

Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

Dying to Live, Part 1

Scripture: Romans 6:1-5

Code: 45-45

For tonight, let's open our Bibles together to the sixth chapter of Romans. We enter tonight in one of the great experiences of our study of the Word of God as we embark upon the journey through Romans 6, 7 and 8. To be honest with you, the reason that I have decided to teach the book of Romans and worked our way through the first five chapters was basically so we could get to these chapters, because I feel there needs to be such a clarification and such a clear understanding of the teaching of the Word of God in this regard. And we're going to take our way slowly through these chapters in some sense.

In another sense, we'll move right along, taking it theme by theme. But I want you to give me the opportunity to follow Paul's argument without giving away everything before we get to it. And so, I know inevitably what's going to happen is we're going to cover a few verses and raise a million questions, many of which will be answered if you'll just wait till the next couple of weeks. So, try to be patient, and if the question is not answered then you let me know, respond, drop me a note or let one of the staff or elders know. We'll do the best we can to touch on that, but we'll move progressively through the development of Paul's argument.

Now, tonight we're going to begin by looking at Romans 6, and the first section really that needs to be looked at in a sense as a unit is verses 1 to 14. Obviously we're not going to cover all of those tonight, but we'll get a start on it. Now, since we began our study of the book of Romans, we have swept through some rather great themes. After an introduction in the first 17 verses, which basically outlines in a microscopic view the unfolding redemption that will be discussed in the book of Romans, Paul launched into a great statement on the sinfulness of man, chapter 1 verses 18 through chapter 3 verse 20. And that whole sweep of truth helped us to understand how utterly sinful man really is, how guilty he is, how hopeless he is, how sin-bound and hell-bound he is.

And then beginning in chapter 3 verse 21, Paul embarked upon a great discussion of the doctrine of salvation by grace through faith and the substitutionary work of Jesus Christ. And so these have been the two major themes: the theme of man's sinfulness and the theme of God's salvation. Throughout these two great sections of foundational doctrine, Paul has been stressing the dire situation of man, the inevitable doom that man faces because of his sin. He has been describing for us the rebellion of man against holy God, man's love of his own sinfulness, man's willful refusal to understand the God who has been clearly revealed to him inwardly and outwardly. And then in response to that, Paul has presented to us the wonderful forgiving mercy and grace of God, which reaches down to this

unworthy man and offers to him full pardon, full acquittal through the perfect and finished work of Jesus Christ.

And the work of Christ in regard to man is so full and so thorough and so complete and so merciful and so gracious, so comprehensive, so abundant, so magnanimous that it can best be summed up in chapter 5, verses 20 and 21. "Moreover the law entered that the offense might abound but where sin abounded, grace did super abound; that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord."

Now, the magnanimity of God's grace is shown there in verse 20 in that the greater the sin was, the greater the grace was to cover that sin. And that's how he sums up that first five chapters, really. Great is man's sinfulness and infinitely greater is God's forgiving grace.

Now, at this point we come to a new development in Paul's thinking. We've talked about man's sin. We've talked about God's salvation. And now we move into a third major discussion in the epistle to the Romans, and it has to do with the believer's holiness. Now that you have been taken out of sin into salvation, what is the inevitable result of that? We're going to see that in chapter 6, 7 and 8.

Now, the way Paul introduces it is by dealing with a question that would inevitably come up at this point if he were presenting this to a group which included those who might object, and the inevitable question appears in verse 1 of chapter 6. Now, Paul was very good at anticipating the argument of his adversary. He had preached the gospel enough times to know what responses it generated. He had presented it in hostile groups well enough and long enough to know how they reacted to it. He knew the inevitable antagonist's viewpoint. He knew what he needed to counter. He knew the gaps that he needed to fill to continue his argument effectively. And so, he anticipates this statement in verse 1, "What shall we say then?" In other words, if sin is abounding but the greater the sin the greater the grace, "Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?"

I mean, if more sin generates more grace, then should we just continue on now that we're redeemed and sin more so God can be more gracious? If He gets such a thrill out of grace, then let Him have a lot of it! In other words, somebody would say to Paul, "Paul, your doctrine is antinomian. Your doctrine is that which gives tremendous liberty. This idea that salvation is simply and only by grace through faith without works, and that the greater the sin the greater the grace, leads to an antinomian viewpoint, that is, an against-law viewpoint, a freedom gone maniacal, a freedom gone berserk. It leads to a person saying, 'Well, if the more sin the more grace, then, man, I'm going to sin like mad so God can just get all kinds of glory by dispensing grace.'"

