



Romans (Strengthened by the Gospel) (Week 9/18) Dead to Sin, Alive to Christ

Small Group Discussion Questions

Connect *How has knowing the that you are not “in Adam” but “in Christ” encouraged you this past week?*

Warm-Up

1. Have you ever had a new status or identity that changed how you saw yourself and how you lived?
2. When people hear “God will forgive you,” how might that truth be misunderstood or misused?

Read Romans 6:1-14

3. What hypothetical question does Paul address? Have you ever been tempted to think “God will forgive me anyway”? How does this seriously misunderstand grace?
4. How does Paul describe baptism? What specific language does he use to describe what happens and who are we united to?
5. How much of our lives are united with Christ in death *and* in life? Are you ever tempted to compartmentalise your life? Why is that approach foolish if we are united with Christ?
6. Read verses 5-7. What effect does death have on sin? Why is it no longer our master?
7. How has the transition *from death to life* been effected? What *event* gives us that confidence?
8. What does Paul implore us to remember, consider, and remind ourselves of in verse 11? What are we at risk of when we forget it, particularly in relation to sin?
9. How does recalling we are both dead to sin and alive in Christ, challenge how we treat or excuse sin? How does it also give us assurance when we feel stuck, ashamed, or hopeless?
10. Why should we offer ourselves as instruments of righteousness? Which parts of our lives do this include?
11. What is one part of your life (e.g., your words, body, desires, relationships) that might need intentional reorientation to God’s purposes?

Read Romans 6:15-23

12. What does it mean: “*you are slaves of the one you obey*”? Why is “freedom to sin” not true freedom?
13. Who are the two masters mentioned? What type of things serve sin and what is the result? What type of things serve God and what is the result?
14. Why is it freeing to belong to Christ? Why is serving God not confining, but life-giving?
15. How should we respond to God’s gift of eternal life? How might this shape how we live this week?

Apply *What is one part of your life (e.g., your words, body, desires, relationships) that might need intentional reorientation to God’s purposes? Ask the Lord to help you offer it to him, as an instrument of righteousness.*

Pray *Gracious Father, help us to see clearly what you have done for us in Christ: that we have died to sin and been raised to new life in him. By your Spirit, teach us to remember who we are and to live under your grace. In Jesus’ name we pray, Amen.*

GOING DEEPER

Romans (Strengthened by the Gospel) (Week 9/18) Dead to Sin, Alive to Christ

Small Group Discussion Questions

On Your Front Line this Week

On ordinary days, what reminds you that you belong to Jesus?

For Families

- *Download:* some of the family resources to use at home: stbartskids.org

Listen, Watch, and Read

- *Watch (sermon):* “Set Free from Sin: Union with Christ” by Sinclair Ferguson:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cSJV5Vs3NZ4>
- *Listen (sermon):* “We too may live a good life” by Richard Bewes:
https://www.allsouls.org/Media/AllMedia.aspx?show_media=50728&show_file=57631
- *Listen (sermon):* “Perfect Freedom” by Tim Keller:
<https://gospelinlife.com/sermon/perfect-freedom/>
- *Read (article):* “Union with Christ: What Does It Mean for Christian Growth?” by Mark Seifrid:
<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/union-christ/>
- *Read (testimony):* “Dead to Sin’s Dominion” by Sinclair Ferguson:
<https://learn.ligonier.org/podcasts/things-unseen-with-sinclair-ferguson/dead-to-sins-dominion>

Series Resources

- *Read:* ““Strengthened by the Gospel” by Brian Rosner. 📖
- *Read:* “The Story of God Bible Commentary: Romans” by Michael Bird.
- *Read:* “Into the Heart of Romans” by N. T. Wright. 📖
- *Read:* “Epistle of Paul to the Romans” by F. F. Bruce. 📖
- *Read:* “The Message of Romans” by John Stott. 📖
- *Read:* “The Epistle to the Romans” by Leon Morris. 📖
- *Watch:* “Romans” by the Bible Project:
<https://bibleproject.com/guides/book-of-romans/>

📖 Available to borrow from the St Bart’s Library (Toowoomba): stbarts.com.au/library

ROMANS (STRENGTHENED BY THE GOSPEL)

Week 09/18 “Dead to Sin, Alive in Christ”

by Justin Lai (21/06/2026)

죄에 대하여 죽고 그리스도 안에서 살아남 | 向罪而死, 在基督里而活 |
பாவத்திற்கு மரித்து, கிறிஸ்துவில் பிழைத்தல்

Bible Passage: Romans 6:1-23

*Gracious Father, as we hear your word from Romans 6,
help us to see clearly what you have done for us in Christ:
that we have died to sin and been raised to new life in him.
By your Spirit, teach us to remember who we are and to live under your grace. Amen.*

Over the last few weeks in Romans, we have heard some wonderful truths. Paul has been describing the incredible blessings of the gospel.

