

# CONTINUING IN GRACE ROMANS 6 OR THE REIGN OF GRACE (Part 2)

Pastor Jose F. Maldonado

Hillburn Drive Grace Baptist Church

March 11, 2007

*"What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" Romans 6:1 & 2*

## I. THE CONTEMPLATION.

## II. THE CLARIFICATION.

## III. THE CONTRADICTION.

**II. THE CLARIFICATION.** (Preached May 11, 2008) (Quick overview of our subject and point 1) Paul is very forward in clarifying his point. The language he uses is just as powerful. The questions again in verse one are "*What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?*" He clarifies any misunderstanding by his answer: **"GOD FORBID!"** No, no way, by no means can we who are dead to sin live any longer therein! GOD FORBID! If you get anything out of my message, its GOD FORBID! That should go a long way, GOD FORBID! Paul's rhetorical questions are clarified = GOD FORBID! Certainly not, perish the thought, of course not, impossible, nonsense, absurd! Paul is very clear in answering his own questions. He knew what some would think, if grace abounds more than sin, then if I sin more I will have more grace. Grace will abound more in my life if I sin more, Paul answers so fast as though he does not even want this type of thinking to capture our imagination, GOD FORBID = MAY IT NEVER BE! This is one of Paul's way of rejecting foolish ideas indignantly. Paul uses this phrase 10 times in the book of Romans.

God forbid in the Greek is "*me genoito.*" The BLB says that "*me genoito* is in the aorist (a view of the action as having begun from a certain point or existing at a certain point) tense, middle voice and optative mood. The optative mood usually expresses a wish and sometimes in some NT passages is actually a prayer, the literal Greek reads, *may it not become.*" As though Paul dismisses the very thought as unthinkable or impossible. The BLB continues, "*me genoito* is the strongest Greek idiom to indicate repudiation (refusal to accept and implies a casting off or disowning as untrue, unauthorized or unworthy acceptance)." It conveys the idea of outraged indignation. As though Paul is saying, "*may such a thing never occur.*" "*It expresses a conviction of its falsehood,*" (Godet). For a Christian to continue in sin, because he has been justified and forgiven and because grace abounds is an abominable thought to Paul.

Justification is not intended to give us a license to sin, no, but intended to liberate us from sin. Consider the insight of the following brethren, Charles Spurgeon says, *“an unchanged life is the mark of an unchanged heart, and an unchanged heart is a sign of an unregenerate life.”* Dr. Donald Grey Barnhouse says, *“holiness starts where justification finishes; and if holiness does not start, we have the right to suspect that justification has never started.”* Hendriksen says, *“For a Christian, continuing to live in sin is not only impermissible, it is impossible!... (Paul) reminds his readers that something decisive has taken place in his and in their lives. By the grace of God they had died to sin; that is, they had renounced allegiance to their sinful selves and to all the allurements and enticements of this sinful world.”* Godet says, *“just as a dead man does not revive and resume his former occupations, as little can the believer ever return to his old life of sin; for in his case also there had been a death.”* Ray Stedman makes a very powerful point, *“...what if "someone asks, What if a Christian does go on sinning, living in sin, claiming forgiveness, but goes on without any change in his life whatever? What about that? There are people who are doing that. The answer, in light of this Scripture is very simple: These people simply are revealing that they never truly have been justified by faith; they are not Christians. Let's put it as bluntly as the apostle himself put it. They are deceiving themselves and deceiving others. Though they may do so with good intent, and with utter sincerity as far as they know -- nevertheless the case is clear. It is impossible for your lifestyle to continue unchanged when you become a Christian. It is simply impossible, because a change has occurred deep in the human spirit. And those who protest, and say they can go on living this way, are simply revealing that there has been no change in their spirit, there has been no break with Adam.”* Kent Hughes says, *“...the argument that we should continue in sin because we are under grace is absolutely fallacious! The reverse is true. It is impossible to continue living unchanged when you become a Christian. In fact, I will put it even stronger: those who argue that grace allows a buffer for sin—that their sin will ultimately glorify God anyway—are revealing they are not under grace! They are not Christians, no matter how much they argue otherwise. When we have experienced solidarity with Christ, our lifestyle is affected, just as it was by our solidarity with Adam. If one's life has not changed and if there is no impulse for further change toward Christ, he or she is very probably not a Christian.”*

