

Date : 13 October 2024
Theme : Sanctification - The Journey of Righteousness
Topic : How should Christians now live in relation to sin and grace?
Key passage: Romans 6
Key verse : Romans 6:6-7 For we know that our old self was crucified with him (Christ) so that the body ruled by sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin—because anyone who has died has been set free from sin.

Introduction:

Romans 5 concluded with the profound truth that we are all either in Adam (inheriting the consequences of sin) or in Christ, beneficiaries of eternal life because of His abounding, redeeming grace.

Our problem of sin and death has been dealt with by the death of Jesus on the cross and His resurrection. How should Christians now live in relation to sin and grace?

Romans 5:20 says “where sin increased, grace increased all the more”. Christians then make the slanderous statement, “More sin = more grace. Therefore, it is ok to go on sinning.” Is this argument consistent with being justified by God? (= release from the penalty of sin).

Romans 6:14 also says “you are not under the law, but under grace”. Christians then say “We are not under the law. Therefore, we don’t need to follow God’s commandments anymore.” Is this a license to live unrighteously, correct?

Apostle Paul responded to both statements emphatically with the exclamation, “By no means! Certainly not! Never!”. Then he provided the arguments for each, starting by asking “Don’t you know?”.

The 2 statements (OK to sin and not under the law) are flawed because firstly they are taken out of context. Secondly, they failed to understand what grace really entail.

We will discuss how Romans 6 addresses the 2 questions below and conclude how believers ought to live in relation to sin, after we have received salvation by grace in Christ Jesus.

1. Is this true? Grace is greater than our sins. Therefore, it is ok to go on sinning? v1

To “go on sinning” is a person whose intention is how he wants to live and has no intention to obey God at all. This is not about a person whose intention is to obey God but sins unintentionally, or struggles and falls into sin.

Romans 5:20 “... where sin increased, grace increased all the more...”. The context is about the greatness of God’s grace to forgive the greatest sins. It is not the conclusion to go on sinning. The idea that we can go on sinning was refuted by Paul immediately - “By no means! We are those who have died to sin; how can we live in it any longer?” Romans 6:2.

1.1. We have died to sin and cannot live in it anymore. v2

- **How did we die to sin?**
 - **By identifying with Jesus’ death by our baptism. v3**
 - The penalty of our sins requires us to die (Romans 6:23). Death is not merely the separation of soul from the body. It is the separation of sinful man from God and suffer the eternal punishment in hell.

- We are saved when we believe in Jesus' death and resurrection for our forgiveness, and confess that Jesus is our Lord (Romans 10:9).
 - Our death is declared through water baptism. We are baptised into Jesus' death, buried with him and united with Him. v3-5
 - Our old sinful self is crucified with Jesus and died, through baptism. v6
 - Baptism is not just a symbolic act or an outward form of faith to God. Baptism is a real and significant spiritual event for every believer.
- **When we die, we are set free from sin's slavery. v7**
 - A dead person cannot sin and cannot be tempted by sin. Sin has no power to make a dead person to sin. Therefore, we are no longer slaves to sin.
 - When Christians think that the sin and temptation is too strong for them to resist, they fall into the devil's lie and fail to claim God's promise of victory over sins. (1 Corinthians 10:13)

1.2. We now have a new life in Christ to live for God and not for sin. v11

- **How did we receive the new life?**
 - **By identifying with Jesus' resurrection by our baptism. v3-5**
 - Jesus' death paid the penalty for our sins, but if he did not rise from the dead, we will still be in our sins - dead. 1 Corinthians 15:17.
 - To set us free from sin and death, Jesus must also be raised from the dead.
 - Our new life is declared through the same water baptism when we come out of the water. We are united also with Jesus in His resurrection and receive new life in him.
- **When we receive the new life, we live for God.**
 - As Jesus was raised to life and lived for God, we too in this new life, to live for God.
 - We no longer live as the old sinful self - the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life.

1.3. How are Christians to live now that we have died to sin and alive in Jesus? v8

We must consider ourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ. v11

- Many Christians suffer defeat from sin's temptation throughout their Christian lives and think that sin is too powerful for them to overcome. This is the devil's lie.
- We have forgotten that if we have been baptised in Jesus, we have died to sin, and sin has no power over us.
- We must not let sin rule over our bodies when it dangles the pleasures of sin before our eyes and we let sin walk all over us. We must exercise our spiritual authority to resist sin.
- We must remember and declare by faith:
 - I have died to sins, united in Jesus' death, sins have no power over me.
 - I have been raised to life, united in Jesus' resurrection, and now live to obey God and to please Him.

2. Is this true? We are no more under the law but under grace. Therefore, we don't need to follow the law?

The context of "not under the law but under grace" is for Romans 6:11-14 – because sin shall no longer be your master, count yourself dead to sin, do not let sin rule, do not offer yourself to sin. Under the law, means that we are sinners and the penalty is death. Under grace, means that Jesus paid the death penalty for us, we died with him through faith by our baptism, so sin has no power to make us its slave. Which part says about not needing to follow the law? None. On the contrary, Paul said clearly that the law is not made void and in fact, we uphold the law (Romans 3:31).

