

Romans 6 (Part 1): 1-14 - Baptized Into Christ's Death

Teacher: Pastor Paul LeBoutillier
Calvary Chapel Ontario

Romans chapter 6. We're going to read the first 14 verses and then we're going to pray, see what the Lord has for us here. *"What shall we say then? (Verse 1) Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? ² By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? ³ Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? ⁴ We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. ⁵ For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. ⁶ We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin; ⁷ For one who has died has been set free from sin.*

⁸ Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. ⁹ We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. ¹⁰ For the death he died, he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God. ¹¹ So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus. ¹² Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions. ¹³ Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness. ¹⁴ For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace." (ESV) Stop there. Let's pray.

Heavenly Father, minister grace and insight and understanding through Your Holy Spirit to us today and let the double edged sword of Your Word do Your work. We just open our hearts to learn from You today, to grow in our understanding of the Scriptures and to be filled with insight and truth in a time in this world where truth has stumbled in the streets. Fill us Lord God with understanding we pray. In Jesus' precious Name, amen.

I appreciated the fact that Ken, here at the end of worship, prayed about the times that we live in and the difficult season that we live in. It is difficult. And it begs the question, what should we be doing on a Sunday morning when we gather and— with the difficulty of the times in which you and I live.

I mean, the world is becoming increasingly hostile to Christians. And the question comes up like, So is it time now to change the way we do things? The things we talk about? Should we not be just studying through the Book of Romans on a Sunday morning?

I mean, maybe we should be preparing people for persecution. Maybe we should be talking about how to stand for Christ in a very difficult time of the world. But I'm comforted by the fact that Paul wrote this letter to the church in Rome during a time when the Church was greatly persecuted. Paul wrote this to Believers living in Rome when a guy by the name of Nero was the king, emperor, and he was a crazy man.

I mean, he was a crazy man— and he enjoyed killing Christians, as a matter of fact. He used to put him up on poles and set them on fire and use it to light his garden. That's the kind of guy Nero was. Nero is the man who will eventually call for the beheading of the very man who's writing this letter. And according to Church history, Paul will die under that reign.

And yet, when Paul wrote to the Church in Rome, he talked about our salvation. He talked about how we're saved and he talked about all the benefits of that salvation. That's what we're getting into here in chapter 6. I'm comforted by that, knowing that yes, even in times of difficulty, darkness and persecution, we plod on and we keep talking about the faith that we have in Christ and the power of that faith to change lives.

That's what Paul is dealing with here in chapter 6. And when you begin reading this chapter, if it sounds like you're catching Paul in the middle of a conversation, you're absolutely right; that is what's happening. He is right in the middle of a thought that he began in the earlier chapter, in chapter 5. And you'll remember that at the end of that chapter, he made an important statement that is now generating the information that he's bringing forth in chapter 6. Just so we can all be on the same page as to the statement that I'm referring to from chapter 5, I'm going to put it up on the screen for you. It's from Romans 5, verse 20, where he said these words,

Romans 5:20 (ESV)

...where sin increased, grace abounded all the more.

...where sin increased, grace abounded all the more.

And so what Paul basically was saying there in chapter 5 is that when sin was on the move and actually increasing in the world and in the culture that there is

a corresponding work of God's grace that doesn't just meet that sin, it goes beyond that sin.

It abounds. And those are Paul's words, where sin abounds, grace abounds. (Romans 5:20) How much? In an equal value? No, it abounds all the more. Right? And that is the statement that he made, and that is now what he is going to be using as a springboard for the comments that are coming here in Romans chapter 6. And what he's going to talk to you and I about, and I want to tell you this going into it so that we don't get lost.

He's going to talk about our relationship to sin. What is your relationship to sin now? You know, we know what our relationship was before we met Jesus. Paul actually wrote about that in the Book of Ephesians. Let me also put that Scripture up on the screen for you. Here's what he said. Here was your relationship with sin.

Ephesians 2:1-2 (ESV)

And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience—

You were dead (that pretty much says it, doesn't it? That says to you and I this was our relationship to sin before we met Jesus. We were dead) *in* (your) *trespasses and sins*, (he says) *in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air*, (that's Satan) *the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience—*

We were literally enslaved to the passions of our flesh. We didn't have the ability to say no to our flesh before Christ. We had— but Jesus, He's changed all that. But this was our previous relationship to our sinful nature. And then we came to Christ and put our faith in His work on the cross.

