

## Let Not Sin Reign

Romans 6:11–14<sup>1</sup>

### Dead TO Sin

Just one more time, Romans 6, verses 5 – 10:

<sup>5</sup> For if we have been united with him in a death like his... Romans 6:5

—and we have, if we have come to trust in God by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone—if so, then

...we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. Romans 6:5

This is a certainty. This is not a wish or a hope. It is sure. It is a grace that has been purchased for us by the death of Christ, and applied and sealed to us, guaranteed, by the work of the Holy Spirit of God. Furthermore:

<sup>6</sup> We know that our old self was crucified with him... Romans 6:6 ESV

Literally, our “old man”; the person that we were when we were dead **in** sin,

...was crucified with him... Romans 6:6 ESV

And again, pay close attention here. First of all, we “**know**” this. We **know** that this “old self” has been crucified with Christ. We may have the same certainty of this as the Apostle Paul himself, who wrote in Galatians, chapter 2:

<sup>20</sup> “I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me... Galatians 2:20 NASB2

Does it seem like he was questioning this? Did he write, “*Have I been* crucified with Christ? Really and truly?” To borrow one of his other catchphrases, may it never be! Absolutely not! This was the truth. Paul knew it to be the truth. The Spirit intends that we would know it to be the truth. *Paul* had been crucified with Christ, and so were *we*—so were all those who have come to God through faith in Him. We **know**. And what do we know?

<sup>6</sup> We know that our old self was crucified with him... Romans 6:6 ESV

Secondly, we know that this is a done deal. John Murray wrote:

It is a mistake to think of the believer as both an old man and new man or as having in him both the old man and the new man, the latter in view of regeneration and the former because of remaining corruption. That this is not Paul’s concept is made apparent here by the fact that the “old man” is represented as having been crucified with Christ and the tense indicates a once-for-all definitive act after the pattern of Christ’s crucifixion. The “old

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<sup>1</sup> All Scripture citations, unless otherwise noted, *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016).

<sup>2</sup> Galatians 2:20, *New American Standard Bible*, electronic edition. (La Habra, CA: The Lockman Foundation, 1986).

man” can no more be regarded as in the process of being crucified than Christ in his sphere could he thus regarded.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>6</sup> **We know that our old self was crucified with him...** Romans 6:6 ESV

(and here’s why our old self was crucified with Christ),

**...in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing...** Romans 6:6 ESV

(in order that the body of sin might be destroyed; in order that “the body, as conditioned and controlled by sin”<sup>4</sup> might be done away with, that the power of sin over our flesh would be broken),

**...so that...** Romans 6:6 ESV

(and this was the purpose; this was the intended end of the matter)

**...so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin.** Romans 6:6 ESV

The goal then was emancipation from sin in this life.

<sup>7</sup> **For one who has died has been...** Romans 6:7 ESV

(past tense; this is already true),

<sup>7</sup> **...one who has died has been set free from sin.** Romans 6:7 ESV

And remember,

<sup>6</sup> **We know that our old self was crucified with him...** Romans 6:6 ESV

Therefore it follows, **we have been set free from sin.** And I know this seems like a radical idea, but we have been. It’s a fact. This is the Word of the Lord.

**Alive WITH Christ.**

And that’s not even all. Verses 8 – 10:

<sup>8</sup> **Now if we have died with Christ...** Romans 6:8 ESV

(and we have),

**...we believe that we will also live with him.** Romans 6:8 ESV

We believe that we will live with Him, and we believe that we do so not only in eternity, but in the here and now. This is the abundant life that Jesus promised, and He always keeps His promises. So, we believe this; we know this. Just as certainly as

<sup>9</sup> **We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him.** Romans 6:9 ESV

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<sup>3</sup> John Murray, *The Epistle to the Romans, vol. 1, The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, U.K.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1968), 219–220.

<sup>4</sup> Murray, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 220.

Just as surely as we know that

<sup>10</sup> ...the death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God. Romans 6:10 ESV

We know these things, Paul says. We know them just as surely as we know that God is God over all, and that His word is “firmly fixed in the heavens.”<sup>5</sup> These are the facts as we have received them with all of the authority of God’s holy, inspired, and infallible Word. What’s next then? Well, verse 11

<sup>11</sup> Likewise... Romans 6:11 KJV

(just as you know that sin and death no longer has dominion over the Lord Jesus Christ),

...reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Romans 6:11 KJV

If you prefer a more modern translation:

<sup>11</sup> So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus. Romans 6:11 ESV

Either way (it doesn’t make much difference), knowing these things to be true of Jesus Christ (because they are), then reckon—consider—them **to be true of you as well, because they are!** We are **dead to sin**. We have been crucified with Christ in order that, having died with Christ, the body of sin might be rendered powerless—that’s what “brought to nothing” means; it truly is. In the grace of Christ, sin will have no power—no dominion; no rule—over you. WE are dead to sin, so sin will not be lord over us, but we are alive to God in, with, through, and by Jesus Christ, so He absolutely **is**.

### **The Devil, the World, and Our Own Flesh.**

And Jesus Christ is not merely Lord over us, He is Lord over the devil, and the world too.

<sup>12</sup> Therefore...

