

**Title: *United with Christ***  
**Series: *Romans – Living Free***  
**Text: Romans 6:1-14**

**Review:**

- The first chapters of Romans show us that all people need God – both the religious and nonreligious. This assertion is summarized in Romans 3:23 “All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God”
- The next section of the book of Romans teaches that it is through faith, not works, that we secure right standing with God. This is the doctrine of ‘justification by faith’ and is a gift of God’s grace in Jesus Christ
- Chapter five transitions from the themes of original sin and justification by faith and describes the new life we now have. We are said to now reign in life.
- Today, we look in chapter six which shows us the freedom we can experience over sin, the law and ultimately even death.

**→There is freedom available to every person here today from the slavery, bondage and dominion of our ‘old man’**

**Text: Romans 6:1-14** (Ask someone to read the text or read it in unison as a group)

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

- As you reflect on this passage, what questions or “challenges” might the average Christian grapple with in these verses? Perhaps you can share from your own experience. (Note: one idea here is the paradox between the truth of our freedom from sin and the reality of our continued struggle with sin)
- How would you respond to someone who argues, “If grace increases as a result of my sin, why should I give up my sin? God is going to forgive me anyway.”
- What about the Muslim that argues that the “grace” of Christianity is a “cheap grace” because it doesn’t require the sinner to change his/her behavior to be accepted by God?

**I. No misunderstanding about sin – Romans 6:1, 2**

- 1. What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?*
- 2. Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?*

At the end of chapter 5 in verse 20, Paul says that the law of God was given in order that sin might increase so that *‘where sin abounded, grace abounded much more.’*

Paul wants to be perfectly clear that once you are saved – as a free gift – you are not to continue in sin since your works neither add nor subtract from grace.

**A. Wrong thinking.** Some may say, “If God’s grace is magnified by sin, then I will sin more boldly so that I might more abundantly show forth God’s amazing grace towards me. If God’s grace is magnified because of what a sinful wretch I am, then I’ll become

even a worse wretch!" The hymn says, "*Amazing grace . . . that saved a wretch like me.*"

**B. God Forbid!** Every true believer who knows the grace of God should respond to this in only one way: "God forbid – perish the thought!" 10 times Paul heads off a wrong conclusion about the law, sin or God's righteousness by saying 'God forbid!'

Sin remains a big deal. Throughout history people have taken biblical truth and **distorted** it through a lack of biblical understanding and selfish desires.

- **Legalism.** Law-based codes of conduct; rules and regulations, dos and don'ts. Performance orientation. Obey rules rather than have a relationship with God. It gives a sense of self-righteousness and judgment of others.
- **Antinomianism** (Greek *ἀντί*, "against" + *νόμος*, "law"), is the idea that we are under no obligation to obey the laws of ethics or morality. *Antinomianism* is the polar opposite of legalism since it is the heresy that teaches Christianity is actually anti-law - that Christians are above the law and thus the Law of God has no real authority over us.

## II. Baptized into Christ – Romans 6:3-5

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- Ask several group members to share briefly about their baptism experience. How was it meaningful or significant for you? What did you experience during your baptism or in the days following?
- As we look again at this passage, what is the significance of baptism for the believer? Discuss this. Ask group members to dig into the passage again and identify various truths about the significance of baptism (see the various points in the outline below).

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

*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.*

*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,*

### A. Identified with Christ

In baptism we are united with Christ – 'grafted' into Him. You are not alone. It means immersed.

In four different ways baptism is used in Scripture – baptized into Christ, baptized in water both before and after John, baptized in the Holy Spirit, baptized in fire,

Baptism is a sacred act that has an outward element and an inward grace. Baptism is full identification with Christ. When a person receives salvation by faith, the person has identified himself as Christ's very own and baptism is a complimentary step of faith demonstrating that fact.

1. Does something spiritually happen at baptism or is its purpose only symbolic? Yes, something happens. Through the Spirit, you are united with Christ in a real way.