And it changed a whole lot of things about our life. But here's what it also changed— and this is what Paul's going to talk about here today. It changed our relationship to sin. And so he begins with a question. Look at verse 1 with me again. He says, “*What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound?*”

In other words, he's asking the question that he assumes that somebody might be forming in their mind. Well Paul, you said that where grace abounds— or excuse me— where sin abounds, grace much more abounds. So should we just sin?

Should we just give in to sin so that God's grace can abound? I mean, let's give Him something to do.

Have you ever talked to people who actually think it's God's job to forgive sins and it's theirs to give Him something to forgive? It sounds like a crazy sort of an idea, but I've heard it. I've actually had people look me right in the eye when confronted with something in their life that is unbiblical. I come back— and I've actually had someone say to me, Well... God's just going to have to forgive me; that's what He does. Yikes!

But who knows if the question that Paul is forming here is something that was actually asked of him; probably was. But he says here, so does that mean that we're just supposed to sin so that grace can abound?

If we gave this question maybe a little bit more of a modern twist, it might sound something like this: So you're saying that the more people sin, the more God's grace overflows. So why don't we just sin up a storm so God can be gracious? I mean, if all I have to do to be saved is believe, maybe that means I can just live the way I want. I can live my life however I want to live my life because the Bible says, just believe and you will be saved. Hey, what a great deal!

Paul is going to explain here now how the relationship between you and sin has changed since you came to Christ. In fact, he's going to show here how Believers now cannot any longer give into a life of sin. That's why he starts, in verse 2, by asking another question.

Look there in verse 2. The question is, “*How can we, (meaning believers) who died to sin, still live in it?*” How can we do that? Paul is asking how it's possible to live in sin, when in fact, we've died to sin. And our response is, when did we do that?

Do you understand that Paul is making a statement here without explaining where it came from? He's just talking; he's stating a fact. He says, by the way, did you know, don't you know that you died to sin? And we're all going, pfft, really? When did that— he doesn't— he's not giving any background. He's not giving any information. He's not giving the backstory of this thing to us at all. He's just saying, Hey, by the way, you died to sin.

Okay. All right. So when did we die to sin? Well, he goes on and he explains the how of how we died to sin. Look at verse 3 again. And I love how he opens

with these four words, “*Do you not know?*” This is typical of Paul in Romans. He wants you to know; he wants us to know about our salvation.

So he says, “*Do you not know...*” What do we not know? “*Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?*” So he starts off with, “*Do you not know...*” Well, here's the question: Did you know that?

I remember when I learned this, it was not instantaneous. In fact, I think it was probably about 4 or 5 years after I started walking with the Lord. I mean, seriously walking with the Lord, that I went to a Bible class with a friend of mine in downtown Seattle. We were living there at the time. And they were expounding in this class on the Book of Ephesians in ways that I had never heard the Bible expounded on before.

And this guy was talking about, this teacher was talking about, how when we come to Christ, we join him in His death. I'd never heard that before. That was a mind blowing sort of a thought to me. And I remember just thinking, whoa. The implications of this are huge. And my mind was literally spinning with the whole idea.

And so when Paul asks the question, “*Do you not know?*” There was a point in my life where I would have had to say, no, I didn't know that. I had no idea that was the case, but he says here that when you were “*baptized into Christ Jesus (you) were baptized into his death.*”

I thought when I came to Jesus, I was just forgiven of my sin. Well I was, but I figured that's as far as it went. Hey, I'm forgiven— and I was glad; I was like, Hey, I'm forgiven of my sins, praise the Lord! And then I come to find out that I've been “*baptized into his death.*”

Look, what he goes on to say in verse 4, “*We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.*”

Now, stop there for just a moment. Before we can understand what Paul is saying here, we have to understand a good working definition for the word baptism or baptized, or however Paul is using it specifically here.

Let me ask you— I'll start by asking you a question. Have you been baptized into Christ? Now when I ask that question, what people typically think I'm referring to is When were you baptized in water? But that's not what I'm asking. And

that's not what Paul is referring to. The reason we think that is because we've taken water baptism over the years and we've exalted the act over the meaning.

The meaning of water baptism has a— is greater than the act of water baptism. We'll talk about that, but the word baptism simply means 'to be immersed.' All right? To be baptized is to be immersed. And the Bible talks about several baptisms. Water baptism is one of them. There's baptism in the Spirit or by the Spirit, which is being immersed in the Spirit.

