

Message #21

Romans 6:11-14

Most people have a favorite sport. It may be baseball, football, basketball, hockey, running, auto racing, golf, swimming, tennis. Now there is this new sport called pickle ball. I initially thought this was a game where you threw dill pickles at the opponents like a dodge ball competition.

When I was back in High School my best sport was baseball. I played varsity baseball for three years and was a pretty good fast ball hitter. In fact, after high school, I played city league ball here in Kalamazoo for a while. Now the reason I bring this up is because every year I look forward to the baseball playoffs. Mary will tell you that during playoffs, there are at least one game, maybe two games on every night. This probably is a flesh problem or flesh addiction but at least I am confessing it.

Now what amazes me about playoff baseball is how much people identify with the team. People who have never stepped foot on a baseball diamond completely identify themselves with the team and they become very emotional and elated when their team wins and depressed when their team loses.

People actually view the team's victory as their victory. They view the team's win as their win. They view the team's success as their success. They view the fact that the team's championship is their championship.

That kind of mental and emotional connection and identification is exactly what is needed by the people of God, when it comes to having victory over sin.

Since we all have a flesh and since we are all sinners, what is the key to our victory? How do we have victory over sin? How do we defeat it? How do we beat this opponent so we end up champions for God?

Well, if you look to most religious people, they have come up with all kinds of ways they say will give you victory over sin:

- 1) One group says come forward in a service and walk an aisle and that will do it.
- 2) One group says deprive yourself from enjoyable things and become an ascetic and that will do it.
- 3) One group says isolate yourself from the world—people, places and things—that will do it.
- 4) One group says keep our laws and our legalistic rules and regulations and that will do it.
- 5) One group says don't admit you do sin and just ignore it and never face it—that will do it.
- 6) One group says have monthly meetings with people doing the same thing and that will do it.

Frankly, none of this will work. One may be very positive and very successful and really try hard, but one will not ever have victory over sin. That is not my opinion; that is what Paul writes.

The greatest theologian of the first century was the Apostle Paul. He had been personally taught the Gospel by Jesus Christ, Himself (Gal. 1:11-12). Now when we look at Romans 6:11, it is very clear that God and Paul want us having victory over sin and right here we get a big clue as to how that will happen:

THE KEY TO A BELIEVER HAVING VICTORY OVER SIN IS TO MENTALLY CONSIDER THE POSITIONAL IDENTIFICATION WE HAVE THROUGH JESUS CHRIST BY THE GRACE OF GOD.

The key to victory over sin is not to focus on us, but to identify ourselves with Jesus Christ. God wants us to completely identify ourselves with what Jesus Christ did and His victory because this is the key to our victory.

There are two critical keys to having victory over sin that are clearly developed in these verses:

KEY #1 – Carefully calculate and identify yourself with your position in Christ. **6:11**

The first key to victory is to use your mind to identify yourself with Jesus Christ. He is our eternal champion and we need to identify ourselves with Him.

Notice how **verse 11** begins “even so.” That adverb is critical because this informs us that God wants us to think about ourselves in the same way He thinks about us in our connection to what His Son did and how we are linked to Him.

Jesus Christ went to that cross and took our sin with Him. He died and our condemnatory sin died with Him and He arose and we arose with Him and have a new life and new status with God.

The next word in **verse 11** after “even so” is “consider.” That word (*logizomai*) is the word from which we get our English word “logistics” or “logarithm.” This word refers to non-emotional very careful calculation. The Greek word emphasizes very logical mental action. The word literally means to carefully calculate, consider, count and compute (G. Abbott-Smith, *Greek Lexicon*, p. 270).

What God wants us to do is to carefully calculate the fact that Jesus Christ has positionally set us free from our Adamic condemnatory sin and position and by His grace we have been totally and completely identified with Jesus Christ. Christ’s victory is our victory. His death is our death. His resurrection is our resurrection. His status with the Father is our status with the Father.

We are to “consider ourselves dead to sin.” People are very confused about this because most people miss this key point.

- 1) Does this mean we have the responsibility to die to sin? This has nothing to do with our responsibility.
- 2) Does this mean we must die to sin and never sin again? We have a sin nature that does sin.
- 3) Does this mean we just ignore our sin and don’t see ourselves as a sinner? That lives a lie.
- 4) Does this mean we think our sin nature is eradicated? That is delusional.
- 5) Does this mean we are dead as long as sin is not dominating us? This is about past, not present.
- 6) Does this mean as long as I think I’m dead to sin, I am? That is deranged theology.

What this actually means is we begin to have victory over sin by very carefully calculating what it is that Jesus Christ accomplished on that cross. He went to that cross and took our sin with Him. He went to that cross and took our eternal condemnation with Him and when we believe on Him, we are so identified with Him by God’s grace that we are continually in a living relationship with God.

This kind of identification thinking is a big key to us having victory over sin. This is very careful thinking, calculation and computation.