Baptism is a step of faith. Baptism is the physical demonstration of your salvation – you unite with Christ. **An outward act of an inward grace.**

**READ:** You might want to read the following verses, sharing the reading among group members, and ask the group to identify the various dimensions of what it means to be baptized “*in Christ*” from these verses. This could be a powerful exercise that is edifying to the group.

**Gal. 3:27** *For all of you who were **baptized into Christ** have clothed yourselves with Christ*

- *In Christ - We are a new creation 2 Corinthians 5:17*
- *In Christ - We are created to do good works Ephesians 2:10*
- *In Christ - We will be made alive 1 Corinthians 15:22*
- *In Christ - We are free from condemnation Romans 8:1*
- *In Christ - We are reconciled to God Ephesians 2:13*
- *In Christ - We are sons of God Galatians 3:26-27*
- *In Christ - We are free Galatians 2:4*
- *In Christ - We always triumph 2 Corinthians 2:14*
- *In Christ - We are blessed with every spiritual blessing Ephesians 1:3*
- *In Christ - We are seated with Him Ephesians 2:6-7*
- *In Christ - We are righteous, holy and redeemed 1 Corinthians 1:30*
- *In Christ - We have purpose Philippians 3:13-14*
- *In Christ - We have eternal hope 2 Timothy 2:10*

We are crucified, buried, resurrected, ascended, and seated *with* Christ!

**Baptism initiates our new life in Christ, receives us into the local church and empowers us over sin.**

2. Believer's baptism. The Bible teaches believer's baptism, i.e. each of us is to believe in Christ and then be baptized. Paul puts great emphasis on personal faith – believing, speaking, walking – and nowhere indicates that saving faith is imparted through water baptism as in baptismal regeneration.

Paul repeatedly emphasized that it is faith that saves and the book of Acts shows us when people believed they immediately were baptized. Salvation is always in the context of hearing the Word of God preached. The following were baptized:

Acts 2:41 three thousand at Pentecost  
Acts 8:12-13 Simeon the sorcerer.  
Acts 8:36, 38 Ethiopian eunuch  
Acts 9:18 Paul  
Acts 10:47-48 Cornelius's house  
Acts 16:15 Lydia  
Acts 16:33 Philippian jailer  
Acts 18:8 Crispus and the Corinthians  
Acts 19:5 Ephesians

Faith and baptism are inseparable – as if the same action. **1 Pet. 3:21** *And corresponding to that, baptism now saves you-- not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience-- through the resurrection of Jesus Christ*

## **B. In baptism you enter into Jesus death**

**In baptism we cut off our allegiance to the world in a very real way.** It is a severing of all links to the ways of this world – the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life. We are dead to the stimuli of this age of Adam.

**In water baptism, the baptizee surrenders to a baptizer**– just as in the spiritual realm you surrender to the lordship of a Savior.

Baptism is a dying to the old life, the old impulses and the old ways of doing things. It declares a new allegiance.

- Illustration: In some countries there is little persecution for your faith unless you take public baptism. I heard years ago of an Indian man who was baptized and his family watched from one shore and his church family from another. After he arose from the water, his family turned their back on him and cut him off from all family contact from that point onward!

In a sense we live by dying. The only way to save us the patient is to kill us and then resuscitate with new life.

- **A dead man can't sin.** A dead man can't get offended. A dead man does not seek his own way. Not that there is not temptation but our relationship to sin has completely changed.

## **C. In baptism you are given power over sin**

Whereas, the baptism in the Holy Spirit is about power for ministry. The Holy Spirit is involved in both but they have different purposes.

**Romans 6:7** *For he who has died has been freed from sin*

**Romans 6:18** *And having been set free from sin, you become slaves of righteousness*

Therefore, remember your baptism every day. That is what Luther taught his disciples – live your life as a child of God who has died to sin with Christ in his death and been raised to new life with him through His resurrection.

Paul speaks of our identification with Christ as **positional truth**; however, this truth works its way out in our lives until the day of our natural death.

#### **D. In baptism you walk in newness of life**

**Romans 6:4** *...even so we also should walk in newness of life.*

Paul is here teaching that when we identify with Christ through we walk in newness of life – a new quality of life in the here and now...

