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Romans Chapter Six

Romans 6:5-6

March 21, 2010

This is lesson number **33** in our exposition of the Book of Romans.

The Theme of the Letter

“For I am not ashamed of **the gospel of Christ**, for it is the **power** of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. For in it the **righteousness of God** is **revealed** from faith to faith; as it is written, ‘The just shall live by faith.’ ” Romans 1:16-17

Title: “United With Christ”

Romans 6:1-6

6:1 What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? 2 Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it? 3 Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? 4 Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised 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 united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, 6 knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin.

As we continue our exposition of Romans Chapter Six, it is most important that we keep before us the fact that Paul is refuting Antinomian error - the fatal error that says that grace allows a “saved” person to continue in presumptuous sin.

“Certainly not!” How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?

“Or do you not know that as many of us...” i.e., all those who are Christians, died with Christ **when** they were baptized into Christ Jesus. And we learned that this baptism is not water baptism, but it is the baptism of the Holy Spirit. And the baptism of the Holy Spirit is not some so-called “second blessing,” something that you experience after you have been saved, but it is, in fact, the operation of the Holy Spirit in the new birth: And so:

All Christians are joined with Christ in His death;

All Christians are joined with Christ in His burial; and,

All Christians are joined with Christ in His resurrection.

If we have been baptized by the Holy Spirit, a life-altering change has occurred - we have died to sin. Having died to sin, how shall we any longer live in it? That is why Paul’s answer is an emphatic: “Certainly not!”

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This morning we will study verses 5 & 6.

Verse 5 explains verses 3 & 4, “For if ...”

The “if” here means “since,” “because.”

5 For if {since} we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection

You will notice that there are **two parts** of verse 5, the “if” part,
For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death -
which he explains in verses 6-7;

and the “also shall” part, certainly we **also shall be** in the likeness of His resurrection
- which he explains in verses 8-9-10.

Because the first part is true, so shall the second part be true.

For **if {since}** we have been united together in the likeness of His death,
certainly we also **shall be** in the likeness of His resurrection

This is the reason why the Christian cannot continue in presumptuous sin:
“For if {since} we have been united together in the likeness of His death...”

The KJV uses the phrase “planted together” and it is better translated
“united together.” The word means to “grow together,” “closely united.”

Since we have been united together in the **likeness** of His death, why “likeness?”

Because our death is not exactly the same as His death, but it is a real death.

Jesus, the Scripture says {Romans 8:3}, was made in the **likeness** of sinful flesh, not
sinful flesh, but in the likeness of sinful flesh. True humanity, but without sin.

In the same way we have been united together in the **likeness** of His death.
Just as, we did not personally sin with Adam, even so, we did not personally
participate in Christ’s death.

But we **were** “in union” with Adam and **are now** “in union” with Christ.

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Now the phrase “shall be” is usually taught to be a future resurrection of the body.

While a future resurrection of the body is included, what Paul is proving here is that we cannot continue in presumptuous sin; but shall walk in newness of life in this present time.

This walk {manner of life} is future from the time before we are baptized by the Holy Spirit into Christ Jesus, but newness of life begins when the new birth occurs. Verse 11 onward in Chapter Six will make that clear. This is not glorification here, but our new life in Christ from the moment we are born again.

The “likeness of His resurrection” means, as verse 10 makes clear, that just as Christ died to sin once, we died once to sin in this life.

Just as the Lord’s **relationship** to sin has changed, our **relationship** to sin has changed. And yes, we look forward to that time when in glory:

Ephesians 5:25-27

... just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, 26 that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, 27 that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.

Psalm 17:15

15 As for me, I will see Your face in righteousness;
I shall be satisfied when I awake in Your likeness. That will be glory for me!

But I have to live my life as a Christian right now.

My fellow sinners - redeemed by the precious blood of Christ - my brothers and sisters in Christ, even now we are under the superabounding reign of grace, our life is not a defeated, hope-so, can’t be sure if I’m saved or not, joyless, pitiful existence.

Is there anything more insane than to try to live with the idea that we “may continue in sin,” when we have died to sin? That is a conflict of intellect.

We died with Christ and we walk in newness of life with Christ.

How can we do this? Verses 6-7 “...knowing this...”

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In verse 3, “Or do you not know...?”
Again, here in verse 6, “...knowing this...”

Romans 6: 6-7

6 **knowing this**, that our **old man** was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. 7 For he who has died has been freed from sin.

Christian, there is something that you should know, and “knowing this” will keep you from distress, and anxiety, and yes, even depression.

In the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew 6:25:
“Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life.”

Listen very carefully. This is not an experience that you have. This is not some higher degree of sanctification. This is not about being some spiritual warrior. This is about every Christian.

