

Romans: Chapter Six

Romans 5.12-8.39: SANCTIFICATION (*Righteousness Realised*)

Salvation in Christ is *total* and *eternal* (Hebrews 7.25). God has not only dealt with the *penalty* of sin (justification), but also provides salvation from the *power* and *pollution* of sin (sanctification). This is the key theme of Romans 6. One day believers will know salvation from the *presence* of sin (glorification). Romans 6 separates into **two** main sections each of which begin with a question. The *first* section concerns 'Deliverance from Sin as a Monarch' (6.1-14) and begins by asking whether grace allows believers to live under the dominion of sin (v.1). God forbid! Christians have both died to sin (vv.2-7) and died *with* Christ (vv.8-14). Living in sin is therefore clearly incompatible with this position. The *second* section concerns 'Deliverance from Sin as a Master' (6.15-23) and begins by asking whether grace allows believers to commit single, premeditated acts of sin (v.15). Again the answer is God forbid! Christians have changed masters and now serve righteousness rather than sin (vv.16-23). The chapter can also be divided into **three** sections, each of which emphasises a different step essential to the realisation of *practical* sanctification – know, reckon and yield.

KNOW: *Provision of God* (6.1-10)

v.1: Following his statement in 5.20, Paul raises a complaint that was often levelled at the gospel of grace he preached. Can a believer 'continue' or *persevere* in sin, allowing it to reign over their lives as in unconverted days? After all, *'the more we sin, the more will God's grace be required to meet the situation, and this will in turn contribute the more to his glory'*. **v.2:** Such a thought is abhorrent to Paul – 'God forbid!' or 'perish the thought!' The believer 'has died' (*aorist*) to sin. This is a statement of fact. How can they therefore conduct their lives under its rule? This would be morally incompatible with their standing in Christ. Note. 'Sin' is now being considered as an evil principle; a power or monarch that exercises control over individuals. This is the **root** of the sin tree, of which individual acts (or *sins*) are the **fruit**.

v.3: Paul explains what it means to have 'died to sin' by speaking of water baptism which symbolises the truth of identification. When Christ died at Calvary, He did so as our **representative**. At conversion, the believer is so closely **identified** with Christ that His death, burial and resurrection becomes theirs. Thus, in God's reckoning we have died in respect of sin. This is not 'dead in sin' (Ephesians 2.1) which is spiritual death, but 'dead to sin' as a monarch in my life. In unconverted days, I was alive to sin and it ruled my life; now I have died. Sin is 'put away' (prefix *apo*) from me as a king; sin has no claim or jurisdiction over me any longer. This does not mean that Christians are not tempted to sin or incapable of sinning. Water baptism illustrates this wonderful truth of **identification** with Christ. When we were baptised, it was 'unto (*eis*) Christ Jesus' (cf. 1 Corinthians 10.2), that is, into *association* with Him and His death. My baptism was therefore a declaration that I belong to Him, swear allegiance to Him and accept His leadership (as Moses and the nation of Israel), as well as the declaration that I have died with Him. **v.4:** Burial validates that death has occurred. The purpose of our identification with Christ in His death and burial was that like as He was raised up from the dead, we would also 'walk in newness of life'. The Christian orders their conduct in the power of a new *kind* of life on a different *course*. Christ was raised up 'by the glory of the Father', which according to some, means 'by His glorious power'. But **Hamilton Smith** suggests: *All that the Father is (His glory) demanded that the One who had maintained His glory on earth should be raised from the dead.* Thus, the glory of God necessitated His resurrection; the power of God performed it (Ephesians 1.19-20). Now, as we walk in newness of life, its guiding principle should be the same – the glory of God. **v.5:** So, in view of the fact that we have been 'united' (planted together) in vital union with Christ and His death (identification), so shall we be also (*future* tense) 'in His resurrection'. Whilst we enjoy something of the power of Christ's risen life in us now (Philippians 3.10), our being raised with Christ awaits the rapture (Philippians 3.20-21).

v.6: Paul now expands the truth already considered, emphasising dying with Christ (vv.6-7) and living with Christ (vv.8-10). We must further recognise that our 'old man' was crucified with Christ. Like we might use the term 'the white man' to refer to a race of men with certain characteristics, so the 'old man' refers, not to any particular individual, but to the whole human race in its Adam standing. The old (*palaios*, meaning worn out and useless) man is characterised by rebellion, self-will, sin and the sentence of death. The old man was 'crucified' with Christ at Calvary, that is, God passed a sentence of condemnation on the whole Adamic race, which sentence was executed on Christ at Calvary. God has finished with Adamic man. All this was 'in order that' the 'body of sin' might be 'destroyed' (*annulled* or *rendered powerless*). The 'body of sin' (see v.12) is my physical body *in* which sin reigned and *through* which sin acted as one who belonged to Adam's race. As I submitted to sin's desires, it used my members (eyes, hands, feet etc.) as weapons of unrighteousness. But, God has condemned and finished with me in Adam. I have died with Christ. 'Henceforth' there is no longer any obligation to serve sin as a master. **v.7:** In fact, in God's sight, he that has died remains in the place of death and is thus 'freed' or 'justified' from sin. Sin has no jurisdiction over a dead man!