“Should walk” is in the **subjunctive** mood – which describes a probable or potential action. In other words it is not a statement of fact – it is conditional.

This newness of life is a taste of our future resurrection life. In verse 5 the verb is in the *future tense* – so this points to the promise that we will also – one day - be united with Christ in a future resurrection.

- It is like the rising of the sun – at dawn it is considered day but not yet fully day. We taste of the kingdom now but it also ‘not yet’.

### **III. Reckon yourself dead to sin - vv. 11-13**

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

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

**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.*

Since we know the positional truth of being united with Christ what are we to do? Sin has lost its mastery but has it lost its appeal? Its deceit? Its allure? No.

The power of sin is like a mad dog that attacks you every time you walk through its territory. The dog has a vicious threatening bark, huge canine teeth and muscles that ripple when it runs. The only thing is that after you are united with Christ he is put a

leash. He can threaten you and taunt you but if you walk away he can not chase you down!

The battle against sin is very real. However, now we have a Savior and His grace as our advocate and not the Law and condemnation

### **Reckon yourselves to be dead.**

#### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

- “Reckon yourselves” is the first command of chapter six. What do you think Paul means when he says “reckon yourselves dead to sin”?
- How do you explain this in light of our present-day struggle with the temptation to sin?
- In practical terms, how can a person “reckon themselves dead to sin” and disempower the “reign” of sin in their lives?

It is a mathematical term: calculate, count, take these facts into account and believe them.

***Reckon* – remember God’s truth and act upon it in faith**

The verb is in the *present tense*: we are to keep on reckoning, day by day, moment by moment.

Reckon means to remember and act upon that remembrance. In Hebrew thought the idea of ‘remembering’ is not to recollect but to let a past event effect the now.

Reckoning is a constant duty as we walk by faith. The word *reckon* is a faith word. By faith the believer must count on God’s truth and claim them as his very own. It is not enough just to know the facts. The facts must be personally appropriated by faith.

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:** Pastor Dan suggested that one way of “reckoning ourselves dead to sin” is to personally appropriate or activate the truth of God in regards to sin – “*do it before the battle so that during the battle you are strong.*” What do you think he meant by this? How do you do this in practical ways?

Two extremes regarding our relationship with sin: 1) Sinless perfection – I will never consciously sin and 2) Sinless imperfection – I cannot stop sinning.

**2. Present your members as instruments of warfare.** An alternative rendering of the word ‘instruments’ is the word ‘weapons’. The picture here is of a real contest but one in which you have been given better weapons than before.

The thought is that of gladiators fighting one another to the death. You are one of the gladiators given superior spiritual weapons to engage sin.

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:** What does it mean to “present your members as instruments of warfare [or righteousness]”? What are some ways you can do this in practical terms?

#### IV. Under grace and not the law – v. 14

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

**DISCUSSION QUESTION:** How does the reality that we are under grace and not under the legalism of the law impact us in our “fight” against sin? Can anyone share a personal example of how this has made a difference in your own life?

This summarizes everything. There is an old life – under the law – and there is a new life – under grace. You can’t serve two masters or be citizens of two countries.

The verb ‘*shall not*’ is a future tense verb as in 5:5 and 5:8 - both of which address our future in the resurrection.

He is saying that in the end you will need not be judged by law for you can be declared righteous by faith – that’s living under grace.

John Bunyan wrote of the contrast between law and grace in this way:

*Run, John, run! The law commands,  
But gives me neither feet or hands.  
Far grander news the gospel brings--  
It bids me fly and gives me wings!*

#### V. Closing:

*Knowing* – is used three times in our text. *Reckoning* – is used only once but it is a continual action verb. It emphasized we must know some things and then continually and actively apply them by faith. And finally *yielding* – surrender everything to God’s lordship.

**APPLICATION:**

- First, ask if there is anyone in the group who has not yet had the chance to be baptized as a public declaration of their new life in Christ? Encourage these people to be baptized as soon as possible. You may want to assist them in making arrangements to participate in the church’s next baptism or even consider baptizing them as a life group.
- Break up into groups of 2-3 to pray for each other in areas of struggle where you need to appropriate the grace of God in a greater measure.