

Your New Relationship

With Sin

Romans 6:1-7

LTS: John 15:1-11

To receive a new relationship with Jesus is to receive a new relationship with sin.

This morning, as we prepare to launch into the 6th chapter of Romans, I think it would be helpful for us to glance at the rearview mirror (as it were) and reflect on the journey we have walked so far.

You will remember that early in Romans chapter 1 it became evident that Paul wanted to teach us the Gospel of God. The men and women in Rome to whom he was writing had apparently heard the gospel and embrace it fully. They were genuine Christians. They were true believers who were eager to grow in their knowledge of the truth and wanted to learn to live in a manner that is most pleasing to the Lord.

Paul's primary concern was NOT that they needed to repent and believe the Gospel - they had already believed - , but rather, as disciples of Jesus, he wanted them to gain a deeper richer understanding of the inner-workings of the Gospel they had already embraced.

Paul's teaching thus far can be broken down into three questions.

1. What is man's relationship with God before he embraces the Gospel?

Key word: Condemnation.

2. How is man's relationship with God changed by the Gospel? Key word: Justification.

3. How is man's relationship with sin changed by the Gospel? Key word: Sanctification or holiness.

So, looking backwards, it's easy to see these three major themes in what Paul has written in Romans thus far.

First, in chapters 1-3 We see condemnation.

Next, in chapters 4 and 5 Paul shifts from the Bad news to the promise of Good News. Where there was only condemnation, now Paul reveals the promise of Justification for all who believe in Jesus. In other words, by the uninfluenced and unfettered mercy of God, many who were hopelessly bound for condemnation are now granted justification. That is, they are declared righteous, NOT on the basis of good works or good intentions, but by faith in the finished work Jesus accomplished by His righteous life and atoning death.

So, chapters 1-3: Condemnation.

Chapters 4 and 5 : Justification.

Now today, as we come to chapters 6-8, Paul begins introducing us to the doctrine of Sanctification.

- When Paul speaks of Justification ,he means that God declares us righteous in the court of heaven.
- When he speaks of Sanctification, on the other hand, is NOT about God declaring us righteous, but about God making us righteous. Or, more precisely, He is making us Holy.

The passage we will begin studying together today is Rom. 6:1-7.

Now, its not likely that we are going to cover all of these verses today, but we should be able to get a good start into them.

So, Please stand with me in honor of the word of God and follow along as I read this passage in context.

Read Rom. 6:1-14

What shall we say then? 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.

May the Lord add His blessing
to the reading of His word.

You may be seated.

The importance of this passage can hardly be overstated in the Christian life. As believers, we love to talk and preach and sing about our new relationship with Jesus.

- He has become for us the Lamb of God who has taken our sin away.
- He has become our redeemer who paid the price to rescue us from death and hell.
- He has become our mediator, who reconciled sinners like us to God.

John Newton reflected on this new relationship with Jesus when he wrote that hymn whose lyrics famously exclaim...

Amazing Grace! How sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me.

I once was lost but now I'm found,

T'was blind but now I see.

Newton, the former slave-trader turned Gospel-preacher and theologian, was absolutely overwhelmed by the graciousness of God toward such a wretched sinner as himself. He was stunned by all the wonderful benefits of his new relationship with Jesus.

In chapter 5 of Romans, the apostle Paul affirms those divine benefits. He revealed to us that “since we have been justified by faith we have

- Peace with God through Jesus. (1)
- We have access to God through Jesus (2)
- We have the love of God lavishly poured upon us by the Spirit (5)
- We have been saved from the wrath of God through Jesus (9)

All of this and much more is ours because of our new relationship with Jesus. To be sure, Paul has labored long over the believer’s new relationship with God. It is a new relationship that Paul repeatedly refers to as “the free gift” (Chap. 5) which can only be received by the ungodly. In fact, the more ungodly a man or woman is, the more grace God pours upon them to the glory of God’s incomprehensible, magnanimous grace.

Moreover, this free gift – this saving, reconciling, justifying grace becomes a permanent feature of the new believer’s status in the eyes of God. Think about it! the very moment you believed in Jesus, everything changed. And you were changed because you were united with Christ. What could be more glorious, encouraging, and life-giving than that?

I mean, we could spend all morning thinking about the wonderful benefits we received the moment of salvation. If we had time this morning, we could turn to Ephesians chapter 1 and listen to Paul wax eloquent on how “the God and father of our Lord Jesus Christ has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in Christ.” But that is not the point Paul is making here in Romans six. Rather, he wants to talk NOT so much about our new relationship with Jesus, but rather about the believer’s new relationship with SIN.

