

Romans

Romans Chapter Six

Romans 6:13-14

April 18, 2010

This is lesson number 37 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: “**For sin shall not have dominion over you....**”

Rom 6:14

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

We labor in the Word of God to declare to you the Gospel.

The Apostle Paul warned the Christians in the churches in Galatia that they were in great danger because they had been bewitched by another gospel, which Paul says is not another, but a perversion of the only true Gospel.

It is my chief concern as we labor to teach and preach the Gospel that we do not stray from the truth.

The Truth is Jesus Christ. A person can be religious and even claim to be a Christian and yet be lost. Sometimes we may ask, “Do you know Jesus?” The better question is, “Does Jesus know you?”

Many people are comfortable with religion.

No doubt Nicodemus [John 3], before he came to Jesus at night, was “at ease in Zion.” What could he, a Pharisee, possibly lack?

He needed to be born from above.

Each one of us enters the world with the same need.

Religion, for the sake of religion, is damning.

Nicodemus was struck by the possibility of starting over!

Can I enter again into my mother’s womb?

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The apostle Paul proclaimed the **awful** doctrine of the wrath of God; the inability of any law system, or “deeds of the law,” to justify anyone before God; and the **blood atonement** of Jesus, the Christ as the only propitiation to appease God’s wrath.

The word “awful” in its correct usage is to be full of awe, or reverence.

When we came to Chapter Six, we saw that the apostle had to refute the charge that the reign of grace would lead to a life of presumptuous sin.
“Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?”

That, I fear, is where a great many church people are, they are “at ease in Zion,” depending on some religious system or human response that they have done instead of trusting **only** in the righteousness of Jesus Christ.

What I have labored to show you is that true Christianity produces obedience. Christian obedience is not “in order to” manipulate God, Christian obedience is the result of knowing who you are in Christ Jesus.

Referring to Christian obedience, Dr. Bryan Chapell speaking at Beeson Divinity School said, “In Christ-centered {grace oriented} preaching the **rules** don’t change, the **reasons** do.”

What he meant by that is that it is always wrong to bear false witness; to lie. The man under law tries not to lie in order to gain merit before God. The man under grace does not want to lie because he wants to glorify God.

Christian obedience is the **result** of being born again, it is never the **cause** of the new birth. To view obedience to be in any way the **cause** of God’s grace is to follow a system of law, it is to be “under law.”

Verse 3 of Chapter Six refers to the new birth as being
“baptized into Christ Jesus.”

An amazing thing happens when we are “baptized into Christ Jesus,” in God’s work of grace, the “old man,” the self that we were in Adam - died with Christ - was crucified with Christ - was buried with Christ - was raised from the dead with Christ - **for a purpose.**

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That purpose is that we should walk in newness of life;
no longer slaves to sin, but freed from sin.
Not sinless, but with the power to resist sin.

This is called our “**union with Christ.**”
What happened to Christ happened to us.

Our **union with Christ** is the basis upon which the Apostle builds his exhortation that you may “reckon yourselves indeed dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.” **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.

It is only when you so reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, do the commands to live a sanctified life become an attainable reality.
Cf. Romans 12:1 {reasonable worship}

Rom 12:1-3

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*.
² 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.

We have considered Chapter Six, verses 12 & 13.

Our mortal body, this physical body that is dying, is under constant attack by sin. It is essential that we fight against sin. That is what the Christian does.

Our members, as I have said before, includes our thoughts.
Nearly everything we do in the body begins as a thought.

[Of course I am not referring to involuntary body functions like breathing.]

But we can choose and we must control what we think about.
We can choose to **not** languish in sinful thought.

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Martin Luther said this about sinful thoughts: “You cannot stop the birds from flying about your head, but you can stop them from building a nest in your hair.”

When the sinful thought enters your mind:

“do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin”

When the temptation presents itself:

“do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin”

And this is the encouragement, this can be done, you can do it!

That is the negative side of verse 13 - The “do not...”

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

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.”