The antagonistic Jew would have a very difficult time handling Paul's argument about salvation by grace without works because he would assume that it led to this kind of thing. One writer put it this way, "It is at this point that the apostle moves perilously close to the edge of an abyss. One step to

the side, and all he has gained by what has preceded could be lost.” I mean, if salvation is all of God and all of grace and God is glorified in the dispensing of grace, then man in his desire for sin might reason, the more sin the more grace.

And that’s basically how he moves into the section on sanctification or the believer’s holiness. By the way, this has been taught through the years. The evil genius of the Romanov family by the name of Rasputin taught and exemplified the doctrine of salvation through repeated experience of sin and repentance. He said, “The more you sin, the more God gives you grace, and so the more you sin and sin with abandon and the more you allow God to exercise His grace, the more you give God glory.” In fact, he went on to say that, “If you’re just an ordinary sinner, you don’t give God an opportunity to show His glory, so be an extraordinary sinner.”

Now, that is antinomianism. That is complete abandonment in the name of grace, and I suppose that some of Paul’s critics may have accused him of that not only in his own imagination here in chapter 6, but in reality back in chapter 3 verse 8 it says, “And not rather - ” he’s talking about this idea of sin “ - as we are slanderously reported and as some affirm that we say let us do evil that good may come.” And there he alludes to some slander that had been thrown at him that, again, it’s very likely that he had been accused of preaching the kind of a doctrine of grace that condoned evil so that God could be glorified in His forgiveness.

It may be, also, that not only were critics attacking Paul on this angle in a negative sense, in other words, they wanted to deny him the doctrine of grace because it led to antinomianism. It may also be that there were some people who wanted to sin so that grace could abound just to justify their own evil life style. I mean, they aren’t criticizing it; they’re happy to accept it. They’re not the legalists saying, “We can’t accept what you say, Paul. It leads to antinomianism.” They’re the libertines who are saying, “Well, Paul, we do accept what you say. We push it to its logical conclusion.”

If you wanted to meet a group of them you might find them in the city of Corinth in the church. It seems to me if there was any libertine group of people in the name of Jesus Christ, it was that group. They lived without any of the normal restraints of holiness that should bind the children of God. They were characterized by incest, by incessant suing of one another, that is an indication of selfish greed, stepping on each other’s necks. They were characterized by sexual immorality, by prostitution, by paganism, by demonic activity. They even stood up in their assemblies and in the name of a gift of the Holy Spirit, cursed Jesus. And maybe it was those kinds of things that sort of accommodated the libertine who wanted to push the doctrine of grace to, in his own mind, what was its logical conclusion.

But Paul would allow neither of these. He would not abandon grace to accommodate the legalists, and he would not abandon grace to restrict the libertine. He wouldn’t do it in either case. Legalism is never a remedy for anything, not even license. God has a better way, a more excellent way, and we

find Paul unfolds that way in Romans 6, 7 and 8. And basically, if I can give you a preview, the way that is the most excellent way is the way of the work of God in the heart, the regenerating work, and then the concomitant ministry of the Holy Spirit, and we'll see that as we go.

Now, as we move then into chapter 6, what Paul is going to show us is that the true gospel of grace does not lead to libertinism, to just sinning like mad because you're going to be all right anyway. In other words, it's what you've heard people say who wanted to criticize the doctrine of eternal security. They say, "Well, if you believe in eternal security, then what you really mean is that once you're a Christian you can just sin all you want, and you're going to be okay." Have you heard people say that? Sure. It's the same kind of thing. And so for them they want to restrict the gospel of pure saving grace in its eternal reality because they're afraid that that's the only way they can control people. And so, they violate the purity of saving grace as an entity in order to control people who might abuse grace, but Paul will have none of that. In fact, as he moves into chapter 6, he necessarily, inextricably, and permanently links a holy life with true salvation.

In other words, you don't need externally to control people who are redeemed because there is planted within them a control principle by virtue of the new nature, the new life which is under the control of the Holy Spirit of God so that the thing functions internally not externally. And we're going to see that as we unfold these chapters together.

Now, chapters 3, 4 and 5 basically deal with justification. Chapters 6, 7 and 8 deal with sanctification for you that like theological labels. If you want it another way, chapters 3, 4 and 5 deal with how you get saved and chapters 6, 7 and 8 deal with how you live after you've been saved. And there is an absolute connection, an absolute connection. The two are linked.