To give this message a little structure to follow I have broken the text down into three simple points; namely,

I. The Opposition (v 1)

II. The Rejection (2a)

III. The Explanation. (2-7)

I. The Opposition

1. Now I'm sure you're aware that everywhere the apostles preached the Gospel, Jewish antagonists tried to step in and undermine the message. We can assume this was always the case for the apostle Paul. Paul had lots of experience debating his Jewish opponents. And one of the ways they attacked Paul was to accuse him of teaching people that after a person declares that they have put their faith in Jesus, it doesn't matter how you live. Grace covers everything so live as you please!
2. In fact, we know absolutely that this was their accusation because back in Rom 3:8 Paul said,

And why not do evil that good may come?—as some people slanderously charge us with saying. Their condemnation is just.

3. In today's theological vernacular we would say, "Paul, you are preaching Antinomianism! (Antinomian = "No Law.>"). Their thought was, without the law people will be absolutely unrestrained in their sin. They will engage in all forms of sexual immorality and perversion believing all the while that somehow God is glorified in it all. They will become drunkards, adulterers, liars, thieves and give free rein to every fleshly impulse just as the people did at the base of Mt. Sinai, and God judged them.
4. When you teach that "where sin abounds grace superabounds," aren't you suggesting that to sin more is to glorify God more? Isn't that where justification by faith alone leads you?
5. In other words, "If in response to the sinner's ungodliness, God pours out saving grace, why not just encourage people to recklessly abandon any sense of moral restraint and live like drunken pirates and pagans?"
6. I suspect part of the reason some people were confused was because of how High Paul elevated God's grace in his preaching. Beloved, I want you to see here that God's grace is so lavish, so free, so abundant that to accurately describe it in biblical terms may open the door for people to falsely accuse you of antinomianism.
7. One author writes,

“It is at this point that the apostle moves perilously close to the edge of an abyss. One step to the side and all that he has gained by what has preceded could be lost.”¹

8. On the other hand, the danger of antinomianism is real. Many people who call themselves Christians believe they have eternal security with God in Christ because they prayed a prayer, or asked Jesus into their heart, but there was never any change in their relationship with sin. Beloved, this was a relevant issue in Paul’s day and it remains a relevant issue today, 20 centuries later. The question before us this morning is,
 - Can a person be justified and not be sanctified?
 - Can one go through the narrow gate and live on the broad way?
 - Can someone be forgiven of their sin and still live in sin?
 - Can someone be a good tree but bear rotten fruit?²
9. I don’t know about you, but I grew up in a tradition that taught that you can genuinely embrace Jesus as Savior, you can have a true salvation experience that will last forever and yet continue living in the same godless, sinful lifestyle they had before they prayed the sinner’s prayer.
10. In fact, when I was a young pastor and I asked prospective members of the church to share with me their salvation testimony, it was NOT at all uncommon to hear people say, “Well, I trusted in Jesus for salvation when I was 6 years old, but I rededicated my life to the Lord when I was 25.
11. To which I responded with the following question, “What was your life like leading up to moment of “rededication?” And again, it was not uncommon to hear the person say, “Well, it was pretty rough. When I became a teenager I rebelled against my parents and church. When I went to college I fell into the whole party scene with drinking, porn or other sexual sins.
12. How does a young pastor respond to such a testimony? Well, graciously, of course. But as we will discover in this text over the next couple weeks, Paul, offers no biblical category for a person who truly has a new relationship with Jesus but does not have a new relationship with sin. To live like your sin doesn’t matter to God as a Christian is tantamount to saying, “Let us sin so that grace may abound!

11. So Paul has to address NOT only a believer’s relationship with God, but also the believer’s relationship with sin. And He sets up this discussion by taking his oponent’s

¹ John MacArthur, Audio entitled, *Dying to live, Part 1 of 3* message on Rom. 6:1-5. See www.gty.org

² Steve Lawson, Audio Sermon, *Matter of Life and Death*.

accusation and turning it into a question: “Shall we continue to sin that grace may abound?
This question moves us from

“the Opposition” (point 1) to the second point,

II. The Rejection.

1. Should the believer indulge in sin so that grace will abound?

Paul responds (2). “By No Means! “May it never be!”

2. The word in the original is *Me Ginoito*.

- A. MacArthur says, “This was the strongest idiom of repudiation in N.T. Greek.
- B. It is used to convey a sense of outrage about what was being proposed. The very suggestion that sin could in any conceivable way please and glorify God was abhorrent to Paul.”³

3. What Paul is determined to teach us here is that there is more to the gospel than a promise of a new relationship with Christ.

4. In Chapter 6, Paul makes it abundantly clear that a new relationship with Christ brings about a new relationship with SIN.

6. This brings us to the third and primary point:

III. The Explanation. (2-7)

1. After repudiating the idea that Christians can go on sinning as they did before after they have believed in Christ, Paul says, “How can we who died to sin still live in it any longer?”
2. Of course, the logical question, then, is “When did I die to sin? The short answer to that question is if you belong to Jesus, you died when He died.

³ John MacArthur, *The MacArthur N.T. Commentary, Romans 6*.

3. Look at verses 3-5

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 (that's a key word here) with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his.

