

HENCEFORTH MEANS HENCEFORTH!

Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed,
that henceforth we should not serve sin.
Romans 6:6

REVIEW

Sometimes a question can spark quite a conversation. Should we go to war? What is the meaning of life? How do you define success? Presently the question is, put briefly, shall we continue in sin?

Now, many issues branch from that single question. For example:

1. Definition – Who gets to define sin? Think, for example, how differently the world may define sin today from how you or I may define it. To the world, “sin” may be our refusal to change the definition of marriage, accept what is unnatural and immoral, or honor creation over the Creator.
2. Origin – Is all that we see the mindless, purposeless, directionless result of random accidents? Then there are no absolute values. If, on the other hand, all we see originates from an eternal, unchanging God, then there is purpose. There is direction. There is right. There is wrong.
3. Accountability – To whom are we ultimately answerable? Nobody? People? God? Nature?
4. Revelation – Where do we go to understand what is sin? Paul said, “I had not known sin but by the law.” (Rom. 7:7)
5. Motivation – Let me ask you, what would be sufficient motivation for you to stop sinning?
6. Nature of man – Are we but animals or do we have a higher nature? And has God provided a means by which we can escape bondage to sin?

In Romans 6 the Holy Scriptures record that we should STOP SINNING. Granted, we are flawed, so we will fall, but still, we are to purpose to stop. Stop. Stop.

Why? Briefly, because, we are told so far, that continuing to sin is illogical, inconsistent, unloving, unthankful, unperceiving, unscriptural, counter-productive, and indeed destructive and devilish!

What, specifically, are we talking about?

First, there are sins of commission. That would include any sensually immoral activity in thought, word, worldly entertainment, pornography, or deed; any adultery; any idolatry; any theft; any coveting; any insensitivity to one's spouse; any dereliction of responsibilities, defrauding, drunkenness, reviling, cursing, coarse jesting, foolishness, law breaking, love of money, stinginess, dishonesty, gossip, slander, murmuring, complaining, lying, exaggerating, gluttony, laziness, wasting of time, wasting of talents, disrespect for authorities, abuse of property, lack of support or neglect for the church, unkindness, condescension, sarcasm, mockery, bullying, worrying, fearing, etc.

And then there are sins of omission. We are not to forsake our God but to love Him with all our heart, soul, strength, and mind, and our neighbor as ourselves. We must not neglect the Scriptures. We must not neglect prayer. We must be faithful to our local fellowship. We must not neglect the talents and opportunities we have been given. We must be faithful in witnessing. We are to meditate faithfully on the Word of God. We are to be kind, attentive, punctual, honest, gracious, courteous, and courageous.

What shall we say, shall we continue in sin?? NO! Henceforth we should not serve sin! That's the word. There is our focus today. We shall now see that "henceforth" means that the Christian's victorious life described in Romans 6:6 is: Immediate, Irreversible, Inclusive, Indisputable, Important.

I. IMMEDIATE

A. See Cain:

"When thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength." (Gen. 4:12)

1. Message: The old way is *GONE* as of *TODAY!*
2. None of this "I think I'll test the waters, maybe slowly slide into this...."

B. See also:

1. Fishermen – Matt. 4:19-22
2. Tax collectors – Matt. 9:9
3. Blind to see – Matt. 20:34
4. Lame to walk – Mark 2:11-12
5. Sick to serve – Luke 5:38-39

C. Immediately we no longer regard things from a human point of view:

1. Not people – II Cor. 5:16
2. Not what we formerly thought was gain personally – Phil. 3:7
3. Not even family – Matthew 10:37

II. IRREVERSIBLE

A. See Israel's possibility of returning to the land of bondage:

"The LORD hath said unto you, Ye shall henceforth return no more that way." (Deut. 17:16)

1. Message: NO TURNING BACK. EVER.
2. Specifically here the old man is *crucified*. The body of sin has been once-and-for-all, irreversibly *destroyed*. Gone as much as the pre-Flood world.
3. Compare II Cor. 5:17. "Behold" → As if contemplating a rapidly shifting scene, as in a flash, old things vanish, and all things become new. And note: "passed away" is also in aorist tense.

B. See also:

1. Elisha – I Kings 19:19-21
2. Ephesian Christians – Acts 19:19
3. Missionary William Carey

III. INCLUSIVE

A. “Henceforth” encompasses everyone who is saved:

“And that he died for all, that *they which live* should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.” (II Cor. 5:15)

1. Listen: “If any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of His”! But if you *are* one of His, hear this: “They which live should not henceforth live unto themselves.”
2. Look back to our verse (Rom. 6:6). What are the pronouns? God is saying normal people like you and I are not only capable but responsible to accomplish the thing described here.

B. See also:

1. “Neither must *the children of Israel* henceforth come nigh the tabernacle of the congregation, lest they bear sin, and die.” (Num. 18:22)
2. “Let *Israel* hope in the LORD from henceforth and for ever.” (Ps. 131:3)

IV. INDISPUTABLE – “Henceforth” communicates a matter is absolutely certain.

A. As much as:

1. That the Lord shall reign from Mt. Zion without end: “The LORD shall reign over them in mount Zion from henceforth, even for ever.” (Micah 4:7)
2. The Lord forever surrounds His people: “As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the LORD is round about his people from henceforth even for ever.” (Ps. 125:2)
3. In the New Covenant, God's Spirit and Word shall never depart: “As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the LORD; My spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the LORD, from henceforth and for ever.” (Isa. 59:21)

V. IMPORTANT

A. False witnessing is to be abolished from the land:

“Those which remain shall hear, and fear, and shall henceforth commit no more any such evil among you.” (Deut. 19:20)

B. Naaman would never again sacrifice to false gods:

“Thy servant will henceforth offer neither burnt offering nor sacrifice unto other gods, but unto the LORD.” (II Ki. 5:17)

C. Henceforth we Christians should stop acting like children:

“That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive.”
(Eph. 4:14)