Now, listen to what I say. Holiness is as much a gift of God to the believer as salvation is in the redemptive act. I'll say it again. Holiness is as much a gift of God to the believer as redemption is in the saving act. When a person is redeemed, it is not only a divine transaction; it is a divine miracle of transformation. It is not only legal; it is real. It is not God just saying, "Now you're saved." It is God transforming you. It is not only God saying something to be true; it is God making it true. It is not only God declaring you righteous; it is God recreating you in righteousness. You see, as I've been trying to point out earlier in the book of Romans, God doesn't say things that aren't so. And He's not about to call people righteous who aren't, and so sanctification and justification are linked.

And I dare say, beloved, that nothing is more important for us to understand in the utter antinomianism of the contemporary Christian scene than to understand the link between sanctification and justification, to understand the connection between a holy life and true salvation. That's why I've said to you on other occasions that I'm convinced that the church in America is in many, many cases an unregenerate, unredeemed lost godless, Christ-less, hell-bound church because I don't see any holiness there, and I think there must be that reality.

Well, let's look at Paul's argument. I mean, I could just go on ranting and raving about this subject for a long time. I want to get into the text. The foundation for Paul's teaching on holiness is laid down in the opening of this marvelous chapter. Let me just give you three elements to open up the first fourteen verses: the antagonist, the answer and the argument, just a little three point thing. We'll look at the beginning of those significant points.

First of all, the antagonist appears in verse 1. This is an imaginary antagonist, in a sense. It's probably imaginary in this case but not in terms of Paul's experience. Many times he's been accused of preaching a gospel of grace that is antinomian. When he went back, you remember, to the city of Jerusalem after collecting the offering from the Gentile churches, and went back with all of the Gentile representatives to conciliate the Jewish and Gentile segments of the church, to demonstrate love not only to meet their need in a physical way, but to meet it in a spiritual way. He thought that he would even further identify, and so he went into the temple with some of those Jews, went to offer a vow. He wanted to show his kinship to Judaism and he had not abandoned it. And you remember, there was a riot that broke out and they accused him of speaking against the law and against the temple and against them and against God and everything else they counted to be sacred. Why? Because the doctrine of grace seemed to them to be a libertine teaching. And he wants to show that you don't need to impose law on people.

The Judaizers want to do the same thing. They wanted to go into Galatia, and when they found these people who believed you could enter to God's Kingdom by grace alone, they couldn't handle that. And so they said, "No, you must be circumcised and you must keep all the law of Moses, and then you get through the vestibule of that, you can get into the Kingdom." And their fear was that if they ever got just pure grace that everybody would run amok, and we still have that today. People who think you've got to have a zillion rules in order to conform people to spirituality. It goes on in many places, churches, Christian schools, where you think you can force spirituality down the throats of people by externalizing the rules, they're going to force them into a certain mold. And so, Paul says I know some are going to accuse me of this. They're going to say, "Well, on that basis, Paul, we just ought to sin like mad so we can have a lot of grace." That's the antagonist.

Jude, I think, just as a footnote, has this in mind in verse 4 of that very important epistle. He says, "There are certain men crept in unawares who were before of old – " prewritten is what it means, " - to this condemnation, ungodly men who do – " what? " - turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness and denying the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ."

Now these were the ones who wanted to accept grace and say, "O boy, grace is great." They turned it into lasciviousness, that is sinful activity, and therefore they denied the Lord. So, keep it in mind, you have two factors here. On the one hand, you have the legalists who want to say, "You can't teach that, Paul. People will run wild. You're teaching antinomianism." On the other hand, you have the

libertines who are saying, “Teach it, Paul, we love every minute of it, and we’re going to use that grace to its extreme.” And both are wrong. In fact, both give evidence of never having truly been redeemed at all.

I know a man who has been a preacher, Bible teacher, and an evangelist for years. If I said his name, everyone in this building would know him. For all of those years that he has taught the Bible, he has lived in unceasing sin. One of the major emphasis of his teaching has been grace, and the freedom that grace provides. And all the while that he has been teaching that all across the country, he has been living in vile, wretched sinfulness. He would fit well into this verse. He bangs all the time on grace because it’s the only way he can get up in the morning and face the world, and he’s twisted. So, it isn’t just an old problem; it’s a very contemporary one.

Now, you might look at it another way, just to help you frame the question. It might come that it could be put this way; if God justifies the ungodly – and does He do that? Sure He does, Romans 4:5 – If God justifies the ungodly, and if He delights to justify the ungodly, then there is no point in being what? Godly. So, some would say the doctrine of grace puts a premium on sin.