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

Dr. Lloyd-Jones makes the point here that the negative refers to **your members**, your 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 have died to sin. You are born again, you are in union with Christ and so you,

“...reckon yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Therefore, since you are in **union with Christ**, you **cannot** present **yourself** to sin. Why? Because “You are not your own, you were bought with a price, the precious blood of Jesus.”

You, yourself concludes {reckons} yourself to be dead to sin.

But you may present your members - your mortal body.

Therefore you must control your members - your mortal body.

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

The reason, the rationale, for verses 12 & 13, is in verse 14:

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

Believers are no longer under the reign of sin.

That is not to say that sin is not a reality in the life of the believer.

That is why verse 12 says “do not let sin reign in your mortal body...”

If you were to say to a blind man, “Do not behave as a blind man,” you would be mocking the blind man. He is a blind man and must behave as a blind man.

One time I had a friend that went blind and I would visit with him. My wife used to bake bread and I took a loaf to him. But I did not tell him that I had a loaf of bread I just held it out to him. Of course he did not take it because he was blind. He was acting like a blind man.

The same is true for the man who is a slave to sin;
he must behave as a slave to sin.

But to the one who has been freed from sin, you can say:
“do not let sin reign in your mortal body...”

So believer, “do not let sin reign in your mortal body...”

In reading Dr. Lloyd-Jones, he says that far too many people approach the church from the attitude of what can the church do for them. People go “church shopping.” Keep in mind that he wrote this over 40 years ago. I believe he would be appalled at what has happened in the church today. It does not matter to the majority, it seems to me, whether or not the Gospel is being preached or if the message is Christ-centered. They ask. “What kind of activities does the church offer?” “What can the church offer me?”

They don't care that the gospel is not being preached because they don't know the gospel!

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The most popular preacher in America in 2010 preaches the “Prosperity Gospel,” which is no Gospel and is based on human greed. If the people who follow this false prophet did not expect to get some material “blessing” they would not be in a thousand miles of him.

What you need is a church where the pastors are laboring to present the very Word of God. A place where you will be told the truth about yourself and that your only refuge is in what Jesus has done for you.

Everything that Paul has said in verses 1-10 is about **who you are “in Christ.”** The person who is in Christ will act like who they are.

We have seen that our **justification** is entirely an act of the sovereign God, “who justifies the ungodly.”

That is our justification, it is all of God, and we can only receive it by faith.

It is true that we have a perfect sanctification in Jesus Christ.

But there is progressive sanctification, personal growth in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Personal **sanctification** is not passive. God gives you the grace to believe and the power to obey, and **so you will** obey. When the believer is told “do not let sin reign in your mortal body,” he will desire to do just that.

You know the expression, “chasing a rabbit.”

So this may sound like a diversion of thought, but hear me out.

Perhaps the major symptom of the unrest in our society today is the idea that above everything else, we must be “happy.” And the tragedy is that we think that we can define what it is to be happy.

This is the reason that half the marriages in America end in divorce, and Christians get divorces at nearly the same rate. The person that you married no longer makes you happy, therefore you think you have the option to divorce him / her. Vows before God and the welfare of children take their place far behind being “happy.”

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Now I know that in many cases of divorce one of the parties is not at fault. But I am talking about what is behind the unrest and discontent.

The initial steps to an adulterous relationship is when a person is not content, i.e., not “happy.” And so they allow themselves to form a relationship with someone other than their spouse.

In most cases, it is not their intent to become an adulterer / adulteress, but the affair develops because they ignore verse 13 as well as other similar warnings.

What is the point of this emphasis on being “happy?” Just this; that the purpose of **sanctification** is not to make us “happy,” it is to **glorify God**.

So I wasn’t “chasing a rabbit,” the same unrest and the idea that we must of all things be “happy,” afflicts the believer as well as the unbeliever.

“Be ye holy, because I am holy,” says the Lord. If we can but grasp this truth, that the **purpose** of the Christian is to **glorify God**, most of our anxiety about our sanctification will be dissolved.