This is about every soul that trusts Jesus and Him alone.

So what is this thing you should know?

That our “old man” **was crucified** with Christ:

... that our old man **was crucified** with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, **that we should no longer be slaves of sin.** 7 For he who has died has been freed from sin.

Alas, this is something that has perplexed many sincere believers because they don't know this. This something is this idea that as a Christian I am not supposed to have evil thoughts and do sinful things.

“What is wrong with me?”

Then we buy books that will teach us how to kill the “old man.”
And by “old man” they mean the sinful nature, the flesh, the carnal nature.

That is the root of all monasticism. I want to kill the old man, so I will go off and live in a cave or a monastery or a convent. I will run away from the world, I will sleep on a stone slab in winter with no cover. I will mutilate my body to cause pain. But you cannot escape the sinful nature in that way.

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Like Martin Luther, you will be driven to despair unless God shows you His grace. “The just shall live by faith.” When Luther saw this truth, he was a different man. So listen closely.

The “old man” here is **not** the moral character, it is **not** the carnal nature, it is **not** our sinful nature that we had before we were justified. If you believe that our “old man” is the sinful nature, then you will believe that you are not supposed to have a war with sin and you will forever be in utter confusion and frustration.

The “old man” is the man that was in Adam, the old man that lived under the reign of sin and the old man died. Because that is true, we are no longer slaves of sin. Because that is true, we now have the **ability** to enter into a life of sanctification, to walk in newness of life. This is not something that you must achieve or attain; if you have been baptized by the Holy Spirit into Christ Jesus, it is true of you now!

About ten years ago I preached at another local church. I preached from John 3 - that you must be born again, that being religious, like Nicodemus, was not enough. After my message a very dear lady came to me and asked if she could talk with me about something that had bothered her for many years. She said that she really tried to live a good life, but how could she know if she was really saved. She said that some people had come to her house and were going to teach her how to speak in tongues and then she could know for sure that she was saved. She had enough discernment to send them away and not fall for their error.

But it was apparent to me that she was seeking assurance in an experience. So I put my arm around her and told her that I could not give her the assurance that she wanted, but I could tell her this.

If you know in your heart that you are a sinner and that you trust Jesus Christ alone, and that you put absolutely no trust in water baptism, church membership, or moral character, you can know that you are saved. She said, “Thank you, for I know that I trust Jesus.” She thanked me at least two more times before I left.

Now, I could not say to her, “Go on your way, for I know you are saved.” Why? Because I can’t see her heart. But God knows her heart, and He says in His Word that we must trust Jesus.

It is my belief that this lady was looking for assurance in the wrong place; she wanted some experience, and she could never find real assurance in an experience.

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Feel good one day and mess up the next. I don't "feel" like I think I'm supposed to feel. That is subjectivism. Many people are deceived into trusting in something they have done: subjectivism.

Subjectivism is at the heart of Roman Catholicism and the religion of the Charismatics. Trusting in an experience.

So I will make it personal. Do you trust Jesus? Or, are you looking for assurance in some activity of the flesh? Do you trust Jesus? Or, some religious work like baptism and church membership?

"Look unto Jesus, and be saved, all the ends of the earth."

Isaiah 45:22

"Look to Me, and be saved,
All you ends of the earth!
For I am God, and there is no other.

So, here it is. The "old man" is the man that I used to be in Adam. I have ceased to be in Adam. I am a new man in Christ!

My old humanity is dead; not my carnal nature, I still have that, but the old man was crucified with Christ.

Ephesians 4:17-24

17 This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the **futility** of their mind, 18 having their **understanding darkened**, being **alienated from the life of God**, because of the **ignorance** that is in them, because of the hardening of their heart; 19 who, being past feeling, have given themselves over to lewdness, to work all uncleanness with greediness. 20 **But you have not so learned Christ**, 21 if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus: 22 that you **put off**, concerning your former conduct, **the old man** which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, 23 and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, 24 and that you **put on the new man** which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.

Colossians 3:1-11

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3:1 If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. 2 Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. 3 For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. 4 When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory. 5 Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. 6 Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience, 7 in which you yourselves once walked when you lived in them. 8 But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. 9 Do not lie to one another, **since you have put off the old man** with his deeds, 10 and **have put on the new man** who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him, 11 where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all.

It occurs to me that I must repeat something that I have said before.

If what I am preaching does not sound like antinomianism to the unbeliever, then I am not preaching the Gospel. Keep in mind that the very thing that Paul is arguing against here is the idea that a Christian can continue in presumptuous sin. “Certainly not!”

This is not some level of attainment in a life of warring with sin, it is the reality of the one who has been born again of the Spirit. We are not told to crucify the old man - that occurred when we were baptized into Christ Jesus.

We are told to “put off the old man,” to know that the old man is dead.