v.8: Living with Christ (vv.8-10). Although we presently walk in newness of life, we 'believe' we shall ultimately live with Christ in heaven. **vv.9-10:** When He was here, He willingly submitted to death (once for all) as a consequence of dealing with the question of sin. But He rose again, bursting out from the dominion of death and shattering the power of sin. The Lord Jesus always lived for the glory of God, but the emphasis here is that He now lives for the glory of God in a sphere that is beyond death – it is this sphere which we shall share with Him eternally, serving God without alloy. Paul will soon draw the practical application of this teaching (v.11), but the implication here is that given our glorious future, we should no longer live for the present by yielding to sin's demands, but live for eternity bowing only to the claims of God. **Leckie:** *Since He is my life and I am live in Him, I too must live unto God. He lives unto God, and so must I!*

RECKON: Proving of God (6.11-12)

v.11: Faith recognises our *past* (vv.3-7) and our *future* (vv.8-10). How do we live in the *present*? We must daily 'reckon' (*logizomai*) what God has done. This is not make-believe or pretence. We are to constantly 'count as true' and 'believe as considered fact' that sin has no right of authority over me any longer – I'm dead – and yet I have new life in Christ Jesus (union) which enables me to live unto God. What a change! In my unconverted days the opposite was true; I was *dead* to God and *alive* to sin in Adam. No longer! **v.12:** Part of 'reckoning' is to adjust our conduct in the light of this truth. Thus, when sin makes its appeal (which it will), I reckon I have died and disallow its appeal. This is a matter of the **will** ('let not') – we must appropriate this truth in practical terms. We have an obligation not to attempt to fight with sin (it is a powerful monarch) or obey the lusts (evil desires) of the body (energised by sin), but when it makes its demands we seek divine help not to respond or obey.

YIELD: Presentation to God (6.13-23)

v.13: As well as refusing the appeal of sin, we are not to 'yield' ourselves (or 'members' of our body) as 'instruments' or 'weapons of warfare' in doing what is wrong. Rather we are *first* to 'yield ourselves to God', *then* continually yield ourselves to doing what is right. Take, for example, the tongue. It is very easy to use this as a weapon of unrighteousness (e.g. to gossip), but we should ensure it is rather used as a weapon in the good fight (e.g. to preach), cf. James 3.10-11. How can this be done? We must once and for all 'yield ourselves to God' (Romans 12.1). The word 'yield' is to 'place beside' or 'at the disposal of another' (as a tool in a carpenter's hand). We are to 'worshipfully (not grudgingly) present' our whole selves to God and His service, not the service of sin. *Take my life... hands... feet... eyes...* **v.14:** So, Paul has proved the power of **grace** over **law** (cf. v.1). If the Romans lived under the law, sin would reign over them, because the law makes demands but gives no power to fulfil those demands. But, under grace it is different! They are alive to God through union with Christ and thus are enabled to lead holy lives (see Romans 8).

v.15: The question of v.15 has been paraphrased as follows: *'Since grace makes it impossible for the believer to sin habitually like he did before he was saved (vv.1-14), may we Christians live a life of planned, occasional sin, since we are not under the uncompromising rule of law, but under the lenient sceptre of grace?'* This question meets with the same response as the first – 'God forbid!'

v.16: Paul reminds the believers of a general principle or proverbial saying: 'When a person yields to someone or something, they become its slave.' If a person yields to sin (as in unconverted days), they become a slave to sin which results in death. If a person yields in obedience to God (as at conversion) it results in practical righteousness. **v.17:** 'God be thanked' for the personal experience of the Romans! They were once enslaved to sin in unconverted days, but having obeyed the gospel from the heart (Romans 1.5) they were 'delivered into' a 'mould' (or 'form') of doctrine that now shapes their lives. **v.18:** Having been set free from sin's mastery, they became slaves to do what is right by obedience to the truth of God's word. 'Slave' (*doulos*) means one whose *will* is swallowed up in the will of another; one who is *bound* to another; one who *serves* another to the disregard of his own interests. Our will is subservient to that of God's; we are bound (identified) with Christ; we serve Him with total commitment. How can we therefore bow the knee to the tyrant that is sin? **v.19:** Paul had to explain these things using simple but inadequate human illustrations because of the limitation of our understanding. Persevering with the thought, he reminds them that before conversion, they yielded themselves to 'impurity' and 'lawlessness', living in 'freedom' from what is right (**v.20**). This is a pathway which ends in *death*, and they now look back on with 'shame' (**v.21**). However, now they are servants of God (**v.22**) they are to yield themselves to righteousness, doing only that which is right (**v.19**). This results in a pathway of progressive 'holiness' or sanctification resulting in the full and unfettered enjoyment of eternal life in a day to come (**v.22**). **v.23** summarises the teaching of the section from v.15. Sin, as a master, pays the wages of death. God, as a Master, gives the free gift of eternal life in Christ Jesus. Which master then would we rather serve? Having been set free from the mastery of sin, how can we bow the knee, whether once (v.15) or constantly (v.1) to such a tyrant? Thank God we belong to Him!