What is the first question of our catechism?

What is the chief end of man?

A man’s chief end is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever.

We are to be holy in thought and in deed to **glorify God**, not to make us “happy.”

There are any number of things that people imagine that they think would make them happy. The “pleasure of sin for a season” is what Moses shunned.

Heb 11: 24 By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, 25 choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, 26 esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to the reward.

And so when we are enticed by the allure of sin, we must remember who we are, and that our being happy is not what is important, but to glorify God.

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Now here is the irony. When you, Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord: Heb 12:14 The irony is that you will have contentment, a much more Scriptural idea than being “happy” the way we usually define being happy.

And so verses 11, 12, and 13 are the starting point for the Christian life; they are a warning and an encouragement to all those who are in Christ. Verse 14, unlike verses 12 & 13, is not a command.

As I said, verse 14 is a **reason**, a rationale for verses 12 & 13.

The first clause of verse 14 says: For sin shall not have dominion over you, ...

This is the reason why we must “not present our members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin,” because of what has happened to us.

For sin shall not have dominion over you

It will not be allowed to happen!

Matt 1:21

And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins."

Often this verse is taken to mean that ultimately His people will be delivered from sin in heaven. But the verse says, **from** their sins, not **in** their sins.

We have been justified, “There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.” Romans 8:1

The idea that a Christian can continue in sin is to deny the essence of the Gospel. It is to mock our justification, the new birth, repentance and faith, and sanctification.

An old preacher once said,

“When the Lord saves a man, even his dog will know it.”

There is a radical change. You no longer live for self. You learn that there are things that are more important than what pleases your sinful nature.

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The second clause in verse 14, explains the first clause.
The reason sin shall not have dominion over you, is:

for you are not under law but under grace.

What does it mean to be “under law,” and to be “under grace”?

To be under law is to be subject to a system whereby a person seeks to justify themselves by their conformity to a set of rules. This would include the moral law and the Mosaic law and any law principle, or human response.

In Chapter 2 we saw that the Gentiles, who never heard of the law given to Israel through Moses, were nevertheless subject to natural law. This natural law is inherent in every person. Everyone has in their being a law principle by which they accuse or excuse one another.

So to be under law means that you will try to justify yourself before God by your actions and deeds. “What must I do to be saved?”

Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.”

Go beyond that and you have fallen for another gospel.

The person under law is under the dominion of sin.
But the Christian is not under law, but under grace.

Rom 3:19-20

19 Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. 20 Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

This tells us what the law can and what the law cannot do. The law cannot save {justify} anyone, it only gives the knowledge of sin. That’s it! That is all the law can do.

Gal 3: 21 Is the law then against the promises of God? Certainly not! For if there had been a law given which could have given life, truly righteousness would have been by the law. 22 But the Scripture has confined all under sin, that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.

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And so that's all we can say for the law. Any law principle, be it the law of Moses, or a set of rules, or circumcision, or baptism "in order to be saved."

Law-keeping for merit cannot save, it can only condemn.

Ah, but there is grace. What is it to be under grace?

The object of worship is God in Jesus Christ and you will not be bewitched by another gospel. Your sins are completely and finally dealt with.

Your sin-stained garments have been washed in the precious blood of Jesus.

Hallelujah?

Nicodemus was on the right track when he asked Jesus, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter again into his mother's womb and be born?"

What Nicodemus wanted to know is how can a man get a **new start**, a new life? To Nicodemus that as was impossible as literally being born a second time.

But Jesus was talking about the only way that a new life comes to us. To be born of the Holy Spirit.

It troubles me that I have not properly emphasized this essential truth.
"... for you are not under law but under grace...."

I said, "To be under law is to be subject to a system of rules whereby a person seeks to justify themselves by their conformity to a set of rules."

We are looking at the failure of any system of rules you may follow to gain any **merit** before God. This is not limited to the idea of gaining God's favor through following the Mosaic law. That system of law was not given to save, but to give the knowledge of sin.

