

# SCRIPTURE LESSON TEXT

**ROM. 6:1** What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?

**2 God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?**

3 Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?

**4 Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.**

5 For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also *in the likeness of his* resurrection:

**6 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.**

7 For he that is dead is freed from sin.

**8 Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him:**

9 Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him.

**10 For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.**

11 Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**12 Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.**

13 Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.

**14 For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.**

## NOTES

# Dead to Sin, Alive in Christ

Lesson Text: Romans 6:1-14

Related Scriptures: I Corinthians 15:12-23; Colossians 3:1-11

TIME: A.D. 56

PLACE: from Corinth

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**GOLDEN TEXT**—"Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 6:11).

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## *Lesson Exposition*

### **BURIED WITH CHRIST—Rom. 6:1-4**

#### **Saved by Christ (Rom. 6:1-2).**

Since we are "justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 3:24), we can see how the concept of salvation by grace can be distorted. As is still true today, Paul had to confront various corruptions of the gospel. One such aberration was the Judaizing controversy. These false teachers wanted to force Gentiles to keep the Mosaic Law, demanding circumcision as a means of salvation (Acts 15:1). These legalists were saying that grace was insufficient; works had to be added to what Christ had done to save.

Another group, antinomians (literally, "anti-law" proponents), wanted to cast aside all moral restraints. In contrast to the legalists mentioned above, these people were libertines, teaching that Christians could do anything they pleased. They took the view that the more a person sinned, the more grace he or she would receive. Hence, the way to receive a lot of God's grace was to sin more. It does not take much theological depth to conclude that such a view would be counterpro-

ductive to living a godly life. Paul, of course, rejected such an understanding of the Christian faith with a thundering "God forbid" (Rom. 6:2)!

Christians are "dead to sin," or alternatively, "have died to sin" (reflecting the reality that there was a point in the past when this occurred, namely, when the sinner repented and came to Christ). Being "dead to sin" does not mean that the believer cannot or will not sin. Our goal should be to resist temptation and live above sin, viewing Christ as our perfect example.

#### **Baptized into Christ (Rom. 6:3).**

Paul illustrates the absurdity of a Christian living in sin by reminding his readers of their conversion, symbolized in Christian baptism. Although Paul had never visited the church at Rome, he knew they were baptized believers, since baptism was commanded by Christ in the Great Commission (Matt. 28:19-20; Mark 16:15-16).

There are several baptisms mentioned in the New Testament: John's baptism (Matt. 3:1-6); baptism of the Spirit (vs. 11); baptism in fire (vss. 10-12); baptism in suffering (20:22-23); and the baptism of the Great Commission

(28:19), which, like John's baptism, was baptism in water (Acts 8:35-38).

While all of the above have certain similarities, which baptism was Paul speaking of in Romans 6? Because of his emphasis elsewhere that "by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body" (I Cor. 12:13), many think that the focus here is on our spiritual union with Christ in His body, which is the church (Eph. 4:4-6; Col. 1:24). But since water baptism mirrors this, we cannot rule out that Paul had this too in mind.

Water baptism was the immediate response of those receiving Christ in Acts (2:41; 8:12; 35-39; 9:17-18; 10:47-48; 18:8). It reflected the spiritual reality of repentance and faith, along with the arrival of the Holy Spirit and the convert's inclusion into the church of Jesus Christ (2:47; 5:14; 11:24).

Note that Paul says believers were "baptized into Jesus Christ" (Rom. 6:3). By faith, we are brought into Christ's body when we turn from sin and put our trust in Him and His saving work of redemption. Without repentance (Acts 2:38), faith (8:12), and a profession of that faith (8:37), baptism is a meaningless ritual.

When true believers are baptized, however, it reflects the fact that something has occurred in the heart and life of the convert, that they have come to Christ and have experienced an inward change brought about by the power of God's Spirit. "Baptism is the rite of passage from the old dominion of sin into the new dominion of righteousness" (Allen, ed., *Broadman Bible Commentary*, Broadman).

**Raised with Christ (Rom. 6:4).** The symbolic value of water baptism is two-fold: First, it pictures what happened to Christ: He died on the cross, was buried in the tomb, and arose on the third day. Second, it pictures what happened to us: we died to sin, were "buried with him by baptism into death," and were

then raised to "walk in newness of life." Baptism therefore portrays what the Holy Spirit performs in a believer's life.

To suggest that Christians should indulge in sin so they can experience more of God's grace is a repudiation of the truth that they are born again to a new life.

In Colossians, Paul also speaks of being "buried with [Christ] in baptism" (2:12) and goes on to emphasize that those who are risen with him are to seek heavenly things, not "things on the earth" (3:1-2). In short, those who profess faith in Christ must live a life of faith, avoiding sin at all costs and reflecting the "newness of life" they now possess (Rom. 6:4).

#### **UNITED WITH CHRIST— Rom. 6:5-11**

**Planted (Rom. 6:5).** The phrase "planted together" represents a single word in Greek and could be rendered "united." The original word means "to make to grow together" or "grown along with, united with" (Vine, *An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*, Revell). A related word is elsewhere translated "engrafted" (cf. Jas. 1:21).