These writers concur in their sentiments about Paul's powerful statement, God forbid, that is, it is utterly impossible for a person who has been born again to live continually in sin, bar none. Again, this is not speaking of perfection or that Christians do not sin, but that there is not a habitual lifestyle in sin when God saves us, when God makes us new creatures in Christ. Paul is basically saying you have been put in a different realm, different sphere. Notice the words of Paul to the Colossians, chapter 1 verses 12-14, *“Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins.”* We have been translated to a different realm when God births us into His kingdom. This is why Paul insists that it cannot be for a Christian to remain in bondage to sin, GOD FORBID! Perhaps more on this later, but Paul clarified his point, which leads us to our last point:

**III. THE CONTRADICTION.** Paul contradicts the view of the persons who think they can continue in sin after God saves them. He says clearly and succinctly in verse 2, “*God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?*” Paul is very clear in making his point. He is very lucid in setting forth that a child of God cannot continue in the lifestyle of sin after conversion. In verse one Paul explains that we cannot continue in sin and then turns right around in verse 2 to say that we cannot live in sin any longer. In other words he contradicts any view that proposes or indicates a licentious lifestyle.

Remember he says in verse 1, “...*Shall we continue **in sin**, that grace may abound?*” The phrase “in sin” speaks of a realm or sphere, that is, in the sphere of sin or in the realm of sin. Shall we continue in that realm or sphere of sin? Paul’s point is unambiguous and unmistakable. The believer no longer lives in the realm or sphere of sin, that is, under its power, under its bondage, under its dominion. That is not the place or atmosphere a believer is to be or live in. They are no longer to live in that dimension. This is why he uses the phrase, “...*live any longer therein*” Where? In that sphere or dimension, frankly, we are not to live therein any longer! We must remember that salvation is not just a forensic transaction (justification). When we are regenerated God declares us righteous, justified from the penalty of sin, but regeneration also puts into action the process of being transformed in the image of Christ. In other words if you are truly saved, regenerated and justified there is an effect. You do not stay the same. True salvation is effectual; therefore, there is a result. No, not perfection, (though we are to strive for this, Matt.5:48; Phil.3:12 & 15, plus other verses) but a change of lifestyle, a change of spiritual dimension. We do not continue or remain in a sinful lifestyle. This is why Paul’s statements are powerful in Romans 6:1 & 2. He is not just throwing out some things or grasping for straws, no he is articulating the powerful process that takes place in regeneration and conversion. From Romans 3:20 to 5:21 the thought process is being justified by faith. Therefore if this is true then there is an effect, a result in our salvation. God does not save us from our sins to leave us in our sins, no, He powerfully transforms us from the realm of spiritual death unto spiritual life, and it is effectual. God doesn’t try to accomplish this, no HE effectually performs this! This is what it means to be born again, not just reciting some sinners prayer or walking some isle or performing some religious ceremony whether it be infant baptism or some other religious “sacrament”. All of this is man made. True salvation is GOD centered or if you wish, THEOCENTRIC.

The problem with a false view of salvation which is seen in easy believism or cheap grace is that it leads to those things that Paul is teaching against, which leads to the carnal Christian theory or the fleshly Christian theory. This is why Paul says unmistakably GOD FORBID, how can a person who has been truly justified remain in sin any longer. This is contrary to the message of the gospel; again I want to be careful and clear in saying that this does not mean that Christians do not sin, but

that Christians do not live in a habitual sinful lifestyle as before. Something happened at regeneration, there is a powerful transformation, a glorious spiritual metamorphosis in our new birth. This is the whole of Paul's argument, if this is true then there is a change and a different lifestyle. Therefore we will not continue in sin or live therein any longer. If you miss this he says, GOD FORBID! He clarifies his point with this and then he contradicts any other mindset or interpretation, "*How shall we, that **are dead to sin**, live any longer therein?*"

As we come to the end of our message I want to look at 3 of the many passages of Scriptures that will strengthen Paul's proclamation of this truth. The first one is from the Old Testament in Ezekiel 36:26, 27 & 31, "*A new heart also **will I** give you, and a new spirit **will I** put within you: and **I will** take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and **I will** give you an heart of flesh. And **I will** put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them. (31) Then shall ye remember your own evil ways, and your doings that were not good, and shall lothe yourselves in your own sight for your iniquities and for your abominations.*" The prophet Ezekiel shows us what happens when God saves a sinner. God performs spiritual surgery on the heart or as Paul says in Colossians 2:12, "*...through the faith of the operation of God...*" We serve a Sovereign Surgeon who operates powerfully in our hearts. He has never, nor ever will lose a patient of His. Notice the five WILL'S that are mentioned regarding God by Ezekiel. He speaks about the OMNIPOTENT God. ("*...for the Lord God OMNIPOTENT reigneth.*" Rev.19:6) This omnipotent God takes out our sinful heart of stone and puts in a new heart, a heart of flesh, i.e. a soft heart. He also puts within us His Spirit to cause us to walk in His ways, to walk in newness of life as in Romans 6:4. We have been raised from the deadness of our sins and given new SPIRITUAL life in Christ. The effects are seen in verse 31 of Ezekiel 36, when God changes our nature in regeneration/salvation he opens our hearts and understanding to see ourselves as we really are. Up to this point our pride and self-righteousness says to us, we are not that bad, we are ok and if anyone deserves heaven it is me. Our sins blind us to our true self, but God opens our eyes and we confess our evil ways before God as a fruit of repentance. There is a lot more here but we must go on.