The old man that was born under the reign of sin and death died.

“There is therefore now no condemnation to those who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.” {Romans 8:1}

It is not my sinful nature that died, but my “old man” died. To put off the old man means to put off the character of the old man.

Don’t go on living as though the “old man” still lived.

Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones says it this way: “**Be what you are.**”

Dr. Lloyd-Jones gives an example of how we use this thought. As a boy grows into a man, someone will say to him, “Don’t act like a baby.” In other words, “Be what you are.”

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We must crucify, mortify, and put to death the flesh.
But our experimental change will come at verse 11 ff.

This is objective truth here that you must know:
the old man who I was in Adam died.

“Be what you are.”

We are never called on the crucify the “old man” because he is already dead.
Realize that he is dead and “Be what you are.”

“Knowing this” will make a difference.
It is not knowing my experience; it is knowing this, the old man died!

We are brought back to Chapter 4:13-22.

We are called on the believe what Abraham believed.
There was nothing **experimental** in what Abraham believed.
Yet he did not stagger at the enormity of what he was asked to believe.
He knew the facts, he was 99 and Sarah was 90.
He felt nothing, he just had God’s word for it.

“Abraham believed God and it was reckoned to him for righteousness.”

And so likewise, we are called on to believe God’s word.

How do I know that I was in Adam?
How do I know that I was baptized into Christ?
How do I know that the old man died?

Because God said so in His Word!

And knowing this, I am not condemned, but I am justified by faith.

Now I can give you the evidence that these things are true of me because of what
God’s Word tells me. Remember 5:3-5?

The old man died, yet the sinful nature is at war in my being, but the reign of sin is
overcome by the reign of grace.

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“But where sin abounded, grace superabounded!”

Do you now see how utterly ridiculous and impossible it is for a Christian to continue in sin?

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Someone asked me a question about what I had said regarding the Old Testament sacrifices in Leviticus, specifically, that there was no sacrifice for presumptuous sin. If you study Leviticus you will see that there are indeed sacrifices for almost every situation, for the people, and for the priests. In a careful reading of Leviticus, Chapters 1-7, you will find phrases like “if a person sins,” or “if a person sins unintentionally,” or “is found to be lying,” or “if a person touches an unclean thing.”

In each case it appears that the sin or trespass kind of crept up on the person.

But over in Numbers, there is a very strong warning: Numbers 15:27-36.

The New Testament equivalent of this warning is found in Hebrews 10:19-31.

In a sense, every sin is deliberate. Yet, a person may come to a hardened condition due to continued resistance of the wooing of the Holy Spirit.

O my soul, do not presume on the grace of God!

This is a most important corollary to Romans 6: 1-10.

In these lessons on Chapter 6, we have tried to keep before our minds the main thing that the apostle wants us to realize: That it is **impossible** for a Christian to continue to live under the reign of sin. This question was anticipated in verse 1 and answered emphatically in the negative in verse 2. The reason that the Christian can no longer live under the domination of the realm of sin is simply because every Christian has **died** to sin.

Romans 6:1-7

6:1 What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? 2 Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it? 3 Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? 4 Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised 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 united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, **6 knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. 7 For he who has died has been freed from sin.**

We saw that “as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death.” Even though the majority of scholars and commentaries will tell you

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that this baptism is water baptism, I have demonstrated to you that this baptism cannot be water baptism, but is, in fact, the baptism of the Holy Spirit in the new birth. Unless you have been born again, you are not a Christian and you cannot see the Kingdom of God.

If you hold that this baptism in Romans 6 is water baptism, you will necessarily continue down the path of subjectivism and end up **either** being a living example of the very thing that Paul condemns: i.e, a benighted, deceived, so-called “Christian” who believes that a real Christian can continue to live under the reign of sin; **or** if you are serious about your commitment to Christ, you will become frustrated by the sin in your life and may fall into despair and depression.

Neither of these as a manner of life is to “walk in newness of life.”

But “as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus ...”; as many of us as are in union with Christ, died with Him, were buried with Him, were raised with Him to walk in newness of life.

Have you been so baptized into Christ?

And so, in our last study we saw that the “old man” in verse 6, “was crucified with Christ,” and that all Christians should know this.

“Knowing this.” Knowing that the “old man” is not your carnal or sinful nature, but knowing that the “old man” is your old humanity that was born under the reign of sin, the “old man” that you used to be when you were in union with Adam is dead!

The “old man” died when you “were baptized into Christ Jesus” and you are no longer helpless to fight sin in your life. And this is where many church people are having trouble today.

Many believe, because of false teaching, that if they have died to sin then they should no longer be troubled by sin in their life. And when they **inevitably** fall into sin, they begin to question whether or not they are saved. And then they find themselves in an unsolvable dilemma because sin won’t leave them alone and they don’t know why sin is still such a problem.