4. Now, in order to get our heads around this we need to remember the doctrine of Union with Christ. You probably remember our final discussion in chapter 5 where we learned that the reason all humans are born in sin is because Adam sinned on our behalf in the garden of Eden. He was our representative head, so that when he disobeyed, his sin was imputed to everyone who was in Adam (which includes the entire human family).
5. In the same way, when Christ, the “Second Adam” obeyed the Father by living a perfect life and then dying a sinner’s death, his perfect obedience was counted as our perfect obedience, and His death was counted as our death because we are In Christ.
6. This is what the metaphor of baptism in this passage is all about. He says, (2) “Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?”
7. Paul is NOT talking about the ordinance of baptism. He’s not talking about the act of being emersed in water as an act of obedience to the Lord before a watching crowd. Rather, Paul is using baptism as a metaphor of what happens to a person who is genuinely justified by faith.
8. Jay Adams is helpful on this point when he explains:

“If this chapter speaks of water baptism then clearly that baptism is necessary for salvation because Paul writes of baptism into Christ (v. 3). But it is plain everywhere in the New Testament that water baptism and salvation are linked only as reality and symbol. That is to say, baptism is but the outward symbol of the inward reality; water baptism is not necessary for salvation.⁴
9. Again, we should recall that in the Bible the metaphor of baptism is clearly used to speak of a change in relationship. For example, in the case of the Israelites who followed Moses in the crossing of the Red Sea. Paul tells us in 1 Cor. 10:2 that “all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea.” In other words, they became united with Moses as never before,

⁴ Jay E. Adams, [*Romans, Philippians, I Thessalonians, and II Thessalonians*](#), The Christian Counselor’s Commentary (Cordova, TN: Institute for Nouthetic Studies, 2020), 47.

recognizing his leadership and their dependence on Him.⁵

10. In other words, to be baptized into Christ Jesus is the same thing as being united with Him. Therefore, when He died, you died. And when Jesus arose from the grave, you too were resurrected. And you weren't resurrected to go back to the old way of living, but to a new way – the way of the Spirit. The way of holiness which is called Sanctification.
11. What is Sanctification? When we speak of “sanctification” we are talking about growing in holiness. The Greek word for holy is *hagios*, which when used as a verb is *hogiazo* which means “to Make Holy.” Any time you read in the NT any form of the word “sanctify,” you know you are reading about holiness.⁶ Sanctification is about God making a sinner holy. In Romans 6, Paul is showing us that there is a direct link between a holy life and true salvation. Holiness is as much a gift of God as redemption is. Salvation is not merely God declaring you righteous, it is God by His Spirit making you righteous. Justification and sanctification are inextricably linked.
12. “Are we to continue to sin that grace may abound?” May it never be. Does that mean that when a person becomes a Christian he never sin again? No! That's not what Paul is saying. Look at the word “continue” (1). “Shall we continue in sin...”
 - a. The word for “continue” (*epi-meno*) means to remain, abide, or stay. It some times refers to living permanently in a house or taking up residence there.
 - b. Shall we go on living the same kind of life we lived before we trusted in Jesus?
 - c. Shall we continue maintain the same old sinful habits, enslavements, and idolatries as before? May it never be.
13. This truth is revealed all over the N.T. In fact, I have a list of 14 different Scriptures that teach us that when a sinful man or woman receives salvation and is justified before God, the immediate evidence of that reality is that they suddenly abhor their sin and begin pursuing a life of that is pleasing the Lord in every way.
14. We don't have time for 14 more Scriptures, but let me point you to one. 1 John 3:9 The apostle John writes...

No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God's seed abides in him; and he cannot keep on sinning, because he has been born of God.

⁵ Frank Gaebeline, *The Expositors Bible Commentary: With the New International version of the Holy Bible*, (Michigan, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976), 68-63

⁶ John Piper & David Mathis, editors, *Acting the Miracle*, (Wheaton, Crossway, 2013), 29

15. John is talking about the impossibility of a sinner being born again without experiencing significant change in their relationship with sin.
16. It's not about perfection. It's about direction. And the same God who justified you is sanctifying you if you are truly his.

Application:

1. I imagine there are college students listening to this message today. You claim to be a Christian, but your lifestyle bears no significant difference than you unbelieving friends. I implore you to consider the possibility that something is terribly wrong in your relationship with Christ. Could it be that you have never truly repented and believed?
2. I also assume that some who are listening to me right now make no claim of knowing Christ. He knows you! He knows everything about you. He created you and you are accountable to him. I know that you are aware of your guilt, your conscience has born that out Ten Thousand times, but you keep suppressing the truth. You know that you are "Ungodly," but I am here to tell you that the Gospel of Jesus Christ only works for people like you. Won't you Confess to God who you really are – what is truly in your heart? Won't you come declaring, God, if all this is true, I have nothing to offer you but my sin. But I believe. Will you receive me change me. I am yours if you will have me, AMEN.

To receive a new relationship with Jesus is to receive a new relationship with sin.