

"Dead To Sin, Alive In Christ"

Portions contributed by [Kenneth Sauer](#).

Psalms 116:1-2, 12-19

Romans 6:1-4, 8-14, 20-23

When I gave my life over to Jesus Christ...you know, deciding to die to self and live for God that is...I was convinced that I would never sin again. And I didn't...well, at least for the first few hours.

Our passage for this morning can be kind of troubling for some. It can almost give off the impression that Christians don't sin, and if Christians don't sin: wow!!! I guess I'm not a Christian!!!

But that is not what Paul is getting at in this passage. Because, if we were to go back a few verses to Romans Chapter 5, Paul is describing how the Law is in place in order to show us that we are, indeed, sinners.

It's there to show us that we can't save ourselves, we must rely completely on Jesus' sacrifice for our sins, **"because while we were still sinners Christ died for us."**

You know, the more we read and understand God's words, the more we study the Law of God, the more we realize how far we fall short.

Paul explains that through the disobedience of Adam in the Garden of Eden, sin and death entered the world. But then he goes on to say that through the obedience of One Person--Jesus Christ--LIFE and GRACE--has now entered the world. **"So now the righteous requirements necessary for life are met for everyone through the righteous act of [Jesus Christ],"** Paul explains in Romans 5:18.

Then he goes on to say that the Old Testament Law **"stepped in to amplify"** just how sinful and lost we are, and then he writes: **"but where sin increased, grace multiplied even more."**

In other words, the more we see just how sinful and fallen we are--the more we understand just how much God's grace has saved us, through God's love for us!!!!!!

"While you were at your darkest, I loved you." That is an interpretation of Romans 5:8...not of any Bible that I have seen, but the description I have seen in a few different reading that are trying to describe that verse. And that is because, in essence, that is what God says to us. That is how much God loves us!!!

You see, long before we even thought of God--God loved us and died for us!!!

God loves us even in our darkest most sordid moments of our lives. And because God loves us--even at our worst, we can love ourselves; we can love God; we can love others!!! And, and...we are transformed by accepting this love and believing in this love!!!!

If someone knows they are loved, they act, feel and are a lot different than if they believe that they are condemned, hated, worthless, you name it. But no one is worthless. No matter who we are and no matter what we have done--God loves us just the way we are!!!

And Praise God for that!!!

You see, that is what Paul is explaining. But it's easy to misunderstand this. So Paul says in Romans 6:1, **"So what are we going to say? Should we continue sinning so grace will multiply? Absolutely not!"**

I read a story from Pastor Kenneth Sauer, where he explained a trip that his aunt went on. This is the way he describes his aunt's story. He says, "My aunt told me a story about how, on an airplane ride she sat next to a Christian man. They got along very well, and talked about God and faith the entire flight.

As the plane descended toward their destination, the man turned to my aunt and asked her if she would like to get a hotel room when they land. My aunt was floored, and asked, 'After all this talk about Christianity and Jesus?'

The man's reply, 'We are saved by grace. That means we can do anything we want.'"

So many people feel and think this way, and I believe that this man, and all of those people, are all kind of missing the point just a bit...don't you think? Well, what makes it even worse, is that we all do that at times as well.

Paul writes: "all who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death...Therefore, we were buried together with him through baptism into his death, so that just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too can walk in newness of life."

We "CAN walk in newness of life."

You see, just as Jesus Christ was raised from the dead, we, who are dead in our sins, can be raised to new life in Christ. Sin is a glorified lie of the devil. It may look good and right. It may smell appealing. It may seem to make sense. But all it does, is leave us unfulfilled and unhappy.

Sin leaves us dead inside. And so, we continue on the never-ending trek in search of something that will make us happy.

Have you ever bought a new car, thinking, "Oh boy. Now that I have this new car, every time I get behind the wheel and take it for a drive--my life is going to be so much better"? Well, that eventually wears off pretty quick, does it not? It's the same thing with sin.