Do you know that the Bible even talks about being baptized into suffering? You don't hear much about that one, do you? I don't hear many people praying for that one either, but there is such a thing as being immersed in suffering.

When Paul is talking here about baptism, he's talking about the spiritual reality that you and I portray when we're baptized in water. But please understand Christians, water baptism— and what I'm talking about the act of water baptism— it is a portrayal of a greater reality. That's why we know that water baptism doesn't save people. It's what happens— it's the reality that saves you: being immersed into Christ. We immerse people in water to portray the fact that they've been immersed into Christ.

And the whole water baptism story is a beautiful, dramatic picture. I usually ask people before we— when we do our water baptism class, if any of them have ever been in drama of any kind in school or college or something like that. Some of them have, and I'll say, well, you know what it's like then to act out a story, and water baptism is a beautiful story that you're essentially acting out or portraying, but the act of water baptism is not what saves you; it's what you're portraying— the reality, the spiritual reality, of being immersed into Christ. That's what saves you because your sins are forgiven and you've accepted Jesus for what He did for you on the cross.

So understand that water baptism is a portrayal of a spiritual reality and that spiritual reality is what we're talking about here. Now, he's telling us that when you are immersed into Christ, you are joined with Him in various certain things. And one of the things you're joined with Christ in when you're immersed, or baptized into Christ, is you're joined with Him in His death.

Seems like a crazy sort of a thing to me, I remember when I got baptized in water. I did it when I was in my 20s. I didn't even understand this stuff but I went and I submitted to water baptism because— out of obedience. It's in the Word, but I remember at the time I didn't understand what I was doing. But I was telling a story. And every time we do a baptism, people tell a story.

What is that story? It's the story of Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection, and now how you are identified with and joining Him in those things. So we take people into the water, right? And they stand there, and what they're portraying now is the life without Christ.

They come into the water. Now, they're already born again, but they're still portraying this after the fact. So we bring them into the water. And the first thing that we do is we lay them back into the water and that portrays the fact that they have joined with Christ in His death.

And then when they're in the water for however short a time it is, that portrays that they have joined with Christ, literally merged with Him, in His burial. And then we bring them back up out of the water, and that signifies, portrays if you will, the spiritual reality of the fact that they have been raised with Christ into a new life. So it's this beautiful portrayal of a spiritual reality.

But again, water baptism itself, the act doesn't save people. You can get anybody you want, dunk them in water. It's not going to make any difference unless there has been a spiritual action that has gone along with that sort of a thing.

I mean, if water baptism saved people, we'd baptize people without their consent. We just go around and start tying them up with ropes and duct tape and hauling them in and dunking them in water and saying, there, you'll thank me someday. But what—right? I mean, if that's all it took? But that's not all it takes.

It's a heart situation. It's a coming to Christ. It's an opening one's heart completely to what He has done on the cross. And once that heart has been opened, the spiritual reality of being baptized into Christ takes place: Immersed into Jesus; joining Him in His death, burial, and resurrection.

Now, why is Paul bringing all this up? Because that resurrection part of it, of being joined with Christ, is not just for some great, wonderful day down the road when your body will be raised and resurrected. He's talking about a resurrection... today, a resurrection that you can enjoy, that you can take hold of today, August 2, 2015. He has a resurrection in mind for you.

Look at verse 4 again. Let me, let's read it here in your Bible. He says, "*We were buried therefore with him by immersion, (and that's what the baptism means) into death in order that, (or so that) just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might...*" be raised one day. No! It's not

what he says. He says, “... *so that we too might walk in newness of life.*” He's talking about your new relationship to sin.

Remember what we saw before from Ephesians? What was your relationship to sin? You were dead in it. Now you're dead to it. And you have a new relationship that allows you to walk in a new way, according to the plan of God, the purpose of God, the heart of God, and no longer according to the flesh.

This is the beauty of what has happened to you and I. This death that you and I entered into with Jesus, it was needed because we had to be dead to what once controlled us, which is the old man or the old woman, as the case may be. The old sinful person needed to die because a death, only a death, could set us free from the old life of the flesh. Only death could set us free.

What is the result again? You see that the end of verse 4 is that we “*might walk in the newness of life.*” And here's how Paul says it, if you go on in verse 5, look with me there. “*For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his.*”

What was His resurrection like? It was one of being raised victorious over the penalty of sin. He conquered sin, right? By His death, burial, and resurrection. By joining Him in His death, burial, and resurrection, we too are victorious. We emerge victorious over sin.