- We have peace with God.
- We stand in grace.
- We have the certainty of future glory.

But at this point, a question naturally arises.

- If God’s grace is this abundant, what difference does it make to *how we live now?*
- And after hearing Paul’s word in Romans 5:20, “*where sin increased, grace increased all the more*” - some might even ask a sharper question:
 - “If God’s grace is so great, why not just keep sinning?”
 - After all, if God keeps forgiving, wouldn’t more sin simply mean more grace?

That’s exactly the question Paul raises in Romans 6.

- And his answer is emphatic: “By no means!”
- Not because he wants to soften grace.
- But because he wants us to *understand grace properly*.
 - God’s grace does not simply forgive sin and then leave us unchanged.
 - God’s grace unites us to Christ.
 - It brings us out from sin’s rule and into a completely *new reality*.
 - And so we are to *live in light of that reality*.

So, in Romans 6, Paul gives us two pictures of this new reality:

1. **Baptism** - we have died with Christ and been raised to new life.
2. **Slavery** - we have been set free from sin, and now belong to God.

Together, these pictures teach us that becoming a Christian is not simply receiving forgiveness. *It is entering a new life, a new realm, a new allegiance.*

In Christ, we have been transferred *from death to life.*

3

FROM DEATH TO LIFE | VERSES 1-14

죽음에서 생명으로 | 从死亡到生命 | மரணத்திலிருந்து ஜீவன்

The first picture Paul uses is “baptism”. Reading from verse 1:

1 What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? 2 By no means! We are those who have died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? 3 Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? 4 We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. (Rom 6:1-4)

Paul asks: if grace increases where sin increases, should we keep sinning so grace can increase? His answer is: “By no means!”

Why? Because Christians are *people who have died to sin.*

- That does not mean we are sinless now. Every Christian knows the daily struggle with temptation. But it does mean our old relationship to sin has been broken. We *no longer belong to the realm* where sin is master.
- And Paul says *baptism* pictures this reality.
 - The water symbolises that we were buried with him into death.
 - The burial *marks the end of our old life.* The old realm is left behind.
- So, the question “can we go on sinning so that grace may increase?” simply **does not fit who we are anymore.**

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- But baptism is not only about death. Verse 4 continues, “*in order that...we too may live a new life*”.
 - In other words, baptism is not just a funeral. *It is also a resurrection.*
 - You do not go down into the water to stay there. You go down in order to come up.
 - In Christ, his death marks the end of our old life, and his resurrection opens up our new life.
- And that is where Paul takes us next: if we have been united with Christ in his death, we will also share in his resurrection life.

Read with me from verse 5:

5 For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly also be united with him in a resurrection like his. 6 For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body ruled by sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin— 7 because anyone who has died has been set free from sin. (Rom 6:5-7)

- Notice verse 6: “our *old self* was crucified with him.”
 - That does not mean just one sinful part of us died, while the rest stayed the same.
 - It means the *whole person* we were in the *old Adam* - the old self under sin’s rule - was crucified with Christ. [John Stott, *Romans*, BST, 176]
 - Why did this happen?
 - Verse 6: “*that we should no longer be slaves to sin.*”
 - And verse 7 explains, “*anyone who has died has been set free from sin.*”
 - Death ends sin’s claim.
 - In union with Christ, his death counts for us. The penalty has been paid, and sin's right to rule has been broken. [Stott, 177]
 - So in Christ, your old life under sin has come to an end.
 - You have been set free!
- Now, that does not mean Christians no longer face temptation.
 - Sin still whispers, pulls, and attacks.
- But our *relationship to sin has fundamentally changed.*
 - Sin may tempt us, but can no longer claim us.
 - Sin may attack us, but it is no longer our master.
- This is good news for Christians who struggle against sin every day.
 - We are not fighting sin in order to become free.
 - We fight sin because, in Christ, we have *already been set free!*
- Then in verses 8-10, Paul turns our eyes to Christ himself.
 - Christ died once for all. Death no longer has mastery over him.
 - The life he now lives, he lives to God.

So, what should we do with this?

Paul's first command comes in verse 11:

11 count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus.