Does it? I’ve been accused of that. I’ve been accused of preaching grace and not having rules. Sometimes pastors say to me, “What are the rules in your church for membership?” That’s true, many ask me that. Do they have to sign a long list of rules? And my answer to that is well, “If the Lord lets them in the Kingdom on the basis of faith, I think we can let them in our church.” We really don’t want to set a standard higher than God. And we never have believed for a minute that we can put up a list of external rules and make people spiritual. God has a better plan.

“Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?” The word “continue” is interesting in the Greek, *epimen*. It’s an intensified word with a prefix preposition. It means “to abide, remain, or stay.” It’s used of staying in a house, making a residence there. Shall we then who have been saved by grace habitually sustain the same relationship to sin that we have had before? Shall we go on with that same relationship where sin had full control and we yielded fully to it, it was an unbroken habit? Are we going to continue that same abiding within the house of sin?

In other words, to put it theologically, does justification not necessarily connect to sanctification? Can a person be saved and go on in the same life pattern? Can there be a divine transaction that has no impact on the life? Some in our Christian culture would say, yes. Yes, if you’ve ever asked Jesus in your heart no matter what your life is like, you can be sure you’re going to go to heaven. In other words, justification can exist apart from sanctification.

One writer, current writer, says, “You can be saved and have absolutely no fruit. You can be saved and have no evidence, no practical righteousness. It isn’t desirable. It isn’t God’s will. It isn’t best, but it is possible.” Let me put the question this way; does the gospel allow men to be unholy? Can you be

really saved and unholy and continue to remain in, abide in, stay in, live in the same relationship to sin you had before? That's the question. Let's look at the answer in verse 2. "*M genoito*." You don't see that in your Bible. It says "God forbid." But *m genoito* does not translate "God forbid." It is an idiom, the strongest reaction possible. It is outraged indignation. To put it in the words of my grandmother, "Perish the thought!" You remember that one? To put it in the contemporary vernacular, "No way!" May it never be! It is denial with an abhorrence of such a thought. The very suggestion is thoroughly obnoxious to Paul. So that he doesn't spew out some great argument, he just says no, no, no. It is a blunt formula. By no means, absolutely not! A Christian continuing to remain in, abide in, live in sin is not only impermissible; it is impossible. The thought only creates disgust.

Dr. Barnhouse wrote an interesting paragraph in this regard. In part of it he said, "Holiness starts where justification finishes and if holiness does not start, we have the right to suspect that justification never started either." And he's right.

Now, Paul's reason for this revulsion is not found in, again, some elaborate argument, but rather in one simple question, and it's so profound. Look at it in verse 2. "How shall we who have died to sin live any longer in it?" Now, that, friends, is a very deep profound and rich statement. Paul doesn't say, "Well, I see where you're coming from, guys. Oh, boy, that is a problem. Ahhh, well, let's see. I better back up on this grace deal a little. Yeah, I can see we could have a little, some loose ends there." No, he doesn't alter the doctrine of grace. He doesn't modify it. He doesn't equivocate on it. Salvation is a free, unmerited gift of grace which overrules sin. No matter how bad the sin is, the grace is greater. He doesn't change that. If the whole world objected, if the whole world was in antagonism to that, he would never alter it one wit or one word. Grace is grace. Grace super-abounds in salvation. It super-abounds in security forever even to the chief of sinners, and there's no regard of the depth of their evil, the extent of their sin, or the length of their rebellion. It doesn't matter whether you're a goody-goody, or whether you're a rotten multiple murderer or anything in between. He doesn't equivocate with grace. So we just leave that where it is. We don't have to go back and edit chapter 3, 4 and 5. We just leave it.

What is his answer? How shall we that have died to sin live any longer in it? He says it's impossible. You can't sustain the same relationship to sin you had before because you've died to it. Now some, I think the authorized version, has "dead to sin." That's not the best translation. It's not talking about a state; it's talking about a past act. It isn't saying that you are presently dead to sin. He is saying you have died, aorist tense. At one point in time you died to sin, you died to it. How can you remain in it when you died to it?

Now I want you to just draw a little circle around that phrase "died to sin" in your Bible because it is the key or the fundamental premise of the whole argument of the chapter. And it's going to take us the whole chapter, really, to unfold the significance of this concept, but we'll get a little start on it tonight.

Now what is he saying? Hang on to this because it's foundational to the rest of the chapter. Death and life are not compatible. I mean, you can't be dead and alive at the same time. Would you agree to that? I mean, that's a logical impossibility. You cannot be dead and alive. Some of you can be alive and look dead and then sometimes you go to a funeral, somebody is dead but they look alive. But you can't really be dead and really be alive at the same time. They're not compatible. So it is a fundamental logical contradiction for a Christian to be living in sin when he has died to it. You see?

