

Romans

Romans Chapter Six

Romans 6:12-13

April 11, 2010

This is lesson number **36** in our exposition of the Book of Romans.

The Theme of the Letter

Romans 1:16-17

“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: **“Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body”**

Romans 6: 12-13

Verse 12 “Therefore....”

Verse 13 “and do not....”

Rom 6:11-14

11 Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord. 12 Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts. 13 And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. 14 For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.

Everything in Romans up to 6:11 is **doctrine**.

No exhortation, no encouragement or application, just teaching.

Unless you base your religious practice and beliefs on sound **doctrine** you are cast adrift in the sea of subjectivism and emotionalism.

And so the basis of the Gospel is found in the O.T. Scriptures “which He promised before through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures, concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord....”

Paul inextricably links the Gospel with the wrath of God; the just condemnation of Gentile and Jew alike; justification by faith apart from the law; original sin; representation in Adam and Christ; the reign of sin and the reign of grace; baptism of the Holy Spirit into Christ; union with Christ.

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All of that doctrine Paul writes, to get us to know and understand how a Christian thinks.

The false professors of Christ, psuedo-Christians, to whom Jesus will say,

“... I never knew you, depart from Me, you who work lawlessness.” {Mt 7:21-23}

are typical of those Paul is refuting here in Chapter 6; the kind of person who would ask or think: “Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?”

And the answer is:

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

All of that doctrine {teaching} is necessary in order that **when** the Christian is exhorted to act:

11 Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin,
but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

that the true believer in Christ will have a legitimate basis to so reckon himself to be in Christ and alive to God.

Your **reckoning** must be on what Christ Jesus has done and not on anything that you have done; no matter how noble and beneficial to others it may be.

To base your assurance on anything other than the sufficient propitiation of Jesus Christ will place you in the ranks of those very people that Jesus never knew.

And so we have come to the “so what.” First the doctrine, then “so what?”

Now we are going to see how someone who has died to sin will think, someone who is no longer a slave to sin.

There is something that needs to be made very clear. This occurred to me while I was preparing this lesson. In the very process of preparing to teach on how a Christian must think, an impure thought came into my mind. For a second, maybe two, my sinful nature relished that thought.

But then, my born again self reminded me: Likewise **you also** {**even you preacher**}, reckon yourselves to be **dead** indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

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And you know what? My mind went to something pure.
And here is the point. When you sin, you do not think think, “Well then, I must not be a Christian.” No! But you must reckon yourself dead to sin.

The Christian will think like that.
The deceived false professor will make excuses.

And so I am not preaching that you must become some spiritual giant who never has a sinful thought. I am, however, preaching “holiness, without which no one will see the Lord...” {Hebrews 12:14}

This holiness comes by reckoning who you are in Christ.
“alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Let me give you an example of how the Spirit of God works.

It is my practice to read a few chapters in both the O.T. and the N.T. everyday.
This is simply devotional and meditative, not reading for sermon or lesson preparation.

Over the years I have used several daily Bible reading guides and have no problem with them as long as you don't make reading the Bible a duty that must be done and so you become impatient with the reading itself. Reading your Bible should not be a chore, but rather something that you look forward to each day.

So what I do is to read about three chapters in both the O.T. and the N.T. everyday. That will take you through the Bible in a year or less. Then you just start over. I make no boast in this, but this is how I have read through the Bible, in several good translations, cover to cover, well over 50 times.

The Bible is a living book. I rarely read a book more than once with a few exceptions, like Pilgrim's Progress. But the Bible never gets old. Everytime I read it, I find something that I had missed or likely that I had grown in knowledge so that it makes an impact on my mind, perhaps for the first time.
Allow me to give you two examples:

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In the N.T. I read about the time when some religious hypocrites brought a woman to Jesus who was caught in the act of adultery, to see what He would say they should do with her.

They intended to trap Jesus in His words. {John 8:1-11}

Immediately after reading about the woman taken in adultery, I turned to read in the O.T. The next place I happened read was Leviticus 20, the law about sexual sins. Now I did not plan that coincidence, but that kind of coincidence happens very often when you read everyday in both the OT and the NT. The reason is that the NT is a commentary on the OT.