- Notice where Paul begins. He begins with the **mind**:
 - “count yourselves” does not mean pretend;
 - It is not positive thinking;
- It means *reckon* this to be true. *Consider* it. *Remember* it. *Live* in light of what God has already made true in Christ. [Stott, 177]
 - You are dead to sin.
 - You are alive to God.
 - You belong to Christ.
 - Sin is no longer your master.
- So, when temptation comes, the first response is not “just try harder”. The first response is, “Remember who you are.”
- And if we ever doubt that, look to the *risen Jesus*.
 - As John Murray puts it, “As surely as Christ rose from the dead, so surely shall we walk in newness of life.” [J. Murray, *Romans*, NICNT 216.]
 - So every time we say at Communion, “Christ is risen,” we are not only remembering what is true about Jesus. We are also remembering what is true for everyone united to him.

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But Paul does not stop with the mind. He moves to the **body**.

- Verse 12: “do not let sin reign in your mortal body...”
- Verse 13: “do not offer any part of yourself to sin as an instrument of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God...”
 - So being under grace does not mean, “relax and do nothing.”
 - No. Since Christ has set you free, *do not hand yourself back to the old master*.
 - This becomes very practical:
 - Your eyes, your mouth, your hands, your time, your habits, your anger, your desires - what are you offering them to?
 - Are they instruments for wickedness?
 - Or instruments for righteousness?

Then Paul gives us the promise in verse 14.

14 For sin shall no longer be your master, because you are not under the law, but under grace.

- This is the foundation.
- Grace does not free us to continue in sin. Grace breaks sin's mastery.
- So remember who you are.
 - You have been united with Christ in his death and resurrection.
 - As baptism pictures, you have moved *from dead to life*.

But does that mean we are now free to do whatever we want?

Again, Paul says: “by no means!” And that brings us to the second point: *Living for a New Master*.

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Then Paul makes it practical in verse 19:

19 Just as you used to offer yourselves as slaves to impurity... so now offer yourselves as slaves to righteousness leading to holiness." (Rom 6:19)

- Before we came to Christ,
 - We offered ourselves to sin - our bodies, our words, our desires, our time.
 - And sin does not leave us unchanged. Paul says it leads to “ever-increasing wickedness.” Sin grows when it is served.

- But now, because we belong to God, we are to offer ourselves to righteousness.
- **Live for your new Master!**
 - Give your body to him.
 - Give your words to him.
 - Give him your time, your habits, your relationships, your decisions.
 - Not to earn his grace, but because grace has already rescued you.

- And notice where this leads: “*righteousness leading to holiness.*”
- The Christian life is not instant perfection.
 - But it is a new direction. A new allegiance. A new road!

11

Then Paul asks us to compare the two masters.

Read with me from verse 20:

20 When you were slaves to sin, you were free from the control of righteousness. 21 What benefit did you reap at that time from the things you are now ashamed of? Those things result in death! 22 But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life. (Rom 6:20-22)

- When we were slaves to sin, we were “*free from the control of righteousness.*”
 - That may sound like freedom. But what did it produce?
 - Verse 21: *shame and death.*
- But now, in Christ, we have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God. And what does this new Master produce?
 - *Holiness.*
 - And the result is eternal life.
 - Stott puts it memorably, “*There is a freedom which spells death, and a bondage which spells life.*” [Stott, 186]
- So Paul wants us to see the two roads clearly.
 - Serving sin leads to shame and death.
 - Serving God leads to holiness and life.

12

Conclusion

Then verse 23 lands the whole chapter with one final contrast:

“For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Rom 6:23)

- Sin pays wages.
 - It gives what it promises and what we deserve: death.
- But God does not deal with us on that basis of wages.
 - He gives a gift - the free gift of eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

- And that really has been Paul’s point throughout Romans 6.
 - If you belong to Christ, you are no longer who you once were.
 - You have died with Christ,
 - You have been raised with Christ.
 - You no longer belong to sin.
 - You belong to God!
 - So as we fight sin, we do not fight with fear, as though sin is still our master. We fight with *joyful freedom, because Christ has already set us free.*

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- This week, when temptation comes, you may hear two voices:
 - One voice says:
 - “It’s only a small compromise; God will forgive me anyway.”
 - But Romans 6 says: grace is not permission to keep sinning. Rather, offer yourself to God as an instrument of righteousness.
 - The other voice says:
 - “You’ll never change. You’ll always be trapped with this sin.”
 - But Romans 6 says: remember who we are.
 - *We are united to Christ - we are dead to sin - you are alive to God!*
 - So don’t listen to either lie.
 - Instead, ask God to point out the sin in your life.
 - Ask him to help you put sin to death.
 - And when the fight feels slow and painful, remember: his Spirit is with you and at work in you!
- You belong to the gracious Master - Jesus Christ our Lord, who died for you, rose again for you, and freely gives eternal life to all who put trust in him!

Gracious Father, thank you that in Christ we are no longer slaves to sin, but belong to you. Help us this week to count ourselves dead to sin and alive to you, and to offer every part of ourselves to you in joyful obedience, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

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