In a definite act in the past time, a once for all definite break with sin was made. That is a part of the believer's identity, and a believer cannot therefore live in sin. If a man lives in sin, if he abides in sin, if he continues in sin he is not a believer. It is no different than what John says in 1 John. The one who is born of God cannot continue to commit sin. The one who does that, who remains in it, gives evidence of the fact that he's never been taken out of that domain. He's never died to that. He is still alive to that dimension.

Now, if you were to view sin as a realm, or you were to view sin as a sphere, you could say the believer no longer lives in that realm, the believer no longer lives in that sphere. And you know, it says in Psalm 37 that a certain person passed away. "And lo, he was not. Yea, I sought him but he couldn't be found." And in a real sense that's the same way with the matter of sin. The believer is no longer there. He has died to sin.

Now, some of your wheels are turning here already and you're saying, "Now, wait a minute, MacArthur, what do you mean by that? Are you saying Christians never sin?" Did I say that? I'm just saying what Paul said. Now, be patient enough to wait till the argument unfolds, and we'll get to the question. But the point we want to note here is that whatever you want to do to explain it, we have died to sin and we no longer live in that sphere. We no longer live in that dimension. We have been translated out of the kingdom of darkness into another realm.

Now listen, that means, as I said before, that salvation is not only forensic; it is for real. It is not only a stated fact in terms of transaction; it is a reality in terms of transformation. "If any man be in Christ, he is –" what? " - a new creation." I think it was Stifler, the commentator, who said, and I think it's – I don't want to misrepresent him, but I think what he said was, "He died not only for what I did but also for what I am." Very important. He died not only for what I did, but for what I am.

In 2 Corinthians chapter 5, and if you feel like you're getting lost, hang in there we'll find you. In 2 Corinthians 5:14, just to give you some other Scriptures, "For the love of Christ constraineth us because we thus realize –" or judge, ascertain, " - that if one died for all then we're all –" what? " - dead; and that He died for all that they who live should not henceforth live unto themselves but unto him who died for them and rose again." Now, he says we determine this, we ascertain this that if Jesus died, then we all died, too. And if we all died, then we no longer live the way we used to live,

we now live in a new life, and we live to Him. That's the same concept. It's exactly the same thought. We have died to the sphere of sin which was our captor.

In fact, in Colossians 3:3 it says, "Set your affections - " verse 2 " - on things above and not on things on the earth." You say, "Well, how can I do that?" Here's how, "For you are dead." You're dead to what? To the sin sphere, and your life is hidden with Christ in God, and Christ who is our life shall appear. We have a new sphere, a new dimension, a new atmosphere in which we live. First John 3:9 says that, "Whosoever is born of God does not continue to commit sin, for his seed remains in him and he cannot sin because he's born of God."

Now people have choked on these kinds of concepts and passages because they're afraid it means eradication of the sin nature, and I've been asked that question. People say, "Do you believe in the eradication of the sin nature? I mean, do you believe that when you become a Christian you're instantly perfect?" My answer to that is, "Are you kidding? I'm a pastor, I know better. I know better over my own life and everybody else's." All I'm doing is telling you what Paul is saying here. We'll see how it all fits together as we move along. But a Christian cannot remain, abide in, stay in, reside in sin the way he did before his conversion. He died to sin.

Now, that's the antagonist and the answer.

Let's look at the argument. And it begins to unfold in verse 3, and we'll just get a brief start. Watch how it unfolds. Here's how he explains what he means when he talks about dying to sin. What do you really mean by that? Here's his explanation, and he does it in a series of logical statements. This is very logical. You've really got to think with Paul. He's really in his legal mode here. He's taking this as if it were a legal argument. It's very logical. It's very fluid in terms of the flow of thought. But he works his way from verse 3 to 14 with a series of truths, just one by one, unfolding what it means that we have died to sin.

As we work our way through the first principle is this; we're baptized into Christ. See it there in verse 3? "Know ye not that as many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death." Just take the first half of the verse. That's the first principle I want you to see. "As many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ." We in our conversion were baptized into Jesus Christ. What does that mean? Well, what does that mean? Well, let's talk about the implications; that a person can even think of asking whether Christians are free to sin betrays a lack of understanding of what a Christian is. You're not merely a justified legally declared righteous person who chooses to do as he pleases. When you became a Christian, you were brought into intimate living union with Jesus Christ. And I think that's the best way to understand it. Salvation isn't God up in heaven looking at the record "MacArthur" and where it says "Sinner bound for hell," He draws a line through it and stamps it "saved." It isn't just that.