Let's keep reading. “*We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin, (the old man, whatever you want to call it) might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. For one who has died has been set free from sin.*” Stop there for a moment.

Here's— this is interesting language and Paul's going to develop it a little bit further, but he likens our previous relationship to sin to one of slavery. We were slaves. A slave doesn't have any choice. They live how their master determines they're going to live, and we were in slavery to our sinful nature. We had no choice in the matter. We simply obeyed our flesh.

But now by joining in Christ and His death, that relationship with slavery has been broken. Why? Because the slave is dead! When you're a slave, there's one way to get set free for sure, that's to die because you know that master has no more control over a dead slave.

Do you guys— are any of you into classic movies? I love classic movies. Raised my kids watching classic movies. They liked them— they went through an

interesting period of time in their lives where they liked them and then they would ask me when I said, Hey, let's watch a family movie. They'd say, is it in color? Please Dad, tell us it's in color, because I showed them all these black and white movies over the years.

There's a great movie back from 1960 called Spartacus. Who knows about Spartacus? Come on, put your hands up there proudly (Pastor Paul raises his hand) All right! You watch some of those old movies, too, and that's not even all that old. I mean, well, relatively speaking. But anyway, Spartacus is a movie about Roman times; slaves. And anyway, Kirk Douglas played Spartacus.

I won't do my Kirk Douglas impression, but he has a line in the movie that I always— I think is very cool. He says, *“death is the only freedom a slave knows; that's why we're not afraid of it.”* It's an interesting line, but it is nonetheless true as well, to what we're looking at here in this passage. Death is the only freedom that a slave knows.

And just as death releases a slave from their servitude, so also joining with Christ; being immersed into Jesus's death, we are set free from that previous relationship to sin that once dominated our lives, controlled our lives.

Paul— he's going to develop this a little bit more fully in a few verses, but first look at verse 8 in your Bible. *“Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. ⁹ We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion, (or mastery or power, your Bible may say, over him) For the death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God.”*

Jesus can't die again. That's the point that he's saying here. Because death has been defeated. You with me? Jesus can't die again because death has been defeated. In the same way you and I, when we enter into His death, we enter into that victory over sin. And we stand in that ability to release the power of sin to control and dominate our lives.

And then this is— this next verse we're going to read. Pay attention here; this is important. You might want to underline this in your Bible. This is a key verse to understanding this passage.

Verse 11. *“So...”* You can always tell when the word, so starts off the verse, this is an application verse. *“So you also must consider yourselves, (your Bible may say, reckon yourselves) dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.”*

In other words, exercise your faith and believe that you have entered into the death of Christ and that sin no longer has control over your life. I'm just going to let that one sink in for just a moment.

See, this is one of the reasons why Paul was such— he was criticized so much for his gospel. People said to him, Paul, you're crazy. You're crazy, man. You're telling people that the path to holy living comes without rules. It's ridiculous. The path to holy living comes by faith. Just believing that we've been set free from the tyranny and the control of the sinful nature. And Paul says, yeah, that's exactly what I'm saying.

And should that surprise you and I at all? How are you saved? For— by faith, right? By grace through faith. Isn't that how you're saved? Are you working for yourself? I hope not. I hope you're saved by grace through faith. It's amazing how many people understand that... and yet when they look at the sin in their lives, that's a whole different sort of way of approaching.

They say, Oh yeah, I'm saved by grace. I mean I know that I exercised my faith that what Jesus did on the cross was for me. And now I'm saved; my sins are forgiven. But when it comes to sin, that's where the hard work begins. And people will say that. I mean they'll literally say to me, well I'm really working on this area of my life.

You know what Paul would say? He would say to you that when you came to Christ, you literally joined with Him in His death. And by putting your faith in the fact of that reality, you will begin to see that manifested in your life on an increasing basis— if you will, through faith, believe that you have been set free from the power of sin.

Here's the problem, you guys. We don't believe that we've been set free by the power of sin. We don't believe it. Let's just— I mean, you talk to somebody long enough about what's going on in their life and the sin that they struggle with and you will hear it come out of their mouth eventually in some way, shape or form: This thing has got me by the jugular, and I can't move and I can't get free.

