

ROMANS 6

After having written so eloquently of the wonderful benefits of the gift of justification through Jesus Christ, the apostle Paul now over the next two chapters deals with four questions that he anticipates in response to his teaching. The first two in this chapter deal with whether one can continue to live in sin after being justified by faith through the grace of God.

I) Dead to Sin, Alive to God (6:1-14)

- A) Since grace abounds much more when sin abounds [5:20-21], someone might ask, “Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?” (v. 1; cf. 3:8)
 - 1) First of a series of four questions (6:1, 15; 7:7, 13)
 - 2) Paul’s answer: “Certainly not!” (v. 2; “God forbid!” KJV)
 - a) All those who have been justified by faith have died to sin; therefore, how can those who died *to* sin live any longer *in* it?
 - b) Grace does not tolerate sin; forgiveness of sins should cause one to abandon sin
- B) As many of us as were baptized into Christ were baptized into His death (v. 3)
 - 1) The act of baptism is connected to the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus (Col. 2:12)
 - a) Buried with Jesus through baptism into death (v. 4)
 - b) As Christ was raised from the dead, so also we are raised to walk in newness of life
 - 2) If united in the likeness of Christ’s death, then in the likeness of His resurrection (v. 5)
- C) Old man crucified with Christ (v. 6; Gal. 2:20; 5:24; 6:14; Col. 2:11)
 - 1) The “body of sin” done away – turn away from the sinful activity of the mortal body
 - 2) The new man freed from the bondage of sin (Jn. 8:31-36; Eph. 4:17-31; Col. 3:1-11)
 - 3) One is freed from sin when they die to sin (v. 7) – completed in baptism, which saves us
- D) If we died with Christ, we will live with Him (vv. 8-13)
 - 1) Christ was raised from the dead to die no more – death has no more dominion over Him
 - 2) We are dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord
 - 3) Must not let sin reign [have dominion] in our mortal body to obey its lusts [fall into sin]
 - 4) Do not present your members [body] as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but as instruments of righteousness to God (God must be our master – Matt. 6:24)
 - 5) Develop godly character; conform to His image (8:29; Phil. 3:10; Gal. 2:20)
- E) Sin will not have dominion over the Christian – not under law but under grace (v. 14)
 - 1) Not hopelessly condemned as sinners under the law’s demand of perfection, but forgiven by the gracious free gift of redemption in the blood of Christ
 - 2) To attempt to be justified by law is to fall from grace (Gal. 5:4), but we are still under the law of Christ as a rule of duty and service (1 Cor. 9:20-21)

Based on what he just said, Paul anticipates that some might say that they should continue in sin that grace might abound. This is the first of four questions that Paul anticipates in response to what he is teaching. His answer is “Certainly not!” One who has died to sin can no longer live in it. Paul then explains why this is so.

All those who were baptized into Christ were baptized into His death and raised to newness of life. Why would such a one live anymore in the sin of the old life? When the old man of sin is done away and he is now freed from sin. Since we are dead to sin and

alive to God we must not let sin reign in our bodies. The members of our body should be used as instruments of righteousness to God.

Sin will not have dominion over us, for we are not under law (condemnation of sin) but under grace (forgiveness by God). Those who seek to be justified by perfect law-keeping will be confined under the bondage of sin without recourse. Grace is the only hope sinful man has to gain freedom from sin by the redemption in Christ.

Some have misconstrued Paul's point in verse 14 to mean that we are not required to keep any law code of God today. But this is not the point of Paul's contrast. Jack Cottrell correctly wrote, "Paul here contrasts law and grace as opposing ways of salvation...His point is that law cannot set us free from sin's penalty or power. It cannot justify a person once even a single sin has been committed, nor can it give sinners the strength necessary to obey its own commands...But the blessed grace of God does what the law cannot. Its double cure sets us free from both the penalty and power of sin" (Romans commentary 232). We are "under the law of Christ" in the new covenant of Christ (1 Cor. 9:21) As Paul has already stated, we are to be instruments of righteousness, meaning obedient to the righteous will of God in Christ (see Matt. 7:21)

II) Slaves of Sin Set Free to be Slaves of Righteousness (6:15-23)

A) "Should we sin since we are not under law but under grace?" (Second question)

Answer: Certainly not!

1) We are either slaves of sin to death, or slaves of obedience to righteousness (cf. Matt. 6:24)

2) "Obedience" – submission to Christ as instruments of righteousness (vv. 4, 13)

B) Obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine [truth, gospel of Christ, baptism]

1) Set free from sin – became slaves of righteousness (absurd to ask "Shall we sin?")

C) Just as once slaves of uncleanness/lawlessness, now slaves of righteousness for holiness

D) Difference of fruit and reward

1) When slaves of sin, shame and death – *lying, drunkenness, adultery, malice, hate*

2) As slaves of God, holiness and eternal life – *truth, faithfulness, goodness, love*

3) Wages of sin is death; gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord

Paul answers the second anticipated question – being under grace gives no one a license to sin. This continues the answer to the original question in verse one. As Christians saved by the grace of God, we are not servants of sin, but of righteousness, having obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine that set us free from sin. A change of allegiance has taken place in our spiritual lives. This shows how absurd it is to ask, "Shall we sin?" The Christian has no more allegiance to sin and its life.

"That form of doctrine" refers to the same thing as the "gospel" that Paul introduced this letter with in 1:16. Clinton Hamilton wrote, "The sense, is that the teaching, the gospel, is the mold and norm by which one is to pattern his conduct...At conversion, the Christian was given over to the controlling power of the gospel as a mold or pattern to shape his conduct" (Commentary on Romans 403, 404). The "form of doctrine" would include their being obedient to the command to be baptized for the remission of sins as well as living as servants of Christ (vv. 3-4; Acts 2:38; Rom. 12:1-2). Failure to be obedient would deny their being justified by faith and living by faith.

We now can look forward to a life of holiness and as a reward, eternal life. The wages of sin is death but eternal life is available in Christ to all who believe.