It isn't something that goes on heaven that doesn't have anything to do with me. When I become a Christian, the Bible says my life is fused with the life of Jesus Christ. I am, if you want to use the correct sense of the word *baptíz*, I am immersed into Jesus Christ. Now, that's a marvelous concept. When you became a Christian, you were immersed into Jesus Christ. You were fused into Jesus Christ. Now if you were to study, for example, several other passages. Just a couple I'll bring to mind, you can write them down. First Corinthians 10:2 talks about being baptized into Moses. It talks about the children of Israel in the wilderness being baptized into Moses. What it means is to come under the authority of Moses, to participate in the Mosaic leadership, to participate in the Mosaic privilege, to participate in the Mosaic blessing, that which God did in His life reached to the people who followed Him.

So, to be immersed into Moses was to be involved in all that God was doing in the life of Moses, and that's a good parallel. As the children of Israel, in a sense, were fused into Moses, he was their leader. He was the anchor to God. He was the channel through which God spoke, he was the one with the face that shone and revealed the glory of God, and they were in Moses, in a sense, united with him. In an even deeper more profound and real sense, we are baptized into Jesus Christ. We are placed in, immersed in deeply into Christ.

Now, I believe this is used metaphorically here. That is, it's not talking about H₂O. I think he's speaking as he does in terms of baptism in 1 Corinthians 12 when he says we have all been baptized with the Holy Spirit. And he's not talking about water there. He's talking about an immersing ministry where the Spirit of God, the Christ is the baptizer, and through the agency of the Spirit of God, He immerses us in the Spirit and thereby in the church, which carries in it the universal life of the Spirit. Now these are profound thoughts, but it's speaking metaphorically. We are fused into, immersed deeply into Jesus Christ. It speaks of an intimate, personal fellowship.

First John talks about it and says, "Our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son." Jesus said it in Matthew 28, He said, "Lo, I am with you – " what? " - always." Paul said to the Corinthians, 1 Corinthians 6:17, "He that is joined to the Lord is –" what? " – one spirit." And so, when you became a Christian, you became one with Him.

One writer says, "The introduction, or placing of a person, place 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 is the best definition of *baptíz*." It is putting us in a new environment, putting us in a new union, in a new relationship with new conditions, all different.

And so, what Paul is saying here is, "Look, when you were saved, you were placed into Jesus Christ." It's an incredible concept, and I'll be honest with you at this point, you'll never understand it fully until you get to heaven. I don't understand it fully, I just see what it says, and I accept it by faith. In

Galatians 3:27 it says, "As many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." And there he equates the putting on of Christ and the baptizing into Christ as one and the same. It's just two ways to speak of it. In one sense it's like being immersed in Christ. In another sense it's like just putting Him on over you.

Colossians 2 speaks to the same matter in chapter 2 verse 11. "In whom you are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ, you are buried with Him in baptism in which you are also risen with Him through the operation of God who has raised Him from the dead." So, in a sense, you've been placed into His circumcision. You've been placed into His death. You've been placed into His burial. You've been placed into His resurrection. You're fused with Christ. Incredible. You see, it is precisely why Paul in 1 Corinthians 6 says, "How in heaven's name can you join yourself to a prostitute?" Because when you do that, you are joining Christ to a prostitute because you are fused with Him.

"Even when we were dead in sins," Ephesians 2:5, "He made us alive, listen to this, together with Christ and has raised us up together and made us sit together." We died with Christ. We rose with Christ. We ascend with Christ. We reign with Christ. And he says at the end of the third chapter of Revelation, "It is given to you to sit with Me in My throne."

So, listen, I mean just from that alone, if we close the book of Romans and went home, we would know that it is impossible for a person to continue in the same relationship to sin that he had before that because he has been fused with Jesus Christ who is eternally holy.

Now, some people think this means water baptism. God help them. I mean, that's a dry verse if ever there was one. But let me tell you something, you can't help but realize that behind the scenes there's some water because of the choice of words. Somebody says, "Well, why didn't he just say 'All who believe in Christ are believing in His death and believing in His resurrection and are united with Him?' Why does he use baptized?" Because baptism, that wonderful, beautiful symbolic act, had become the outward identification of an inward faith. He's not advocating salvation by water. That would be to contradict chapter 3, 4 and 5. There's no water in any of those chapters, by the way. He's not denying everything he's just said.

But listen, in those days water baptism was a fixed sign for faith, and very often in the Scripture when you read baptism you could substitute faith. Because the writer sees those two the same, baptism being the outward sign of faith. People in those days who put their faith in Christ were baptized.

