I. Doctrinal, Chapters 1-8
- II. Dispensational, Chapters 9-11
- III. Duty, Chapters 12-16

If we use Dr. McGee's outline, we see that we're still in the Doctrinal section. We are about to complete Chapter 6.

Verse 20

For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness.

οτε γαρ δουλοι ητε της αμαρτιας ελευθεροι ητε τη δικαιοσυνη

οτε γαρ δουλοι ητε της αμαρτιας (*hote gar douloi ēte tēs hamartias*) "for when slaves you were of sin" ... this idea of slavery to sin is a primary theme in Romans chapter 6 ..

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. VERSE 6

Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness? VERSE 16

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. VERSE 17

For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. VERSE 20

We find hope to the terrible slavery to sin in verses 18 and 22 ..

And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness. VERSE 18

We'll look at verse 22 in a few minutes.

Whenever a writer or instructor repeats the same idea several times in the span of a few paragraphs, we need to take note of the importance to the author. We know that the true Author of Romans was the Holy Spirit who inspired Paul to write it, which means that the idea of slavery to sin is of great importance to the Spirit of Christ.

ελευθεροι ητε τη δικαιοσυνη (*eleutheroi ēte tē dikaiosynē*)
“free you were from righteousness” ... this is another primary
theme of Paul’s .. Jews viewed themselves righteous because
of their connection to the Mosaic Law, but Paul emphasized
that both Jews and Gentiles were slaves of sin and free
(*eleutheroi* – not a slave, not under restraint, free) from
righteousness .. Paul mentioned this multiple times in chapter
6 ..

*Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves
slaves to obey, you are that one’s slaves whom you obey,
whether of sin leading to death, or of
obedience leading to righteousness? VERSE 16*

*And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of
righteousness. VERSE 18*

*I speak in human terms because of the weakness of your
flesh. For just as you presented your members as slaves
of u n c l e a n n e s s , a n d o f
lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now*

present your members as slaves of righteousness for holiness. VERSE 19

For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. VERSE 20

Paul's point was simple and direct: you are going to obey one or the other. Either you are a slave of sin or a slave of righteousness. As we saw in our last study you will present members of your body as slaves to uncleanness and lawlessness leading to more lawlessness or you will present members of your body to righteousness for holiness. It's one or the other, but not both at the same time.

What do you think of when you think of a slave? I'm guessing the thoughts you had about slavery were negative. Do you ever think of slavery as a positive?

How about the slave master? Are your thoughts negative about that as well? Could there be a positive to slave mastery?

I believe there can be in the context of how Paul refers to slavery in Romans 6. He presents us with two types of slavery and two slave masters. Sin is a slave master and so is righteousness. Each slave master oversees a different type of slavery. Sin oversees uncleanness, lawlessness and death. Righteousness oversees holiness and everlasting life, which we'll see in verses 22 and 23.

You are going to be a slave of one of those slave masters: sin or righteousness. Which one would you prefer? One (sin) leads to death. The other (righteousness) leads to life. Your choice.

Verse 21

What fruit did you have then in the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death.

ΤΙΝΑ ΟΥΝ ΚΑΡΠΟΝ ΕΙΧΕΤΕ ΤΟΤΕ ΕΦ ΟΙΣ ΝΥΝ ΕΠΑΙΣΧΥΝΕΣΘΕ ΤΟ ΓΑΡ ΤΕΛΟΣ ΕΚΕΙΝΩΝ ΘΑΝΑΤΟΣ

ΤΙΝΑ ΟΥΝ ΚΑΡΠΟΝ ΕΙΧΕΤΕ ΤΟΤΕ ΕΦ ΟΙΣ ΝΥΝ ΕΠΑΙΣΧΥΝΕΣΘΕ
(*tina oun karpon eichete tote eph hois nun epaischynesthe*)
“what therefore fruit had you then in the things of which now you are ashamed” ... *karpon* (fruit) can be used literally or figuratively, depending on context .. the context here is figurative about what a person’s thoughts and behavior cause .. “things of which now you are” looks back at the way the Romans had lived in the past under the slave master of sin .. those things, in retrospect, cause shame .. *epaischynesthe* means “to be disgraced, humiliated, ashamed” .. I am ashamed about the way I lived under the slave master ‘sin’ .. I do not look back at my previous life and find any reason to be proud or boast .. I was a miserable

slave under sin and feel nothing but shame and humiliation when I consider my former life .. the fruit my life produced was wretched and ugly and it was getting worse by the day .. you may feel similarly about your former life under *master sin* ..