Paul is stressing the fact that because of our union with Christ in His death, we are guaranteed a union with Him in His resurrection. While this could refer to the believer's resurrection to a new spiritual life (Rom. 6:4), it is more likely that Paul is looking ahead to the future bodily resurrection. Because of Christ's sacrificial death, we have pardon from sin. Because of His resurrection, we have the hope of eternal life. As Jesus said, "Because I live, ye shall live also" (John 14:19).

**Crucified (Rom. 6:6-7).** The "old man" Paul alludes to here is the old self, our former fallen identity in Adam, which was buried with Christ (vs. 4). This same old man was in fact

crucified with Christ.

Receiving Christ as Saviour and Lord not only deals with past sins committed but also provides the spiritual resources needed to deal with future sin so that “henceforth we should not serve sin.”

The one who is dead to sin is also freed from sin (vs. 7). The word translated “freed” is the same word elsewhere translated “justified,” meaning “to be declared not guilty” or “to be made righteous.”

**Resurrected (Rom. 6:8-9).** Paul’s use of the word “if” does not mean that he allows for any doubts about what occurs in conversion. Spiritually, all true believers are indeed “dead with Christ” because of their faith in Him. Paul here is reiterating what he declared in the verses above about being united with Christ in His death.

“We shall also live with him” also reiterates what Paul has already stated about the future resurrection, for “the dead in Christ shall rise” (I Thess. 4:16) when Jesus returns for His saints.

Just as “death hath no more dominion over [Christ]” (Rom. 6:9), so it is with us. True, we will suffer physical death unless we remain alive until Jesus returns, but death has no power over us, for death has been defeated (Heb. 2:14-15).

**Alive (Rom. 6:10-11).** When Christ died for the sins of the world, it was a one-time, eternal sacrifice. Unlike the ancient high priest, He does not have to keep offering sacrifices.

To reckon ourselves as being dead to sin is to consciously rely on the truth of what Paul has written. What is true of Jesus’ death and resurrection is also true of us.

### **YIELDED TO CHRIST— Rom. 6:12-14**

Falling into sin because of the weakness of the flesh is one thing; letting sin reign is entirely another!

If sin reigns in our bodies, we will display an inclination of yielding to fleshly desires and obeying those desires as a slave obeys a master (vs. 16).

Nor should our bodies be used as “instruments of unrighteousness” (vs. 13). “Instruments” is an “old word for tools of any kind for shop or war” (Robertson). “Members” refers to parts of our body, such as eyes, feet, and hands.

Raised by Christ’s power to a new life, our bodies are to be used as “instruments of righteousness,” yielded to Him.

—John Alva Owston.

## QUESTIONS

1. What were some people apparently saying about the relationship between sin and grace?
2. How could Paul be sure that the believers in Rome had been baptized?
3. What does baptism reflect in the life of a believer?
4. What kind of life should those who come to faith in Christ live?
5. What thought does the words “planted together” convey to us (Rom. 6:5)?
6. What was Paul’s likely focus in saying we will be “in the likeness of his resurrection”?
7. Who is the “old man” that is crucified with Christ (vs. 6)?
8. What does it mean that believers are “dead with Christ” (vs. 8)?
9. What happens if we let sin reign in our lives?
10. To what use instead are we to put our bodies?

—John Alva Owston.

## PRACTICAL POINTS

1. Since Jesus died for our sins, believing in Him frees us from slavery to sin (Rom. 6:1-2).
2. We have new life through Christ's resurrection (vss. 3-4).
3. Believers are freed from sin's domination through sharing in Christ's death (vss. 5-6).
4. The death of our old nature allows us to live free from sin (vs. 7).
5. Sin has no power over those who choose life in Christ Jesus (vss. 8-9).
6. The grace of God gives us access to eternal life through Jesus (vss. 10-14).

—Valante M. Grant.

## RESEARCH AND DISCUSSION

1. How does God's common grace apply in a society where sin is so widely accepted?
2. How do we maintain a life that is dead to sin in a sinful environment?
3. Describe characteristics of one who has new life in Christ. How do these characteristics differ from those who continue to live in sin?
4. Discuss what means God uses to help us rise above sin and continue in new life with Christ (Rom. 6:4-5).
5. What does the life of an instrument of God's righteousness look like?
6. In what essential way does the law differ from God's grace?

—Valante M. Grant.

## Golden Text Illuminated

**“Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Romans 6:11).**

We are united with Jesus when we are born again through faith in Him (cf. Gal. 2:20). Our identity has changed.

It is not merely our outward identity that has changed. We have become completely new people. When we receive Christ's free gift, we are joined to Jesus in a spiritual union in His death and resurrection (Rom. 6:5-7). Because of this union, we have been made dead to sin.

For some believers, this profound alteration is difficult to understand. They still feel like they have no power over sin. The temptation is to return to their old patterns.

Paul reminds us that our Lord died to free us from the power of sin (6:10-14). We have been reborn to liberty from sin, not from liberty to sin (vs. 18).

The key to consistently experiencing this newfound power over sin is set forth in our golden text. Because we are united with Christ, we are to “reckon,” or consider true for ourselves what God has declared is in fact true—that, like Christ, we are dead to sin but “alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.” We are to remember this great truth and continually accept and apply it as true in our lives.

Yes, we are all going to falter at times. But we have been given the power to be victorious over sin, and that power is found in our new identity as people united with Christ in His death and resurrection to new life.

—Jennifer Francis.