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Some drift into “sinless perfection” as an escape from the dilemma. But in order for one to believe that he may live without sin in his life requires that they redefine sin and so they become legalists.

Because of false teaching on this subject many Christians are robbed of assurance and are often in despair about the sin that is present in their life.

And the false teaching is just this: That in the Christian there is the “old man” and that there is the “new man,” and they are equal in power and when the “old man” gets control, the “new man” is subdued until you can screw up enough will power to beat down the “old man.” And so it goes. But the best thing that the apostle has told us here is that the “old man” died!

Then why am I still plagued by sin in my life?

That is what verses 6 & 7 teaches us.

So first let’s deal with a term that due to this false teaching about the “old man,” has misled many, viz., “the body of sin.”

6 knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the **body of sin** might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin.

There are those who teach that the “old man” and the “body of sin” are the same thing because they think that the “old man” is our sinful nature. But read it again and see if you can make any sense out of it if the “old man” and the “body of sin” are the same thing? If the “old man” died, can it make any sense for the apostle to go on to say that the “body of sin” **might** be done away with? The “old man” cannot be dead, and then be “done away with.”

An alternate translation for “done away with” is to be “rendered inoperative.” The “old man” was crucified {died} with Christ **that** {for the purpose of }, “that the body of sin **might** be done away with.”

Because the “old man” no longer lives, there is now a certain thing that is going to be true:

5 For if {since} we have been united together in the likeness of His death, **certainly** we also **shall be** in the likeness of His resurrection, ... **it must happen!**

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But if the “body of sin” is not my sinful nature, what is it?

This “body of sin” is my actual body. And it is in my physical body in which sin continues to find ways to cause me trouble. There is the “me” that is in Christ and is right now with Christ in the heavenly places waiting on the redemption of this actual body. That is what Paul means in Chapter 7:17: “But it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me.” There is a distinction between “me,” my true self, and my body. Now don’t for a second think that this means that we are not responsible for our sin. That thinking will lead you right into antinomianism.

Let’s see that the “body of sin” here is the actual body, the flesh.

In verse 13, he calls it “your members,” as he does in verse 19, “your flesh,” “your members,” parts of the body. And in 7:20-24 we have the same thing. Also, Cf. 8:10-11; 12-14, & 23.

The “body of sin” in verse 6 is the physical body of which sin has possessed.

Now let’s also be clear on another thing. The human body itself is not inherently evil. That is Gnosticism and Hinduism.

The Gnosticism that the Apostle John was dealing with in his epistles, especially in First John, taught that the Christ could not be true humanity because of the flesh, they taught that the body was inherently evil, and so Jesus of Nazareth, a Man, could not be the Christ.

He only appeared to be a man, they said.

The Apostle John argues that Jesus had a real human body and it was not sinful. Cf. 1 John 1:1-4; 4:1-6

And so sin is something external to the body.

Consider Jesus Himself.

When Jesus was tempted, it was true temptation, but He did not sin because he did not desire that which is forbidden.

God made us with normal instincts and urges. E.g., the sexual impulse is normal. God gave us that impulse. It only becomes sinful when we yield to it unlawfully;

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when a man looks on a woman to lust, then it is sin. When sex is indulged in outside of the marriage covenant, then it is sin. When unmarried teenagers indulge in sex, then it is sin. When sex is allowed between people of the same sex, then it is sin. But sex in its proper use in marriage is not sin.

And I could give you examples of many other normal urges, such as an appetite for food. Gluttony, e.g., is more than just eating too much, it is an obsession with food. These normal appetites only become sinful when they dominate your body and control what you do with your members. That is what the reign of sin does with the normal appetites of the body.

And so, we have the “old man” who was crucified and is dead and gone forever. But we have a “body of sin,” our actual physical body, that must be rendered inoperative as far as allowing sin to dominate it.

And the way to live with this tension is to know that the “old man” is dead and to **“Be what you are.”** A new man in Christ.

The reason why I am staying with this is because you must know it. Later, in verse 11ff, the Apostle will make an appeal based on this fact when, he will say, “Likewise you also reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin...”
“Likewise” to what?

That the “old man” is dead and sin can no longer get to him.

And so, this “body of sin” remains, but now it is under the reign of grace and eventually the body itself will be redeemed. Because this “body of sin” is now under the reign of grace, we can render the allure of sin to be inoperative, “that we should no longer be slaves to sin. When we were in union with Adam, we were slaves to sin.”

But we are no longer be slaves to sin!

Every man **in union with Adam** is a slave to sin.

But Christian, you are now **in union with Christ**;
“Do you not know?” So “Be what you are.”