το γαρ τέλος εκεινων θανατος (*to gar telos ekeinōn thanatos*) "the for end of those things death" ... if someone continues living under sin they will eventually come to the end of their life and they will die in their sins .. that's the fruit of living a sinful life .. it's the sad outcome for most people around the world .. "the end of those things is death" .. the word *telos* means "consummation, end goal, purpose" .. the reward for all the years of obeying the slave master sin is death .. nothing else .. unsaved people think they are free to do what they want during their lives, but sin is their master and will take everything from them at the end and give them death in return .. that certainly is sad .. but it doesn't have to be that way!

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.

*νυνι δε ελευθερωθεντες απο της αμαρτιας
δουλωθεντες δε τω θεω εχετε τον καρπον υμων εις
αγιασμον το δε τελος ζωην αιωνιον*

νυνι δε ελευθερωθεντες απο της αμαρτιας (*nuni de eleutherōthentes apo tēs hamartias*) “now however having been set free from sin” ... Paul now gives his readers a different view, that of being under a different slave master ..

δουλωθεντες δε τω θεω (*doulōthentes de tō Theō*) “having become slaves now to God” ... Paul now introduces another side of the slave master he had called “righteousness” .. slavery to righteousness is the same as being slaves to God .. that is a positive type of slavery as we will see ..

εχετε τον καρπον υμων εις αγιασμον (*exete ton karpon humōn eis hagianmon*) “you have the fruit of you unto sanctification” ... Paul used the same word for “fruit” that he did in verse 21 .. the outcome of the former fruit was shame and death .. the outcome of the second fruit is “unto sanctification” .. the word *hagianmon* means “the process of becoming holy, being set apart for sacred service” .. the idea is of someone who is advancing in holiness and holy service .. becoming slaves to God includes advancing in personal holiness as part of serving God .. advancing in holiness is a good thing .. it compares quite favorably to advancing in lawlessness ..

δε τελος ζωην αιωνιον (*de telos zōēn aiōnion*) “now the end life eternal” ... the goal/purpose of advancing in holiness in response to being slaves of God is eternal life .. that compares quite well with the end of sin, which is death ..

Verse 23

For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

τα γαρ οψωνια της αμαρτιας θανατος το δε χαρισμα του θεου ζωη αιωνιος εν χριστω ιησου τω κυριω ημων

Part of my training as a young Christian was in how to share the Gospel with someone and guide them toward believing on the Lord Jesus Christ. Romans 6:23 was one of the primary verses we used to do that. It summed up the choices we have in life quite well, but is even stronger when we see it in its full context.

τα γαρ οψωνια της αμαρτιας θανατος (*ta gar opsōnia tēs hamartias thanatos*) “the for wages of sin death” ... that’s pretty straightforward .. some slaves in Rome would receive wages as part of their service, especially if they developed specialized skills .. they would still have to give a large portion

of they earned to their master, but they were able to keep some and enjoy a small amount of independence .. the word was also used for soldiers in the Roman army .. they received wages for putting their lives in harms way by fighting wars for their military masters .. the slaves of master "sin" earned some wages, but what they earned wasn't good .. the wages (*opsōnia* – wages, salary, reward) of sin is death (*thanatos* – physical and spiritual death in this case) .. not good .. do you think people would keep working for *master sin* if they knew what it paid? Some might, but many wouldn't and those are the people we want to reach with this message from Romans 6 ..

το δε χαρισμα του θεου ζωη αιωνιος εν χριστω ιησου τω κυριω ημων (*to de charisma tou Theou zōē aiōnios en Christō Iēsou tō Kyriō hēmōn*) "but the gift of God life eternal in Christ Jesus the Lord of us" ... this is the contrast between masters .. master sin forces a person to work for wages that result in death .. God gives us the gift of eternal life in Christ Jesus the Lord (Master) .. the choice seems clear .. work for

master sin and get paid death in the end .. enjoy the Grace of God and receive His gift of eternal life ..

I often think of these words when I consider the wonderful gift God has given me ... *I have received what I do not deserve and have not received what I do deserve* .. thanks be to God for His amazing Grace!

