

## **Romans 6 v 1-14**

### Introduction

Romans 1-5 deals with man's great need in sin and guilt and condemnation. Romans 6-8 is about sanctification. How does the justified man live? The faith by which he is justified is also the beginning of life in which he is sanctified.

Dealing with objection that since we are saved we can live as we like. The more we sin, the more we receive grace. Shocked at very idea. Faith in Christ means being justified and also sanctified. Previously we were under the guilt and power of sin. Now our status and also spiritual condition has changed. Union with Christ means new life of holiness. Regarded as righteous. Now made righteous. Christ's work *for* us brought about our new position, Christ's work *in* us creates our new condition.

Dr Chalmers, the great Scottish theologian and preacher, described Romans 6 as "the greatest and most difficult of chapters in the Bible". It presents both negative and positive sides of Salvation. The death and resurrection of Jesus are not only historical facts and great doctrines, but also personal experiences in the life of the believer. Things which we share with Christ. Therefore since we have died and risen with Christ, it is unthinkable that we should go on living in sin.

Paul builds up a strong argument in 5 stages regarding the idea that we are free to sin.

#### 1. Baptism into Christ

Assumes of course that his readers have been baptised. Because of the nature and meaning of Christian baptism, it is impossible to entertain the idea that Christians are free to sin. The Christian has entered into vital union with Christ. Baptism signifies that union.

Baptism has various meanings eg. Washing from sin, badge of discipleship, but basically it means union with Christ. **Baptised into Jesus Christ** (6:3). Baptism is a dramatic sacrament or ordinance, indicating not only that God washes away our sins but places us into Christ Jesus. In apostolic times baptism followed at once on faith, Not as much 2 distinct experiences, as two parts of one whole. The outward rite of itself does not procure our union, hence the stress on faith in chapters 1-5. Union which is invisibly effected by faith is visibly signified by baptism.

#### 2. Baptism is baptism into Christ's death and resurrection

Pictorial symbolism of baptism – death, burial and resurrection to new life. Baptism portrays a funeral and then a resurrection from the grave. Inwardly by faith, and then outwardly by baptism, the Christian is united to Christ in his death and resurrection. Thus in fact and in symbolism the Christian has shared in Christ's death and resurrection.

### 3. Christ's death is death unto sin and resurrection unto God

**That our old man was** (not “is”) **crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin** (6:6). So the Christian died unto sin once and now lives unto God. So we are to consider ourselves dead unto sin but alive unto God. How are we dead unto sin?

“Old man” in this instance does not refer to “flesh”. Some people think that in a mysterious way Christ took flesh on to cross and there it died, or began dying gradually. Therefore we could be insensitive to sin, as with a corpse not responding to touch, and we would not feel or react to temptation and sin. We are dead. If our old sinful nature were nailed to the cross and killed, we would be insensible to sin.

But this does not work out in experience. The result is disillusionment or despair. Play acting or pretence. The result is doubt in the Bible, or being dishonest about our experience. As Christ died unto sin in bearing penalty and met its claim, therefore sin has no claim on him. So we have died to sin and it has no claim on us. By union with Christ we have borne its penalty.

The “old man” is not lower nature or self, but it is the *former* self. Old self in guilt and under dominion of sin and dupe of devil. Our former personality before new birth, unregenerate, unconverted man. The “old man” is the man of old, the man I used to be, “The man we once were” (NEB). The people we used to be. He is finished, but our sinful nature is not finished. True, we are to deny, mortify, refuse and crucify our sins – but the very fact that we have to do that proves that the “flesh” is not dead.

**That the body of sin might be destroyed** ie. Defeated, deprived of power, that body might no longer be tool of sin.

Repeat – “old man” does not refer to lower self, the flesh, the sinful nature. The “old man” is the man I used to be before I was converted, pre-conversion life. Consider your life in two parts, divided by conversion. Need to labour this point so we fully grasp it, because to grasp it produces new liberty and new dimension of Christian living. It also means the preacher can preach it without tongue in cheek!

Reason for this – need no longer be in bondage to sin. New person in Christ's resurrection. New life possible because old life is dead. Now free to live new life unto God.

### 4. Reckon this as true

Regard, calculate, estimate this to be so. Consider this to be so. Act on this. Not make-believe, pretending to be what in our hearts we know is not true. Realize former self is over. Not the person we used to be. Life in 2 volumes: Volume 1 – story of old man before conversion, dead in Christ; Volume 2 – New man, new creature, the person since conversion, to be lived unto God.

Grasp, lay hold of this, use this. So when temptation comes – that which dominated old life and was a characteristic of it – it has no claim on us. “Sorry, we cannot come – we died last week”. “Augustine, it is I” (temptress to Augustine). “Yes, but it is not

I” (Augustine’s response). Inconceivable we should reopen volume 1, now that we are living in volume 2. Can a married woman live as a single girl? In theory it is possible – but the wedding ring is reminder of new life and new relationship. She must remember who she now is, and live accordingly. Unthinkable for adult to live as if in childhood, for the freed prisoner to go back to prison cell. So incongruous, unthinkable, nonsensical for believer to live as if unregenerate. Volume 1 is closed, living in volume 2 now.

Know that the old life is over. Reckon and act on this fact when temptation comes. Faith and baptism have severed us from old life and committed us to a new one. We, as “old man”, have died. New man has come into being – risen to new life.

#### 5. Practical expression here

**Do not let sin reign** (6:12) – do not let sin lord it over you. Do not let sin rule you and use your members and your body. Instead, yield selves to God. Alive from dead, therefore give bodies to God. Do not keep on allowing sin to be king. Once for all, present selves to God. Let God be your king and rule over you. Sin has no authority or claim on us. Under no obligation to sin. We have changed sides. New status, therefore live like it. Cannot go back to old.

#### Conclusion

To return to first point. **Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?** (6:1). To ask such a question demonstrates ignorance about baptism, faith, conversion and meaning of the cross. No option but to live unto the Lord. New life – unthinkable we should carry on as we were. Know this as a certainty. Use it for practical daily living. So many people go by their feelings. Begin with fact – build on fact with faith. Let God in His mercy add feeling in his will and purpose.

Climax of all – to yield selves. “Placing surrendered self into Hands which will faster to me drift as only its maker can. [*writing unclear*] As he fills us with his presence, he will use it for his beloved will.”

What I offered, he took. What he took, he cleansed. What he cleansed, he filled. What he filled, he used.