But we have a "law system" being offered by many well meaning people today.

To be "**under law**" is to be subject to a law system whereby a person seeks to justify themselves, or become right with God, by their conformity to a set of rules.

The law system may be the moral law as summarized in the Ten Commandments, e.g., Judaism. The law system may be natural law that resides in the heart of every

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person, “I’m just doing the best I can,” they say, “I’m not bad enough that God would send me to hell.”

“Besides a loving God would not send anyone to hell.”

The law system can be any law principle whereby a person seeks to justify themselves by their conformity to a set of rules, be it baptism, or affiliation with a particular group. This applies to any visible body that teaches that “in order to be saved” you must do this or that deed or, you must be a member of their group.

Examples are the Roman Catholic Church, the Church of Christ {the denomination not the true body of Christ}; the Primitive Baptists, and other “Landmark” churches. They all teach that unless you are a member of their particular group you cannot be saved. Well, at least one group is wrong, and it is my belief that they are all in error on this matter and are all “under law.”

It is true that salvation is only by faith in Jesus Christ and His righteousness, but God’s grace is not dispensed through a local church group.

That is what it means to be “under law,” **to trust in anything over which you have control.** {repeat for emphasis}

To be “**under grace**” is to have abandoned all trust in our obedience as to merit, and to look only to Jesus Christ, who is Himself the righteousness of God.

Personally, I do not subscribe to the various scripted or canned approaches to evangelism, such as Four Spiritual Laws, the Roman Road, etc. I don’t deny that God can and has used such a “plan of salvation.” But despite the words that are said, or how you present the script, the impression is given that somehow the deciding factor in salvation is dependent on the person being “evangelized.” And then the presenter usually presses for a “decision.”

They say, “God has provided a Substitute for your sin.”

And, “If **you will decide** to ask Jesus to come into your heart, God will save you.”

This form of “limited atonement” limits God and invests the power, the cause of salvation in the power of your “decision.”

But do we not make a decision?

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When the Holy Spirit convicts a person of their guilt and condemnation, and the law leads them to Christ, and they are born again - then they will make an informed decision. They will decide that unless God shows them mercy they will go to hell.

This is not so much a “decision” as it is to agree with God about sin and guilt and judgement.

They will despise any idea that what they have done in any way obligates God; they will plead for mercy!

On the other end of this spectrum of a law system is the idea that by your actions you can lose God’s salvation. What if you fail to “not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin?” You did not mean to sin, but you did.

Do you then think, “I’m not qualified to pray to God because I have failed.”

No my fellow sinners, you did not earn God’s love and you can’t stop God’s love.

Here is the main point that I have tried to make.

Our union with Christ is eternal.

You did not gain union with Christ by your deeds.
Neither can you forfeit union with Christ by your deeds.

If you are in Christ, you can never be “out.”
D. E. King: “Once in, never out.”

This is not legalism nor is it license, it is the Gospel.
This is our assurance, what Jesus Christ has done for us.

And so out of gratitude to Jesus, we will desire to obey Him.

When we fail to obey Him as we should, we will not think that now God does not love us. God loved us when we were His enemy, and God loved us when we hated Him, and He will love us when we fail in our war against sin.

When we fail, we won’t quit God, by God’s grace we will keep looking to Jesus, and trust Him, and endure to the end. **Why?**

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For you are not under law, but under grace.

“Under grace,” we have been baptized {born again} by the Holy Spirit into Christ Jesus. “Under grace,” we see what God had to do to save a single one of us.

Propitiation of God’s wrath by the precious blood of Jesus.

“Under grace,” we see that no system of law, no matter how noble, could ever justify a guilty and condemned enemy of God.

“Grace, grace, God’s grace, grace that is greater than all our sin.”

Are you under law or are you under grace? **Rom 6:11-14**

Are you trying to obey God? If so, Why?

Are you under law or are you under grace?

Again, using Dr. Bryan Chapell’s statement that I quoted last time:

“The rules don’t change, the reasons do.”