(that being the case),

...do not let sin reign in your mortal body that you should obey its lusts... Romans 6:12 NASB

Moving quickly then, we need to emphasize that this commandment is given because both of the two states of being suggested here are possible. First, although we have been delivered—set free; emancipated—from the power of sin, it is still possible for us to allow it to reign in our mortal body, to give in to the lust of the flesh, and to continue giving up our bodies as instruments to sin. We are commanded not to do this, and to do so will bring discipline,

<sup>6</sup> For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives.” Hebrews 12:6 ESV

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5 Cf. Psalm 119:89.

But these exhortations are necessary precisely because it is possible for us to try to live in this way, and many do, at least, many seem intent to try. And we are encouraged in this attempt by what our Heidelberg Catechism describes as “our sworn enemies—the devil, the world, and our own flesh.” These, we are taught, “never stop attacking us.”<sup>6</sup> That is why we pray, “And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil,” or “from the evil one.”

But here’s the thing, we pray this prayer in the assurance that Jesus Christ has already done so. Do we understand this? Well, in 1<sup>st</sup> John chapter 3, we’re told

<sup>8</sup> ...The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil. <sup>1 John 3:8 ESV</sup>

And in Hebrews 2, verse 14:

<sup>14</sup> Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, <sup>Hebrews 2:14 ESV</sup>

And in Luke 10:

<sup>17</sup> The seventy-two returned with joy, saying, “Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name!” <sup>18</sup> And he said to them, “I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. <sup>19</sup> Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall hurt you. <sup>Luke 10:17–19 ESV</sup>

See the theme developing there. Sometimes we get all worked up over the idea that Satan and all his minions are out there, and it’s true,

<sup>8</sup> ...Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. <sup>1 Peter 5:8 ESV</sup>

<sup>6</sup> But...

as James wrote,

...he gives more grace. Therefore it says, “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.” <sup>7</sup> Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, **and he will flee from you.** <sup>James 4:6–7 ESV</sup>

See, to the extent that we submit to God and resist the evil one, Satan has no power over us. He was definitively defeated by the Lord Jesus Christ in His death and resurrection, and as we are in Christ, he cannot harm us or force us to yield to his temptations. Rather, in Christ, we have defeated him too.

But what of the world? Isaac Watts once asked, “Is this vile world a friend to grace, to help me on to God?”<sup>7</sup> By the way, in case you were wondering, the answer is no. Just no. This vile world is unequivocally not a friend to grace. Jesus Himself even said,

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<sup>6</sup> Christian Reformed Church, “The Heidelberg Catechism, Lord’s Day 52”, in *Ecumenical Creeds and Reformed Confessions* ed. CRCNA (Grand Rapids, MI: Faith Alive Publications, 1988), 76.

<sup>7</sup> “Trinity Hymnal (Rev. Ed.) 573. Am I a Soldier of the Cross | Hymnary.org.” 2024. Hymnary.org. 2024. <https://hymnary.org/hymn/TH1990/573>.

<sup>33</sup> "...In the world you will have tribulation." <sup>John 16:33</sup> ESV

So, yes, in this world there will be distress, struggle, and even temptation.

"But take heart..." <sup>John 16:33</sup> ESV

He continued,

"...I have overcome the world." <sup>John 16:33</sup> ESV

Of course,

<sup>19</sup> If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I [Jesus] chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. <sup>John 15:19</sup> ESV

But, 1<sup>st</sup> John 4, verse 4:

<sup>4</sup> Little children, you are from God and have overcome them, for he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world. <sup>1 John 4:4</sup> ESV

In fact,

<sup>4</sup> ...everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. <sup>1 John 5:4</sup> ESV

As to our own flesh, we've considered it already in Romans 6.

<sup>6</sup> We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. <sup>7</sup> For one who has died has been set free from sin. <sup>Romans 6:6–7</sup> ESV

### **Set Free from Sin.**

"Set free from sin." Can we repeat this too often? I don't think so, because this is a description of every believer in Jesus Christ right here, right now, and it is our comfort, and such comfort. Jesus Christ, my faithful Savior

...has fully paid for all my sins with his precious blood...<sup>8</sup>

(we will celebrate this at His table momentarily)

...**and has set me free from the tyranny of the devil.**<sup>9</sup>

And just in case that weren't enough:

He also watches over me in such a way that not a hair can fall from my head without the will of my Father in heaven: in fact, all things must work together for my salvation.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Christian Reformed Church (CRC), "The Heidelberg Catechism, Lord's Day 1", in *Ecumenical Creeds and Reformed Confessions*, ed. CRCNA (Grand Rapids, MI: Faith Alive Publications, 1988), 13.

<sup>9</sup> CRC, "Lord's Day 1", in *Ecumenical Creeds*, 13.

<sup>10</sup> CRC, "Lord's Day 1", in *Ecumenical Creeds*, 13.

We'll consider more of this in weeks to come, but it is in exactly this light that Paul would later write:

<sup>1</sup> I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, **which is your reasonable service.** Romans 12:1 NKJV

Your logical, rational service. The service that just makes sense in light of all that God has done for us. Christ Jesus has overcome the devil, the world, and even your own flesh. He has set us free not only from the penalty, but also from the power of sin.

<sup>2</sup> Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand... Romans 5:2 ESV

Stand firm then, and

<sup>12</sup> Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions. <sup>13</sup> Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness. <sup>14</sup> For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace. Romans 6:12-14 ESV