

Romans 6:1-2 **It is Impossible for a Believer to Sin**

We are in the book of Romans, starting Romans chapter 6. I want to read to you the first few verses of Romans 6:

1) Therefore what shall we say? Shall we continue in the sin...

And notice in the literal translation I have left in the definite article, not just sin in general, but *the sin*. We will explain it in a moment.

... Shall we continue in the sin in order that grace may abound? 2) May it not happen.

Which in Greek is an idiom that expresses the strictest expression of a negative.

2) May it not happen. We who died to sin, how shall we yet (or still) live in it?

3) Or are you ignorant, that as many as were baptized into Christ Jesus they were baptized into His death?

4) Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death: in order that just as Christ was raised from out the dead ones (that is people) through the glory of the Father, so also we ourselves should walk in newness of life.

5) For if we have become planted with Him in the likeness of His death, but also we shall be in His resurrection:

6) knowing this, that our old man (that is the phrase used in the Bible for our old sin nature) was crucified with Him, in order that the body of sin might be made inactive, so that we should no longer serve the sin. (That is the sin principle.)

7) For the one who has died has been justified from the sin principle.

8) And if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also rise and live with Him:

Our focus this morning is on Romans chapter 6 verses 1 and 2. As I announced earlier the book of Romans is the most detailed teaching of the doctrine of the Christian faith in the Bible.

We studied in chapters 1 through 3 the doctrine of condemnation. The word *condemnation* is a legal term, part of the Greek, Greco-Roman judiciary system. Condemnation means to have a sentence of punishment made against you. And Paul went out of his way to show both Jews and Gentiles that we stand guilty before God. **That all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.** (Romans 3:23)

But then in chapters 4 and 5 we saw justification, the doctrine of justification. We had the doctrine of condemnation, then the doctrine of justification. It is very important to understand the differences between justification and sanctification.

Justification also is a legal term. It means to have someone's account credited with righteousness. It is a transaction. So therefore what God has done is He has sent His Son - as we said the first hour [[see Galatians 5:16-17](#)] - to die for our sins and pay the penalty and the punishment for our sins. And summarizing what we have studied so far is that all of the sins on my account, it is an accounting term, all of my sins have been taken off of my account and put on the Lord's account. And all the righteousness that was on His account has been imputed, or given to my account.

So justification means that my account has been credited with the Lord's righteousness and He went to the cross to pay for all of my debt, all of my sin. So on my account it says *righteous*. The righteousness of Christ stamped on my account. That justifies me before God. That means that on my account it shows that I have met all of God's judicial and legal requirements to have a relationship with Him and enter in fellowship with Him forever.

Justification is a one-time thing and it is permanent. It is one of the three elements of salvation. Remember the first element is *justification*, that is being delivered from the penalty of sin. One-time thing. It is for all eternity.

Sanctification is the setting apart. When the Holy Spirit comes in we are set apart. So I am free. I am justified from the penalty of sin. I am sanctified from the power of sin. Sin no longer has the power over me and God has given me His Spirit.

In the future it will be *glorification*, where I will be delivered from the presence of sin. No more sin around me anymore.

So we have justification, something that is credited to my account. Sanctification, something that has been performed in my life by the Spirit of God. And future glorification. It is all part of my salvation. And it is all part of my life and your life the moment that we receive Christ and surrender to Him.

But here is the important thing to realize, justification is a transaction. My account has been accredited and imputed with the righteousness of Christ. It is a transaction. That does not change me at all. I am not a righteous person but it is on my account. But sanctification is not a transaction, it is a transformation. When the Spirit of God comes into my life I am changed. I become a new creature, a new creation in Christ. I become housed, my body is the house for His Spirit. And He lives in me in His fullness forever. Never sleeps. Never off the job. He is always there leading me and guiding my life in the direction of God's will for my life.

So in Romans chapter 6 we start the study of sanctification. Exactly - and we have three chapters that teach us in depth about the sanctification and what has happened to us the moment that Christ has come into our life. And so I want to share with you - Romans chapter 6 verses 1

through 14 is actually the principles of sanctification. We are going to take verses 1 and 2 this morning. It will be complete and full.