Now notice the first word of **verse 12**, the conjunction “therefore” (oun). This is a conjunction that expresses “simple sequence” (*Ibid.*, p. 328). **So verse 12 introduces us to what is next in the sequence key of having victory over sin.**

KEY #2 – Carefully make practical choices that are consistent with our status in Grace. **6:12-14**

There are three practical choices that we are to continually and habitually make in the matter of having victory over sin:

Choice #1 - We are to make a choice not to continually let sin reign in our bodies. **6:12**

This challenge may only be made to a believer. We must always be alert to sin approaching us in our body and in our lives and we need to continually attack it via honest recognition and confession. We should make sure there is no sin continually dominating us or reigning over us.

Now the word “reign” is one that refers to something that rules us. This word was used of a king who had total authority and power over a kingdom. The particular verb that is used here (present tense with negative prohibition) indicates that this action was in progress and needed to be stopped.

Paul is challenging the believers to stop letting sin rule over them continually. **Now the specific area where sin can rule is not over our position in Christ, but over our mortal body.** Sin cannot ever reign over our immortal soul that has been saved by Jesus Christ because we are completely baptized into Christ. But sin can potentially reign over our mortal body.

Sin wants to have total authority over our life as long as we are in our body.

Sin is out to dominate us and control us in a supreme way.

The way this will attack is through “lusts.” Paul’s point is making sure that sin does not dominate your life. You don’t want to live your life being ruled by lusts.

This is not discussing sinless perfectionism, but this is discussing preventing something from reigning over you. Frankly, there is no such thing as sinless perfection for a believer who is living in his mortal body. That point is made clear from many passages of Scripture, in both the O.T. and N.T.:

- 1) I Kings 8:46 - “When they sin against Thee (for there is no man who does not sin)...”
- 2) Psalm 14:3 - “There is no one who does good, not even one.”
- 3) Proverbs 20:9 - “Who can say I have cleansed my heart, I am pure from my sin?”
- 4) II Chronicles 6:36 - “...for there is no man who does not sin...”
- 5) Psalm 143:2 - “And do not enter into judgment with Thy servant, for in Thy sight no man living is righteous.”
- 6) Romans 3:23 - “for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”
- 7) James 3:2 - “For we all stumble in many ways.”
- 8) I John 1:8 - “If we say we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us.”

No one is perfect. In fact, one of the great promoters for godliness is the knowledge of our potential godlessness.

Satan wants to keep people from admitting the truth that they are poor, wretched, blind sinners (Matt. 9:12-13).

What Paul is addressing here is the potential of a believer being dominated and controlled by sin through various lusts. Paul says in view of your position, stay awake and alert to this. Keep careful guard and watch over yourself. Do not make choices to permit sin to dominate your life as long as you live in your mortal body. This will be a lifelong battle, but this is a battle that must be fought and victory is possible.

Choice #2 - We are to make a choice not to be continually involved in unrighteousness. **6:13a**

Just because one is positionally set free does not mean one is practically set free. One may be enslaved to sin for years. Paul says don't continually present your members to things unrighteous. The verb "present" is one that means to continually make a place for or a provision for something (*Ibid.*, pp. 345-346).

Specifically what one is not to make unrighteous provisions for are the members of your body. The members of the body would be mind, eyes, ears, hands, feet, and mouth.

What Paul is saying here is the key to victory over sin is not to make provisions for any member of your body to get involved in unrighteous things.

Obviously this is a threat to every believer or else Paul and Jesus Christ would not address it.

Now what is specifically stated is that members of the body can become "instruments of unrighteousness." That word "instrument" refers to a weapon or tool. So the point is, we need to make certain we are not continually making room and making provisions for unrighteous things to be in our lives because those things will be a weapon against righteousness.

I want to challenge you with a great New Year's challenge for the whole year. It comes from King David, who challenged himself in Psalm 101:3 – "I will set no worthless thing before my eyes."

Here is a great New Year's resolution. I will not intentionally set before my eyes any unclean or worthless thing. This will take careful thought and discipline. Because of my position in Jesus Christ, I will set no unclean, lustful thing before my eyes this entire year. I can tell you this personally, this is doable and it is possible. Do this and you'll have a great year and you will walk very close with God and you will get stronger and stronger.

Choice #3 - We are to make a choice to continually be involved in that which is righteous.
6:13b

On the other hand, we need to make as many provisions that we can to allow righteous things to control us.

The verb here is aorist tense so this means we must make a point of time decision to present ourselves to God.

We need to make sure that we are not continually making provisions and excuses for not living our lives for righteousness.

Now one might ask "How do I do this?"

Notice how **verse 14** begins "for."

Paul gives a further explanation to all of this and how it is accomplished. Victory is permitted to those not under Law but under Grace.

If one will carefully calculate His identity with Jesus Christ and make choices not to make provision for the flesh, then, "Sin shall not be master over you."

Sin will not ever reign in your life and have control of you.

You are not under law, but under grace. Look what is said here. Sin will not ever reign over us in the sense of our eternity. We live in grace and we are not under condemnatory law. But while we are here in the body, we still may live victoriously and here is how we do it.

The key to victory is in knowing this doctrine. You think about this great position that you have in Jesus Christ and it will impact your choices.