What do Christians really mean when they say that they do not need to follow the law? It means that they can do contrary to what the law tells them to do, i.e. they can sin. They think that grace can give us access to heaven without any cooperation on their part to receive it the grace. The consequence is too severe not to understand this clearly.

2.1 What is biblical slavery in relation to sin and grace?

Romans 6:15-16 "... Shall we sin because we are not under the law but under grace? By no means! Don't you know ... you are slaves of the one you obey." Paul gave the argument referencing to slaves.

"Slave to sin" (Disobedience to God)	"Slave to obedience" (Obedience to God)
Offers himself to sin as his master. Obeys sin as his master. Leads to death.	Offers himself to God as his master. Obeys God as his master. Leads to righteousness.

- There are only 2 types of slaves. We either obey God or obey sin. God is either our master or sin is our master. There is no other option.
- If we do what sin wants us to do, lying, stealing, adultery, not keeping God's word, sin is our master, and we are its slave.
- So, a Christian who thinks that it is ok to sin, offers himself to sin and becomes the slave to sin which leads to death.

2.2 We are now slaves to God to obey Him and not obey sin.

- **In the past, we were unbelievers and slaves to sin.** Now, we have become believers in Jesus and slaves to God. Romans 6:17-22
 - Paul systematically explained about "slaves", going back and forth between the past and now, summarized in the following table.

"Slave to sin" Past – Unbelievers. Under the law.	"Slave to God" Now – believers. Under grace.
Our past identity v17 You were <u>slaves to sin</u> .	Our new identity v18 You have come to obey from your heart the teaching. You have been set free from sin. You have become <u>slaves to obedience</u> .
Our past will v19 You used to offer yourselves as <u>slaves to impurity & wickedness</u> .	Our new will v19 Now, offer yourselves as <u>slaves to righteousness</u> .
Our past outcome v20 When you were <u>slaves to sin</u> . - you were free from control of righteousness. - v21 Benefit: shame and death.	Our new outcome v22 But now, you have been set free from sin. - You have become <u>slaves of God</u> . - Benefit: eternal life.

- **In the past, we were slaves to sin and obey sin.** Now by grace, we have been set free from sin's slavery and have become slaves to God and to obey God.
- **Obedience to God needs to come from our heart. v18** Willingly and not unwillingly.
 - One who is unwilling, does not understand God's sovereignty over all things, His grace that saved us from eternal damnation, nor His will that surpasses our goodness. One who truly understands, will obey God from his heart.

- **Obedience to God requires us to learn His Word. v18**
 - One cannot obey God when he does not know God – His character and His will. It requires us to take time and effort to learn from the bible and through the teachings from godly leaders in the church.

- **Obedience to God gives us great benefits. V22**
 - We are able to receive eternal life and abundant G.R.A.C.E.
 - Gifts. (vs. wages)
 - Righteousness. Having right standing before God.
 - Abundance. power, blessings and riches. 2 Corinthians 8:9, 9:8.
 - Cleansing. Forgiveness.
 - Elevation. From enemies to heirs of God.
 - Obedience to sin gives us immediate pleasures of sinful desires, but it also gives us shame and eternal death, separation from God and receive everything opposite to G.R.A.C.E. v20
 - Sin is not our friend. It was our slave master before and wants to continue enslaving us now - to steal, kill, and destroy us.

- 3. **Under grace, we have only 1 imperative command – Offer ourselves to God as His slave.**
 - **Romans 6:16-22, is about what has already happened for us as believers.**
 - We used to be slaves to sin, and under grace God has set us free from sin’s slavery so **we have a new identity and allegiance – “I am a slave of God”**.
 - **Romans 6:19 is the only imperative command to believers**
 - “... so now offer yourselves as slaves to righteousness leading to holiness.”
 - **We must offer ourselves as slaves to God.**
 - Though we have a new identity as slaves to God, when we choose to obey sin, we offer ourselves as slaves to sin. Instead, we are to offer every part of our bodies to God – our mind, our eyes, our ears, our mouth, our hands, our feet, and our heart.
 - **Being a slave to God is being under grace.**
 - The word “slave” has a negative connotation of forced labour, oppression, cruelty, suffering, without freedom. This is the condition of slavery to sin, enslaving us with the addiction to the pleasures of sin, and destroying us in the end.
 - But the slave to God, is a bond servant to God, who, not by force, but willingly gives himself entirely to God. Because God paid the highest price of His Son to redeem us from sin, make us heirs of His kingdom in heaven, and give us abundant life here on earth.
 - Paul calls himself a bondservant of Jesus Christ, as is Timothy, James, Peter, Jude. All the saints of old, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David, were all servants of God. This is the highest honour and privilege – to serve the King who loved us and gave himself up for us all.

Application:

Discuss: How would you answer the questions?

1. More sin = more grace. Is it ok to go on sinning? Why? (See pt 1. Keyword: dead)
2. We are not under the law but under grace. Is it ok not to follow the law? Why? (See pt 2. Keyword: slave)

Declare daily this week.

1. I have dead to sin but alive to God. Sin has no mastery over me.
2. I am a slave for God and I offer my heart, mind, eyes, ears, mouth, hands, feet to obey Him.