At the end of chapter 5 Paul said about our justification that God offers to all people to come and be justified before Him. Romans chapter 5 verse 20 says, **Where sin abounds, grace super abounds.** That is the literal translation. So no matter how bad a person sin is, God's grace is greater. Nobody can sin their way out of God's grace and away from God's gift in Jesus Christ.

So he is anticipating someone saying, "Well, if where sin abounds grace does much more abound, then I will sin so I can experience God's grace." Win-win situation. Not only does this section answer those people - again, those are the libertines. Those are the ones that say, "Hey, I am free to go sin because God's grace is greater, right? So no matter how much I sin God's grace is going to be there for me." It also answers the question to those people who say, "Freedom in Christ without rules and regulations, you can lose your salvation." Those people do not understand what salvation is. Salvation is not my belief in Jesus Christ from my head, or agreeing with the Bible. My salvation is actually realized when I am born of the Spirit of God.

You do not hear much about being born again these days. There is a lot easy believeism:

"Do you believe in God?"

"Yes."

"You can become a member. Come on in, no questions asked."

A person must experience a spiritual birth. In fact, there is a saying that has a do with the spiritual birth. You know how we were born physically, obviously. And we must be born spiritually. We must experience two births: physical and spiritual. There are also two deaths. Spiritual, of course, comes the moment that we are conceived in the womb. But two important - we die physically once. And eternally, if we reject Christ we die eternally in the second death, which is the judgment. Now it is interesting that if you are only born once you die twice. If you are born twice you die once.

Understanding these two births and these two deaths. We will all experience one death. Some people will experience two. Remember *death* does not mean *annihilation* or *ceasing to exist*. It means *separation*. So the moment I die my spirit separates from my body. I experience death and you are left to pick up the tab. The second death people will be separated from God throughout eternity. And that is the second death.

So we have two people. One person that says if you do not have rules and regulations you can lose your salvation. But they do not understand what salvation is. Salvation takes place the moment that the Spirit of Christ comes into my spirit and I am born-again. And secondly, for those people that say, "Well, if God's grace super abounds with sin then I might as will continue sinning so that I can experience the grace of God."

He says in verse 1, **Therefore what shall we say? Shall we continue in the sin in order that grace may abound?** And again emphasizing to you that the word sin has the definite article *the*. And in the Greek text that means a whole lot and should mean a lot to us doctrinally and spiritually. The Bible says in I John chapter 3 verse 8 that The Sinner is Satan. He has been The Sinner since the beginning, before you and I were even around. Before anybody was even around he rebelled against God and he is called The Sinner.

The Bible says that from Adam's sin transgression spread throughout the whole human race so that everybody is conceived and born with a sin nature automatically. You do not become a sinner because you commit sin. You commit sin because you are a sinner. Even if you try to be good as best you can, you are still a sinner.

And so the Bible says that my sin nature is energized by Satan. Ephesians chapter 2 verses 1 and 2 says that Satan energizes those who do not belong to Christ in order to fulfill the desires of their flesh and of the mind. So those people without Christ are energized by The Sinner and The Sin Principle. It is singular and it has the definite article. I am using the technical correctness here because some Christians read their Bibles and it says - there are several scriptures in the Bible that tell us about sin. A couple of them:

I John chapter 3 verses 8 and 9, **He that commits sin is of the devil.** I commit sin even though I belong to Christ; I guess I do not belong to Christ. **He that commits sin is of the devil; for the devil is the sinner from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, in order that he might unloose (untie, deliver) a person from the works of the devil.** I John chapter 3 verse 9, **Whosoever is born of God does not commit sin - Uh oh, what in the world does that mean? - for God's seed remains in him: and he is not able to sin, because he has been born of God.** Well, I guess we are lost, hmm?

I John chapter 3 verse 6, **Whosoever abides in Christ does not sin: whosoever sins has not seen Him, neither known Him.** Wow, another verse.