Other Commentaries

It all comes down to this: the wages paid by sin are death, but the gift God gives is eternal life (v. 23). Not only is the contrast between death and life but also between earning and giving. Sinners earn what they receive. By obeying the impulses of sin, they are storing up the reward for sinning. Their severance check is death—eternal separation from God, who alone is life. By yielding to the impulses of righteousness, believers do not earn anything. They do, however, receive a gift—the gift of eternal life, which comes by faith through Jesus Christ their Lord. ROBERT H. MOUNCE (2012). NEW AMERICAN COMMENTARY VOL 27: ROMANS. B&H PUBLISHING GROUP.

The pleasure and profit of sin do not deserve to be called fruit. Sinners are but ploughing iniquity, sowing vanity, and reaping the same. Shame came into the world with sin, and is still the certain effect of it. The end of sin is death. Though the way may seem pleasant and inviting, yet it will be bitterness in the latter end. From this condemnation the

believer is set at liberty, when made free from sin. If the fruit is unto holiness, if there is an active principle of true and growing grace, the end will be everlasting life; a very happy end! Though the way is up-hill, though it is narrow, thorny, and beset, yet everlasting life at the end of it is sure. The gift of God is eternal life. And this gift is through Jesus Christ our Lord. Christ purchased it, prepared it, prepares us for it, preserves us to it; he is the All in all in our salvation. MATTHEW HENRY'S CONCISE COMMENTARY

*The Gr. is same word as **free gift**, ch. Romans 5:15.—This word here is, so to speak, a paradox. We should have expected one which would have represented life eternal as the issue of holiness, to balance the truth that death is the issue of sin. And in respect of holiness being the necessary preliminary to the future bliss, this would have been entirely true. But St Paul here all the more forcibly presses the thought that salvation is a gift wholly apart from human merit. The eternal Design, the meritorious Sacrifice, the life-giving and love-imparting Spirit, all alike are a Gift absolutely free. The works of*

sin are the procuring cause of Death; the course of sanctification is not the procuring cause of Life Eternal, but only the training for the enjoyment of what is essentially a Divine gift 'in Jesus Christ our Lord.' CAMBRIDGE BIBLE FOR SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

Eternal life – The same words which in Romans 6:22 are rendered "everlasting life." The phrase is opposed to death; and proves incontestably that that means eternal death. We may remark, therefore,

(1) That the one will be as long as the other.

(2) as there is no doubt about the duration of life, so there can be none about the duration of death. The one will be rich, blessed, everlasting; the other sad, gloomy, lingering, awful, eternal.

(3) if the sinner is lost, he will deserve to die. He will have his reward. He will suffer only what shall be the just due of sin. He will not be a martyr in the cause of injured

innocence. He will not have the compassion of the universe in his favor. He will have no one to take his part against God. He will suffer just as much, and just as long, as he ought to suffer. He will suffer as the culprit pines in the dungeon, or as the murderer dies on the gibbet, because this is the proper reward of sin.

(4) they who are saved will be raised to heaven, not because they merit it, but by the rich and sovereign grace of God. All their salvation will be ascribed to him; and they will celebrate his mercy and grace forever.

(5) it becomes us, therefore, to flee from the wrath to come. No man is so foolish and so wicked as he who is willing to reap the proper wages of sin. None so blessed as he who has part in the mercy of God, and who lays hold on eternal life. BARNES' NOTES ON THE BIBLE

Romans Resources

[Commentary on Romans “The Gospel of God” Chapter 1 Verses 1-15](#)

[Commentary on Romans “The Gospel of God” Chapter 1 Verses 16-17](#)

[Commentary on Romans “The Gospel of God” Chapter 1:18 – 25](#)

[Commentary on Romans “The Gospel of God” Chapter 1:25-32](#)

[Commentary on Romans “The Gospel of God” Chapter 2:1-29](#)

[Commentary on Romans “The Gospel of God” Chapter 3](#)

[Commentary on Romans “The Gospel of God” Chapter 4](#)

[Commentary on Romans “The Gospel of God” Chapter 5](#)

Next eBook

We will look at the first part of Romans 7 as we continue our study of the **Gospel of God**.

Scripture taken from the New King James Version®.
Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

GraceLife © 1990-2023