So, Paul can say that Christ was put on in baptism, Galatians 3:27, and Peter can even say, "Baptism doth also now save us," 1 Peter 3:21. And Titus can say, "We were washed with the washing of regeneration," Titus 3:5. And it can be said that, "Our sins are washed away," in Acts 22:16. And in all of these cases we're not saying you're saved by water, but it just became the symbol of faith. And so,

in a sense, it was used synonymously.

And it's probably true that the Romans were very well aware of baptism and that's why in verse 3 he says, "Don't you know? Have you forgotten what your baptism symbolized?" That's the beauty of baptism. That's why I'm convinced that the only valid baptism is immersion because it's the only one that demonstrates so absolutely the entrance of the believer into utter unity and union with Jesus Christ, an immersing. He's saying, "Are you ignorant of the meaning of your baptism? You don't know that it symbolizes the spiritual reality of being immersed in Jesus Christ?" The sad tragic thing is that that figure became a reality for many people. The carnal mind always turns the symbol into the reality and eliminates the reality.

So, we see the first great truth. We are in union with Jesus Christ. Incredible thought, one with Him. I think Peter maybe says it as marvelously as it could be said in 2 Peter 1:3, "According as His divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness." When you were saved, His power gave you all things pertaining to life, that's real life, spiritual life, and godliness. And then verse 4, he says that, "We've been given exceeding great and rich precious promises that by these you might be partakers of the divine nature having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust." Salvation led you out of corruption and it made you partaker of the divine nature and equipped you with all that life and godliness could ever have. It's just a great truth. Now that's principle number one.

Let's look at principle number two, and we'll stop with this one. We are identified not only in Christ but particularly in His death and resurrection. Verse 3, "Know ye not that as many of us as were immersed into Jesus Christ were immersed into His death." Now let's look at that for a moment.

First of all, we were baptized or immersed into His death. What are we saying here? What we're saying, the first thing that happens when you're saved is you attend your own funeral. That's where it all begins. You die to sin. Now, look at verse 4. "Therefore - " and this verse just regrips the thought of verse 3, " - therefore we are buried with Him by baptism - " by the spiritual baptism; not the water " - into death that as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glorious power of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." Now, we are buried in His death and we rise in His resurrection. It's an incredible statement. "We are buried - " verse 4 " - with Him by baptism into death." Then you have a *hina* purpose clause in the Greek which means in order that we might be raised to walk in new life.

Now what is that saying? When you were saved - now listen to this, and you can't explain it ultimately, only in the simple sense. When you were saved, when you came to Jesus Christ and put your faith in Him, by some divine miracle you were placed into Jesus Christ. And you were taken back 2,000 years, and you died, and you were buried, and you were buried so that the old life could die and that you could rise to walk in what? Newness of life. A death took place and what comes out of

that grave is something very different than what went into that grave. "If any man be in Christ he is a new creation."

So, the purpose for you dying to sin was so that you might live to God. Now, beloved, I think this is a very simple truth. Christians are different. And so, when you ask the question, well, let's just go on sinning. No, no, no. You can't do that. It is not that you don't have permission; it is that you can't do it because you're in a different sphere. You can't go on living in sin. You can't have the constant same habitual remaining in sin that characterized your former life. It's going to be different.

"As Christ – " look at it in verse 4 " - was raised up from the dead by the glory," and the glory there refers to the sum of all God's perfections, His majesty, His power, His excellence. "As that was displayed in the resurrection of Jesus Christ, even so you're raised out of that grave to walk in newness of life." Notice it says there "even we also should walk in newness of life." It isn't the "should" of obligation, it is the "should" of divine accomplishment. You can put there "in order that we will walk in newness of life." We do walk in new life.

You know, I'm a Christian. I'm different than I used to be. That's right. And somebody simply said it this way, "I'm not what I ought to be, but I'm sure not what I was," right? And that's the whole point. I'm different. So when somebody comes along and says, "Well, I'm just going along my same old life but I just brought Jesus in." Uh-uh. You don't add Jesus like some divine salt to your human activity. This is a tremendous truth that when you come to Christ, you are immersed in His death and you rise to walk in new life. You are totally different. We die in Christ in order to live in Christ. We share His death in order to partake of His life. We are justified to be sanctified. They are inseparable realities.

Charles Hodge, that great theologian, said, "There can be no participation in Christ's life without a participation in His death. And we cannot enjoy the benefits of His death unless we are partakers of the power of His life." We must be reconciled to God in order to be holy and we cannot be reconciled without becoming holy."