Here is a good one, I John chapter 5 verse 18, **We know that whosoever has born of God does not sin; but he who has been born of God, God keeps him, and the wicked one does not touch him.**

In all those verses I read to you - I John 3:8-9; I John 3:6; I John 5:18 - all of those have the definite article *the*. It is not talking about an act of sin. It is talking about living under the sin principle and a lifestyle of sin in rebellion and in rejection to Christ. Everybody who has been born of God cannot live under the sin principle any longer because that is what you have been delivered from.

Now the same writer in I John chapter 2 verse 1 - before we get into all this and think that we have really messed up somewhere. He says, **My little children, these things I write unto you, in order that you should not sin.** Notice how I read it, *in order that you should not sin*. That is what is called an aorist subjunctive. Aorist tense means one act. Subjunctive is possibility. **I am writing these to you in order that you should not sin. But if anyone should**

sin - that is, an act of sin - **we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous one.** Jesus Christ is my defense lawyer standing before God.

We saw last Thursday night from Romans chapter 8 verse 34 that Jesus now is on the right hand of the Father interceding for me. He is praying on my behalf to the Father. We also know from verse 26 in that chapter that we have the Holy Spirit and the Holy Spirit is interceding for us according to God's will. Whether I am aware of it or not. So my life is pretty well represented before the Father by both the Holy Spirit and by Christ.

But you see I can commit an act of sin as a believer. Hard to believe. But God's Spirit in me grieves and convicts me and I come to my Lord, as John says in I John chapter 1 verse 9, **If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.** Jesus Christ is in the forgiving ministry. I can come to Him every minute if I have to. But see, it is His Spirit that convicts me. It is His Spirit that drives me to Christ because I am convicted of my sin. If I did not know Christ I would have no conviction. I would be living under the sin principle who is Satan himself. That is a lifestyle of rejection of Christ. No surrender to Him. I might even be religious and go to church, but I have not surrendered to Him by receiving His Spirit into my spirit.

So there is a difference between The Sin, who is a spiritual being, and committing acts of sin. It is impossible for me to live under The Sin Principle, or source of sin, continuously in my life. If that happens then I am not saved. Because that is what it means to be saved. I am saved from the sin principle, the source of sin that has energized my life and led me down the path of sin. I have been saved from him / it. And then the Spirit of Christ came into my spirit and I am born of the Spirit of God.

So he says the answer to the question, **Shall we continue in sin in order that grace may abound?** (That is the sin principle, the source of sin.) He says, **May it never happen.** It cannot happen that way. It is a contradiction against what salvation actually is. So if this person that says, "I am going to go out and sin all I want to so that I can experience the grace of God." He is basically saying, "You cannot do that if you are saved." You can commit an act of sin but you cannot commit a habitual lifestyle of sin with no conviction and no care. You cannot if you are saved. And if you can, you are not saved.

So he says, **Shall we (or are we able to) continue (remain) in the sin** that we were in (supposedly) before we received Christ? Can we continue with the same lifestyle? And he says, **May it never happen.** It cannot happen that way because of God's overextended grace.

He says verse 2, **We who died it to the sin** - and remember the definition of death, **ἀποθνήσκω** (apothēnēskō), is *separation*, not ceasing to exist. In theological Biblical terms I have died to the sin principle. I have been separated from him. Though he continues to exist my connection to him has been broken and my connection now is with the Spirit of Christ but he is still around. But I have died - not to sin in general, I have died to the sin principle, Satan himself. So he says, **How is it that we who died to sin (to the sin principle, definite article) how shall we still live any longer in it?** He is basically saying, "You cannot." It is a contradiction of terms. You can commit acts of sin, but you cannot live a habitual lifestyle of

being under Satan's control in rebellion to God. It is impossible. So he is setting the story straight about what - and he is leading us into that territory, as to exactly what salvation is.

And many years ago as we taught and preached like many others, the message would go out about being born again, experiencing the spiritual birth of Christ. Today it is easy believeism, just to get people / numbers into the church. There are so many people in our churches today that are not even saved and they are made to feel that they are. It is not a matter of performance, it is a matter of the presence of His Spirit.