You see, we might think it will fill the void, but it's just empty calories.

Jesus came to give us life and give it to us in the full!!! Jesus came so that we can live the lives we were created to live...Jesus came so that we can be fulfilled, and make a positive difference during our short stay on this earth.

That is what life is all about!!! That is what gives us a skip in our step!!!

Notice, in verse 4...Paul says that we were **"buried together"** with Jesus Christ, **"so that just as Christ was raised from the dead...we too can WALK in newness of life."**

Paul says we **"can WALK in newness of life."**

To **"walk in newness of life"**, well that means to put our faith into action. It means, journeying with Jesus. It means doing what Jesus did, and doing what Jesus is calling us to do. It means, too put love into action...**"the love of God [that] has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us."**

When we have faith in the love that God has for us, that brings about a radical change in our identity...and it's a change that has implications for every aspect of our lives.

It's not a demand that we accept this change--this love--but it's a glorious possibility--to be alive in God!!!

And when we are **"alive in God,"** we are free to love ourselves, to love others, and to love God. We are free to be the people we were created to be. We are free to be happy and alive at last!!!

As Paul writes in Galatians 5:1: **"It's for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery."**

To be a slave, as Paul understands it, is to surrender our lives to the control of another. And when slavery is defined this way, we have to face it: for we are all slaves of one kind or another.

What are all of you a slave to? Who or what is your master?

You know, it has been said that some people are "slaves to fashion, and fashion is a fickle master indeed. Every season brings a new set of requirements, new clothing and accessories to be purchased, new trends to be adopted. And when we are slaves to fashion, sometimes we look fabulous; other times we may look ridiculous."

Some people are slaves to fitness, arranging their lives around workouts. Some folks have pledged allegiance to wealth.

But Jesus says, "No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money [or stuff]."

If you want to know who your master is, pay attention to what occupies your thoughts and how you spend your time and money. Because you see, we are all serving something or someone. The passage from Romans invites us to ask: "**Whom do I serve?**"

Paul sees only two possible masters: God or sin...Jesus or the devil.

He sees nothing wrong with having a master--everyone has one. It is whom we serve that makes the difference.

New Testament scholar David Bartlett puts it this way: "There are loyalties that liberate."

In other words, the only way to win is to surrender to God.

As the old hymn says: "Make me a captive, Lord, and then I shall be free."

Paul writes: "When you were slaves to sin, you were free from the control of righteousness. What consequences did you get from doing things that you are now ashamed of? The outcome of those

things is death. But now that you have been set free from sin and become slaves to God, you have the consequence of a holy life, and the outcome is eternal. The wages that sin pays are death, but God's gift is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Theologian Shawnthea Monroe shares the following: "When I was a teenager, I had a creative way to keep myself out of trouble. When friends would call and ask me to do something I knew was questionable, I found a way to say 'no' without losing face or popularity. I would ask my mother's permission, but add, 'I need you to tell me no.'

She would say no, so I could say to my friends, 'My mom won't let me go.'

As a teenager, surrendering control to my mother allowed me to do the right thing without a struggle. This is the strange yet wonderful logic of Paul's theology of salvation. God is on our side and has our best interests at heart. If we devote ourselves to God's will, God will lead us to abundant life."

I want you all to never forget that God is on our side. Jesus didn't come and die to make our lives difficult or to put a burden around our necks. Jesus came to lift the burden...Jesus came to give us a way out--He paid the **'price that was on our head'** because of sin, by His death on the Cross!!!

All we must do is accept what He has done, believe it--believe that God loves us THAT much--and then live into being the people God has created us to be!!!

In verse 11 Paul writes: "**...you should consider yourselves dead to sin but alive for God in Christ Jesus.**"

For those who give their lives to Jesus, there is a **"before"** and an **"after."**

Before, we were slaves to sin, without even the hope that we could do what is right. After...after we have the opportunity to truly live and to be "**alive to God in Christ Jesus.**" Let's not miss this opportunity!!!

Amen!!!