The other example has to do with this lesson. Again, there was no planning on my part. I was thinking about this text in Romans Six. How to explain it. That is the job of the preacher, to explain what the Bible teaches.

Then on a Wednesday morning before this lesson, I read in **Num 15:37-41**

37 Again the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 38 "Speak to the children of Israel: Tell them to make tassels on the corners of their garments throughout their generations, and to put a blue thread in the tassels of the corners. 39 And you shall have the tassel, that you may look upon it and remember all the commandments of the LORD and do them, and that you may not follow the harlotry to which your own heart and your own eyes are inclined, 40 and that you may remember and do all My commandments, and be holy for your God. 41 I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, to be your God: I am the LORD your God."

Now let me read to you what Matthew Henry wrote about this passage:

Num 15:37-41

The people are ordered by the Lord to make fringes on the borders of their garments. The Jews were distinguished from their neighbours in their dress, as well as in their diet, and thus taught not to be conformed to the way of the heathen in other things. They proclaimed themselves Jews wherever they were, as not ashamed of God and his law. The fringes were not appointed for trimming and adorning their clothes, but to stir up their minds by way of remembrance 2 Peter 3:1. If they were tempted to sin, the fringe would warn them not to break God's commandments. We should use every means of refreshing our memories with the truths and precepts of God's word, to strengthen and quicken our obedience, and arm our minds against temptation. Be holy unto your God; cleansed from sin, and sincerely devoted to his service; and that great reason for all the commandments is again and again repeated, "I am the Lord your God." (from Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 2000 by BibleSoft)

Well, I don't see any tassels hanging from your garments, but you don't need them now. Why?

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11 Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

So as we come to verses 12 -13 -14, you must see that these are not unreasonable commands, these commands are only what the Christian will want to do.

Dr. Lloyd-Jones says that generally Christians fall into **two main groups**.

The larger group is not interested in doctrine at all. Emotionalism, visions, emphasis on the Holy Spirit. They never seem to question or care whether or not their practice is in accordance with what the Bible teaches. They say, "I feel it, so it must be true."

The smaller group is only interested in doctrine. They will argue about the finer points of theology while missionaries suffer for lack of support. Antinomians are a subset of this group.

Both groups are wrong.

All of the doctrine that we have studied in these first chapters of Romans is "strong meat." But doctrine is to be applied or we will be like the demons who believe God and tremble.

James says in **2:19**

You believe that there is one God.
You do well. Even the demons believe--and tremble!

What if you believed all of the teachings of the Bible and failed to apply them to your own life? You would be no better off than the demons.

And so we must apply the doctrine to everyone who is a Christian.

Let's go back to 6:6 and recall that we made the distinction that your "old man," is who you are, the you, yourself.

The "old man" who was in Adam and who died with Christ when you were baptized by the Holy Spirit into Christ Jesus in verse 3. The "old man" is not your sinful nature and is not the "body of sin," which is your mortal body.

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Sin is a force separate from your physical body in which sin operates and is called the “body of sin.” Your “body of sin” is your physical body, now referred to in 6:12 as your ‘mortal body.’”

I don’t want to confuse anyone, but these terms are often used and unless you are very sure of what they mean you will not see what the apostle is teaching us.

The old man is who you were in Adam and the old man has died to sin.

The sinful nature is still very much alive and active in our physical body.

The body of sin is our physical body and is also called our mortal body.

Our physical or mortal body is constantly being attacked by sin.

“Mortal” means dying. We are all dying. Some of us are closer to death than others, but our mortality has very little to do with our age. Actuarially, I should die long before one of these twenty-somethings out there. But young people are killed in car wrecks or by disease and some people live to be 100 years old. But we are all dying. We are mortal.

But this is not a great concern to the believer. Don’t misunderstand me. No one wants to be sick and in pain, but death has lost its sting. The sting of death is sin and we are dead to sin.

The encouragement is that however long we remain in this mortal body, it is temporary. **Phil 3:20-21**

20 For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, 21 who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.

There are two errors that this passage in 6:11-14 completely destroys.