So, as Christ died and rose, so His people die to sin and rise to God. As Christ's resurrection life was the certain consequence of His death, so the believer's holy life is the certain consequence of His resurrection and death to sin. And now we walk in newness of life.

What is that? What is newness of life? *Kainos*, not *neos*, not new in terms of chronology. New in terms of quality, a new kind of life, a new quality of life, not like the old life. Righteousness now becomes our pattern and, whereas in the past, it was all unmitigated sin, now there is the pattern of righteousness. Oh? Albeit, sin crops up here and there, doesn't it? We'll find out why, by the way, when we get to chapter 7, so hang on.

But we have a new life, a holy life, something has happened. The Bible speaks of this in such beautiful terms. Ezekiel 36 calls it a new heart. Ezekiel 18 calls it a new spirit. Second Corinthians 5 calls it a new creation. Galatians 6:15, a new creature. Ephesians 4:24, a new man. Revelation 2:17, a new name. Psalm 40 says we have a new song. Everything is new.

And notice what it says, "We walk in newness of life." Listen now, it isn't just a new creation, it is a new creation that lives differently. What does the word "walk" mean in the New Testament? It is the word for what? Daily spiritual conduct. When you become a Christian, you begin to walk in a different kind of life, and what kind of life did Jesus have? Holy life. If the old life was the quality of evil, the new life is the quality of righteousness.

Now, Paul affirms this great truth in verse 5 by using another analogy to sum up his thought. "For if we have been - " I love this, " – *sumphutos* if we have been grown together in the likeness of His death, we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection." I just can't tell you what that term does to me. The word means "to grow together." If we've been grown together with Jesus Christ. Later on in chapter 9 of Romans he talks about branches being grafted in. If we've been growing together; John talks about the vine and the branches. If we've been growing together with Christ, if it is His life in us, if it is Him in us, if it is His power in us bearing fruit, if it is Him with us, we have been moving together, growing together. If we grew together in His death, we grow together with Him in His resurrection.

Bishop Moule said, "We have received the reconciliation that we may now walk not away from God, as if released from a prison but with God as His children in His Son. Because we are justified, we are to be holy, separated from sin, separated to God; not as a mere indication that our faith is real and that therefore we are legally safe, but because we were justified for this very purpose that we might be holy. The grapes upon a vine are not merely a living token that the tree is a vine and is alive; they are the product for which the vine exists. It is a thing not to be thought of that the sinner should accept justification and then live to himself. It is a moral contradiction of the very deepest kind and cannot be entertained without betraying an initial error in the man's whole spiritual creed."

In other words, he says you can't have justification without sanctification. It's just exactly what Ephesians 2 says when it says, "You're saved by grace through faith," right? "Not of – " what? " - works, lest any man should boast," but you are God's workmanship, created anew in Christ Jesus, and it is ordained that you should walk in good works" right, as a result? You don't get saved by good works; you get saved to produce them. It's a marvelous concept.

Let me summarize now. A Christian is new, brand new. He has become something he never was before. It is not addition. It is transformation. File that somewhere because we're going to come back to that. It is not addition. It isn't that you get something you didn't have, and you keep what you did have. It is transformation. Being a Christian is not getting something new; it is becoming someone

new. It means we have died to sin in our new nature. Sin no longer is the abiding power in our life. Marvelous. And all of this is more than something God says about us; it's something God did for us. This is where we have to start.

Charles Wesley's words in the great hymn "And Can It Be" is a fitting conclusion. "Long my imprisoned spirit lay, fast bound in sin in nature's night; thine eye defused a quickening ray, I woke the dungeon flamed with light, my chains fell off, my heart was free." Now comes the punch line, "I rose, went forth – " what? " - and followed Thee." See, that's the key. See, Wesley knew that justification led to sanctification.

In his new book, *The Dynamics of Spiritual Life*, Richard Lovelace suggests that in contemporary Christianity there is a sanctification gap, he calls it. Well, he may have a sanctification gap, but God hasn't got any. If you came to Christ, you've been saved unto holiness. You're not the same. You're different. And if you're not different, you better examine yourself to see whether you're in the faith. Well, more next week. That's just the start. Let's pray.

Father, we feel like little children wandering around in the vast library of great truth, trying to find a primer that can reduce it for our simple minds. Help us, help us to see and hear what You're saying to us. And at least for tonight, to get the foundation that to be saved is to be different, to be dead in terms of having died to sin, to be alive to God and walking in a new kind of life. Thank You for that clear word. And we pray that You'll unfold the truth as we study it diligently, that we might be to the praise and glory of our Savior. We pray in His name. Amen.

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