

Romans 6: Battle Sin and Win!

Romans 6:1-2

For the next six weeks, we will be wielding Romans 6 as our Sword of the Spirit. If we are to experience victory over sin, we must apprehend God's Word, allowing it to dwell in us richly (Colossians 3:16).

To gain context for today's two verses, we first look at Romans 5:19-21:

Romans 5:19-21

For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous. Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.

Romans 5:19

One man's disobedience: referring to Adam. Obedience of one: referring to Jesus.

So, though we were yet sinners, Christ died for us—we are declared justified and righteous through the one act of Jesus on the cross!

Romans 5:20:

The law was a schoolmaster pointing out our sin. Oh, but grace outmatched sin at every turn!

Romans 5:21:

Even as we all had sinned and fell short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23), grace and righteousness reigned unto eternal life through Jesus Christ. This is why when we choose to say yes to the Gospel, we are saying yes to eternal life—we will live with God forever!

So, these verses promote grace—which is great—but they also create a situation here (as in Romans 6:1-2) wherein grace can be misunderstood and abused. Paul is addressing this wrong understanding of grace—God forbid!

***QUESTION FOR MEDITATION:** As you observe today's Christian culture, do you see any ways that Biblical grace is perhaps abused?

***STUDY POINT:** Write down three examples of how grace is being abused in the modern church. Compare these examples against Scriptures (perhaps today's employed verses) that speak of righteous grace.

We know from human relationships that taking advantage of the one you love and sinning against them with intentional acts of abuse, disrespect, control and manipulation is not expressing love in action. Quite the opposite. In the same way, we do not abuse the grace of God—not if we claim to love Him and walk in newness of life:

Romans 6:4

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.

We don't abuse grace if we claim to love Him with all we are (Luke 10:27). The intended function of grace is to teach us to say no to ungodliness and worldly lusts (Titus 2:12). Therefore to continue in sin after we are declared dead to it through the cross of Christ, is blasphemous indeed!

In a right relationship with God we respond to His goodness and grace through Jesus with our obedience—because we are grateful and because we love Him.

All through the book of Romans, we see Paul explaining justification. And gloriously yes, at the end of the day we are justified by faith alone in Christ alone (Romans 4:1-12)!

Romans 6:23

For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

This verse contrasts death and life. And mark well, beloved, the chasm between the two can only be bridged by Jesus Christ and His death on a cross for us on Calvary. Two disparate destinations indeed!

The gift of God. That's right, it's a gift! We receive it. We open it. It is a supernatural miracle that causes us to be a miracle. Hallelujah! Our sphere of influence then wonders what happened to us. The answer, of course, is that we have been transformed, we have been born again:

John 3:5-8

Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

To be born again means that when we were first born, we were born into sin via our fallen flesh. When we accepted Jesus as Lord and Leader of our lives, we were then reborn in the Spirit via God's grace.

To frame Paul's message in context: the saints reasoned that if God's grace is free, and they were justified by that grace—why not go on sinning?

Romans 6:1

(KJV) What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?

(NIV) What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase?

Romans 6:2

(KJV) God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?

(NIV) By no means! We are those who have died to sin; how can we live in it any longer?

Hence Paul is addressing the wrong, misplaced attitudes of his church. They are saying, "We have the free grace of God—let's sin to the utmost!" And Paul is saying, "God forbid, how could you children of God—who claim to love Him—go on sinning?"

Presumptuous, or intensional, sins need not have dominion over us:

Psalms 19:13

Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression.

1Corinthians 10:13

There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.

*QUESTION FOR MEDITATION: Have you been aware in times past of God's commitment to making a way out of sin for you in the heat of the battle? Have you acted on His promises? Why or why not?

*STUDY POINT: Write down three examples from both old and new testaments wherein a Biblical character employed Scripture to overcome temptation. Then find three examples in which the Biblical character ignored the clear commands of Scripture. What was the outcome? What lessons can we glean from both types of examples?

We have no excuse, once we truly know God and His holiness. Remember that we need to guard our hearts (Proverbs 4:23), for every bad choice we make hardens our hearts that much more—until we are far from Him:

Hebrews 3:12

heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.

As protection against the potential hardening of our hearts, we meet with God daily in the quiet refuge of our prayer closets—bowing low and then still lower—before His

holiness, listening for the still, small voice of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 6:6). As believers, we also encourage one another daily, that our hearts do not become hardened by the deceitfulness of sin (Hebrews 3:13).

And then this: consider yourselves to be dead to sin:

Romans 6:10-14

For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. 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. For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.

Paul's people—and indeed all humankind since the garden of Eden—have been enjoying the temporal pleasures of sin. As born-again saints, we will still be tempted to go back and visit the old haunts of our unredeemed lives outside of God. But that is only the flesh wanting to express itself. God makes it so clear that we can now, by the power of the Holy Spirit, deny carnal pleasures in favour of choosing righteous acts. When we do choose Him and do His will, we will will be blessed!

Note how God makes the choices of right and wrong so clear to us:

Galatians 5:17

For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other, so that you are not to do whatever you want.

Romans 8:6

For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.

Dear follower of Christ: choose life and peace!

Amen.

~ Reverend Darren McClelland