Our next passage is in Colossians 1:12-14 which we briefly mentioned earlier, "*Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins.*" Here Paul shows the translation of the realm or dimension of which we are moved from. First of all, the Sovereign Omnipotent God is the one that makes us fit for heaven, not we ourselves or any religious ceremony, no God and God alone makes us fit for heaven. This is what he means in the phrase "*Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet...*" Secondly, Paul says, "*...Who hath delivered us...*" The word "who" here is speaking of God, it is God and He alone who delivers us, again not we ourselves or some religious ritual. Thirdly, this is the effectual action that takes place, "*...Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the*

*kingdom of his dear Son.*” God translates us from one domain, realm, sphere, dimension unto another one, from the power of darkness into the Kingdom of Christ. This is again a powerful work of God. Fourthly, the means, *“In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins.”* It is through the blood of Christ, through His vicarious substitution for those whom He saves. We see here a translation from darkness to light, in other words something does happen at regeneration/salvation/justification and it is effectual! Again there is much here but we must press on.

Our third and last passage is in 2 Corinthians 5:17, *“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.”* Paul gives us a genuine declaration regarding our new birth. If a person is in Christ he is a new creature or a new creation, that is, old things pass away and all things become new. There is a true change, a change of heart, a change of our mindset, a change of our lifestyle, an effectual change. If a person is in Christ Jesus he is a new creation in the essence of quality, old things become antiquated, they don’t belong to the new life or new change. The phase ‘passed away’ is in the aorist tense, therefore denoting a definite change took place at some point in our lives. Remember the aorist tense speaks of an action as having begun from a certain point or existing at a certain point. At the point of our conversion/salvation a change took place. The phrase ‘are become’ is in the present tense therefore it describes an action which is seen as having been completed in the past once and for all and not needing to be repeated and thus producing the new nature of the change introduced in regeneration/conversion or salvation. Again, it does not mean sinless perfection; it doesn’t mean that old habits, evil thoughts and lustful looks are done away forever, no but that we do not want to do those things anymore. This is where our responsibility comes in, in keeping the fire burning, not letting the fire go out. This is part of mortification of sin.

Remember we are being conformed to the image of Christ; notice the next two verses, *“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”* Romans 12:1 & 2, and in Romans 8:28-30, *“And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose. For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.”*

Thus, Paul knows exactly what he is speaking about in Romans 6:1 & 2, he is not just rambling on, no, he knows his theology; he knows exactly what happens in regeneration, for it happened to him. He is speaking by experience and by true proper theology.

So, in real simple terms, if there is a new heart given, if there is a real translation from darkness to light and if there is a new creation, a new change then Paul's statements are valid and genuine and therefore applicable. "*What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?*" I would like to share a poem I've written on Romans 6 with you.

## **The New Man in Romans 6**

**We are made new creatures in Christ  
He alone paid the gratuitous price  
Where sin used to powerfully abound  
Grace does now much more super-abound**

**Being in Christ do we now continue in sin?  
God forbid, we are no longer to live therein  
We are now dead to sin being saved by grace  
We are so thankful that He died in our place**

**We are buried with Christ by baptism  
This is nothing but a type or symbolism  
As Christ was raised from the dead one day  
We should also walk in newness of life today**

**Knowing this, that our old man is with Christ crucified  
This is a blessed truth that by faith we must recognize  
We are not to serve sin or live any longer therein  
Because he that is dead to sin is freed from sin**

**Because Jesus Christ was raised from the dead  
Sin has no more dominion over us as Paul has said  
Christ has died unto sin only once and is now alive  
Because of this we will in heaven one day arrive**

**We need to reckon ourselves to be dead unto sin  
But alive unto God because of His grace within  
Let not sin therefore reign in the heart  
We must therefore mortify it in every part**

**We must not yield our members to unrighteousness  
But yield ourselves unto God in true holiness  
The wages of sin is death as God's Holy Word does record  
But the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our LORD**