Remember Thursday night in Romans chapter 8 verse 9 Paul says, **If anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ in them they don't belong to Christ.** What happened to everything else? Well, if He is not there it does not matter what everything else is. He went on to say, **Those who belong to Christ are being led by the Spirit of God.** He says those who are of Christ have His Spirit testifying with their spirit. The days that I feel like I am such a failure, maybe I am not saved, look at what a schlock I am. But it is God's Spirit in me that testifies. He is the only thing about me that is holy. And yet, the keeping and sustaining power of God's Spirit is what testifies to me, and in me, and through me that I belong to Christ. It is not my performance, it is the presence of Christ. So it says, **We have died to sin.**

Very quickly three deaths are mentioned in the Scriptures:

- 1) Everybody is born in spiritual death. You do not have to do anything to inherit that with your sin nature. Again *death is separation*, we are separated from God. Ephesians chapter 2 verse 1 says that we have died in our trespasses and sins. The psalmist says, **Your sin has separated you from your God.** So we died spiritually. Everybody is spiritually dead when they are born into this world.
- 2) There is physical death. We know about that. Everybody dies physically, at least most people. There are a couple people in the Bible that did not, but their day is coming. There is physical death.
- 3) There is also a third death that we mentioned earlier. In Revelation chapter 20 verse 6 it is says that there is the second death. Physical death is the first death. The second death from a spiritual standpoint is the fact that if you reject Christ there will come a time, Revelation 20:6, when people will be cast into the lake of fire and they will experience the second and permanent death, which is separation from God throughout eternity.

So he says, **We who have died to sin.** See, I have been made alive to Christ. I used to be dead to Him. Not interested. Do not care. But His spirit has made me alive to Christ and I have a living relationship with Him but I have died to sin. Though sin continues to function, I have been cut off from its source, cut off from its control, and I am now under the control of the Spirit of God.

So he asked the question, **We who have died to the sin principle, how can you continue to live in it?** It is impossible. We can commit acts of sin. But we cannot live under the control of Satan any longer. That is a factual Biblical principle.

That answers the question that confuses many people. "Well, it says it is impossible to sin if you are born of God, so I guess I am not born of God." You commit acts of sin, and you confess your sin as God convicts us. That is our relationship with Him. But if we can continue in our sin the same as before supposedly we receive Christ, he says, "You cannot do that and be saved." If your life is under the sin principle, it cannot happen.

So there is a detailed technical explanation in the Bible for salvation. What it is. What you are saved from. And a person's position and relationship with God in light of that. John himself, and I quoted from I John, his first letter. He is a very polemic writer. He would probably be kicked out of just about every church today if he went to visit and was asked to be a guest speaker. He is the one that says, "If you do not have Christ, you are not saved." And somebody would go, "Wait a minute, I believe." He would say, "So does the devil. The devil confesses Him too. But if you do not have Christ you are not saved." Very controversial writer. No gray area. It is either black or white. But the reason why they can say these things is because in the early church they did not go by your religious beliefs.

As Paul said in II Corinthians chapter 13 verse 5, he says, **Test yourself and examine yourselves whether Christ be in you or not.** To the church in Colossae he said, **Christ in you is the hope of glory.** His presence. The indwelling of His Spirit is the guarantee and the token that one belongs to Christ.

So that is the technical and Biblical explanation as to why he can say, **Shall we continue to remain in sin in order that grace may abound?** He says, **May it never happen. Because we who have died to sin the sin principle, how yet shall we live in it?** You cannot. It is impossible.

Next week, we will continue in this section as he continues to build for us and explain to us. There are five sections in these next two chapters that has the word *ignorance* or *know* in it, to know something. So he is ministering to people who are ignorant about the things of Christ. That is also you and me. We are ignorant about the things of Christ in the church today. And it is very detailed and it is very exact about the information that it is giving. And we will be rooted and grounded in what God's word says.

Let's close with prayer.