And what they're saying to you is, I am not free. You know? Well, when we come to Christ, we are set free. That's what Paul is saying here. We are set free from the tyranny and the control of our sinful nature. There's a new relationship for the Believer and sin. And through the death of Jesus Christ, we are now made alive to God, and we are dead to sin. Paul says, Now believe it! Reckon yourselves dead to sin; believe that you're dead to sin. It's not wishful thinking, you guys. It's not the kind of thinking like, I believe it, I believe it. Like, (Pastor

Paul sings) when you wish upon a star..., sort of the Disney sort of, I believe, I hope, oh, I wish, I hope, I hope, I wish. That whole Disney sort of a mentality—that's what has captivated our hearts. We all grew up with it. And when Paul says, Now believe it! We're like, okay, I believe, I believe. No, this is not wishful thinking; it's not the same thing.

Believe that it's done. Believe that He did it. Believe that He set you free, that it's real, true, in place; ready to be put into action in your life. If you will exercise faith, Paul says, consider—reckon yourselves dead to those old ways.

Why don't we believe it? Well, because sin is constantly knocking on our door, right? And we hear it every day. I don't get one day's rest from sin. Not one day. It's constantly reminding me of its presence in my life. And that—and so the enemy loves to just dance into that little party and remind me that, you're—you are as much under the control of sin as you ever were, Buddy. So don't go believing this hogwash in the Bible that somehow you've been set free from your sinful nature. Good grief!

That's one of—the enemy loves to convey that sort of a thing to you and I... and we believe it. We gulp it down; hook, line and sinker. But we need to start changing our way of thinking, believing that we really have been set free.

Here's how Paul describes the walking out of that faith. Look at verse 12. *“Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions.”* He's saying you've been set free from this slavery, so... walk it out!

Now, am I saying here that a Christian can't walk back into slavery? Actually, I'm not saying that. This is an interesting thing about being set free. Jesus has set you and I free from the tyranny and the control of the sinful nature. I've said that how many times already this morning?

But do you guys understand what freedom really means? Do you understand that to be free, you have to also be free to choose what would make you again a slave? If you can't choose sin, you are not really free. Do you understand that? Do you understand that He hasn't taken away the option of choosing sin? He just simply has made you free to choose the right way now.

Before you knew Christ, you had no choice in the matter. Now you have a choice in the matter. People think sometimes, well if God set me free, then why do I keep sinning? Because you choose to. You choose to. You choose to sin. That's the only explanation. It's the only explanation in light of a Scripture from

the Book of Galatians chapter 5, verse 1. Let me put this on the screen for you. Paul writes to the churches there and says, Listen guys, it's,

Galatians 5:1 (ESV)

For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.

For freedom that Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.

What is Paul saying here to us in this Scripture? It's possible to go back and take on a position as a slave. It's possible. You've been set free. But you can— you're now free to say, Jesus, I follow You. But you're also free to say: Sin, I'm going to follow you. If you aren't free to say that, you're not really free. And the Bible says, Him whom the Son sets free is free indeed. Right? (John 8:36) Free. That means free— completely.

Do you understand then that freedom means I can now choose bad stuff if I want to. But I can also choose God if I want to. So that's why Paul writes to the Galatians and says, So guys, now that you're free, just understand this..., he makes this beautiful statement: *“It's for freedom that God has set you free.”*

It's not for slavery. He didn't set you free so you could go back and be a slave. He set you free so you could be free, so you could walk in freedom. You see? And so Paul is appealing, in that particular case with the Galatians, he's appealing to them about not taking on the yoke of slavery as it relates to following the Law and the conditions of the Law and that sort of thing.

Paul ends this section here. Look at verse 13 with me once again. He says, *“Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness.”* You've got to figure out what that means in your life. Don't do it. Don't present who you are, what you are, to sin— just to be used by it, *“but rather present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life* (because you have, you've) *been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness.”*

And then I love this last statement. And this is going to be the spring port into next week: *“For sin will have no dominion over you since you are not under law but under grace.”* Oh, Paul, you stepped in at this time. What do you mean, We're *“not under law, we're under grace.”* What is that all about?

You can't talk about righteous living Paul without the Law! If you take the Law away, all you're left with is lawlessness. Aha! Paul says, no, there's way more to it, my beloved friend in Christ. And we're going to talk about it. And that's what Paul is going to develop in the coming chapters. How can you and I live in a way that's pleasing to God, apart from rules and regulations bound up in the Law, since we are not under the Law, but are under grace?

That's what we'll deal with next time.