One is “sinless perfection.” This is the teaching that in this life you can arrive at a level of spirituality that is above sin.

Even John Wesley, who taught this error, gave it up before he died.

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Sinless perfection teaches that sin is dead to you. But the correct teaching is that you are dead to sin. But your mortal body must be brought under control, or sin will reign over it.

The other error is called the **“Carnal Christian.”**

The idea being that you can be a Christian and continue to live a fleshly and carnal life. The people who believe this error trust in their decisions, water baptism, and church membership and they are deceived.

This is an offspring of antinomianism.

But this passage refutes both of those errors:
Sinless perfection and the carnal Christian.

12 Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts.

You must see that we are at war with sin. Sin is a force that attacks us. It is the great weapon of satan. While satan cannot steal a child of God from the Father’s hand, he can cause great damage to the individual and to the visible church.

We have learned that justification is received by faith and it is once and forever.

Sanctification is not a sudden and one time thing. We will be most miserable if we think that sin is going to leave this mortal body alone.

And so in verse 12

Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts.

As so you reckon yourself to be dead to sin, and the Holy Spirit will strengthen and comfort you in your war with sin. But you must take action. This is not doing something in order to get saved, it is what saved people do. That’s why the apostle says, “Therefore,…”

You can tell a lost man not to sin and he is helpless to obey. Yes, he may reform himself for a season, but he is still a slave to sin, and sin will overcome him.

But you can tell a Christian, “Therefore,…” and he can “reckon” and can and will do it. You are dealing with a man that is freed from sin, no longer a slave to sin.

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12 Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts.

And how to obey?

13 And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.

Remember that Paul is defending against the charge that justification by faith and the assurance that it gives leads to antinomianism. And so he insists that if we believe the doctrine, the application to ourselves is certain.

How then do we “not let sin reign in our mortal body?”

Don't let it have an opportunity to enter.

As the old saying goes, now I'm going to stop preaching and start meddling.

Believe me I am not saying, “You - you - you.”
I am saying “We - we -we.”

This applies to the preacher as well as to the listener.

Some men are tempted to impure thoughts of fornication and adultery by what they look at. Yes, pornography, but even less graphic images.

What to do? Simply “do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness, ...” Your members includes your mind, your thoughts.

Some women fantasize about romance and spend hours watching illicit romance and adultery on the TV. What to do?

“do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness, ...”

Christian, you can do this.

Anyone that teaches that sanctification is easy is simply wrong.

We must fight against sin. The devil wants you to give up.

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He wants to see local churches destroyed by members who are exposed in sinful behavior. He wants the gossip to be spread. He enjoys the grief that the faithful experience when their brothers and sisters fall into sin.

So do not present your members as instruments {**weapons**} of unrighteousness to sin

A lesson or two ago I told you about an encounter that I had with a man who said that the Bible did not tell us how to live. So I asked him to read Colossians 3 with me.

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,

“And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness, ...”

That is the negative side of verse 13.

But the apostle never leaves us in the negative.

The positive side of verse 13 says,

but present **yourselves** to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.

The moralists, the legalists, stop at the negative:
touch not, taste not, handle not - and all their man made rules.

Well there are definite commands to be obeyed, and we can obey them;
yes, we must obey them.

And so the positive says, “present yourselves...”

Lloyd-Jones makes the point here that the negative refers to **your members**, our mortal body. Do not yield or present your thoughts and body to be satan’s weapon, his instruments of unrighteousness to sin.

The positive side is “**yourselves.**”
Remember that you, yourself, has died to sin.

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Therefore, you **cannot** present yourself to sin, because you are dead to sin.

But you can control your members.

The positive is to present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.

The apostle John tells us in **1 John 5:1-5**

5:1 Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves Him who begot also loves him who is begotten of Him. 2 By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep His commandments. 3 For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome. 4 For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world--our faith. 5 Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

My dear brothers and sisters, Christianity is a serious matter.

The life of the Christian is not without effort.

But we have all the power we need to obey these commands, even the Holy Spirit of God.

11 Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord. 12 Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts. 13 And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.

And God willing we will take up 6:14 the next time.

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