

Christ's Grace and the New Man

Clearing the Debt

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I'm glad to be back again to preach the word of God and we turn to Romans 6 and we read the chapter from the beginning. Romans 6.

1 What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? 2 God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? 3 Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? 4 Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. 5 For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: 6 Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. 7 For he that is dead is freed from sin. 8 Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him: 9 Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. 10 For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. 11 Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. 12 Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. 13 Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. 14 For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace. 15 What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid. 16 Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? 17 But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. 18 Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness. 19 I speak after the manner of men because

of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness. 20 For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness. 21 What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death. 22 But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. 23 For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen. May the Lord bless the reading of his word to our hearts.

Verse 21 of this chapter reads,

21 What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death. 22 But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. 23 For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Our theme this evening is "Christ's Grace and the New Man." Christ's grace and the new man. We've learned over these nights that the only way to be justified by God, that is, to be declared not guilty by God as the judge, is by having Christ's righteousness, his sinless life and his sin-bearing death imputed to us, reckoned to our account, transferred over to us, and that God reckons and imputes Christ's righteousness only to those who trust in Jesus Christ alone. Those who trust in Christ, our filthy rags of our sinful lives are taken away and the spotless righteousness of Christ is put upon us, but God only does this to those who are born again of the Spirit and who trust only in the Lord Jesus for acceptance in his sight. But this, then, raises a question and verse 1 gives us that question, "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?" If it is by faith in Christ, that if it is through trusting in Christ that Christ's righteousness is reckoned to the account of a sinner and his sins are forgiven and his guilt is taken away on the basis of what Christ has done on behalf of sinners, does that mean that if we trust in Christ we can just go on leading an ungodly life as before?

Now the short answer is given in verse 2, "God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" The apostle doesn't give an answer along the lines of modifying the gospel doctrine that he has already given. It is true those who trust in Christ, their sins are forgiven not because of any merit or works that they have done or can do or will do. That's true. He doesn't say it will not happen but he does show that the true believer will not say, "Let us continue in sin that grace may abound." He simply says if there is true faith, if someone is truly a believer, they won't say, "Let us continue in sin that grace may abound." And the reason he won't say it is because the forgiven man is a changed man. The forgiven man is a changed man. He has a changed state as well as a changed status. He has a changed nature as well as a changed standing before God. The man who is in Christ is delivered from the guilt of sin and he has begun to be delivered from the

practice of sin. The man who is justified, declared righteous before God, has begun to be sanctified, that is, made actually righteous. This is the argument that is then fully developed from verse 3 onwards.

Firstly, let us consider the Christian is under new management. The Christian is under new management. The apostle begins with the meaning of baptism, verse 3, "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?" He doesn't assume that they all remember being baptized and those of us who are convinced that not only adult believers but also the children of such should be baptized, then obviously not everyone remembers their baptism. Those baptized in infancy do not remember the event anymore than Isaac, who was circumcised when he was eight days old, would remember that event though his father Abraham, as we saw when we were in Romans 4, received the sign of circumcision as a believer. But whether baptized in adulthood or in infancy, it doesn't matter. The apostle isn't saying do you remember it happening but he's saying you know it happened.

And what does that baptism mean? Now the word "baptizo," the Greek word, has no direct equivalent, no single word that is the equivalent. That's why in English and in our Bibles we have the Anglicized form "baptized." That's why it's simply rendered "baptized" because there is no single word, other single word that is equivalent to that word. We get some idea of the meaning of the word "baptized" from its use in the book of Acts in relation to the baptism of the Spirit, that special outpouring of the Spirit on all the sections of the church as it moved into the New Testament age, showing that Christ now being exalted, the New Testament church was to be especially characterized by more of the presence of the Spirit of God than was generally the case in the Old Testament. And so on the day of Pentecost when the apostles and the disciples were baptized of the Spirit, the Apostle Peter explains it in Acts 2:16, "But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy," and so on. There this outpouring of the Spirit is the baptism of the Spirit. When we turn to Acts 8 and the Samaritans received this special baptism of the Spirit marking out the New Testament age, we read that the Holy Spirit fell upon them, Acts 8:16, and when the Gentiles of Cornelius' household in Acts 10, when the same thing happened there, we're told that the Spirit fell on them and was poured out upon them, Acts 10:44-45.

So the main idea is of the word "baptized" is of acting upon and producing an effect. That's what happened with the baptism of the Spirit, that the Spirit was poured out or came upon them and they prophesied and so on. Now water baptism in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost symbolizes the Spirit of God working upon a sinner bringing him into union with God through the Lord Jesus Christ, and the fact that it's performed with water symbolically indicates that the effect of being brought into union with Christ is that sin is cleansed away.

Now many people have the sign without the reality but that's the symbolism. We mustn't confuse the sign with its meaning. Some people have the sign of baptism but their sins are not cleansed away and they're not united to Christ, nevertheless that is the meaning of

baptism and the apostle is saying if you have not only the outward sign of baptism with water in the name of the Trinity but the reality of which it is the sign, then that means you're united to Jesus Christ. "Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into death?" Wait a minute, he's saying, if you have what your baptism is a sign of, in other words, you have more than just the sign, you have the reality, you're united to Christ, but remember that the Christ to whom you are united, that Christ died. He was crucified, buried, and rose again. Then if you're united to him as your baptism is the sign of, but if you have the reality, if you really are united to Christ, then if he was crucified, buried and rose again there must be something, something parallel to that that has happened to you. And there is and that's why in verse 6 he says, "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin."

The old man is crucified with Christ. This does not mean that the whole sinful nature has been eradicated yet because verse 12 tells them, "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body," but it does mean that the sin-dominated man, the man over which sin previously presided unhindered, that man whose body, his faculties, were at the disposal of a sinful heart and of sinful desires and thoughts and imaginations, that sin-dominated man is dead and the new man, a man with, in principle, a new nature, has been raised up. And so the forgiven man is a changed man. He is under new management, in principle. He's still imperfect, he still has the remains of corruption, remains of corruption that will not be totally removed until he's in heaven, but he is a changed man. Christ is his Lord and, in principle, he serves God and the Lord Jesus Christ and he's no longer given over to sin.

How does this fit in with what the rest of the Bible teaches? Well, the Bible teaches that true faith in Christ is the result of being born again of the Holy Spirit. In John 3, the Spirit of God is compared to the wind, "The wind bloweth where it listeth," where it pleases, "and thou canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth." You can't control the wind. You can see the effects, you can hear the effects, you can hear the sound of it but you can't control it, "so is every one that is born of the Spirit."

Why do some people believe the gospel and others don't? Why is it that though all are commanded to believe, all are invited to believe, only some do believe? Well, because of the sovereign work of the Holy Spirit renewing the hearts of some sinners and not others. So in Acts 13 when the Apostle Paul preached to the Jews in the synagogue of Antioch in Pisidia we're told, "as many as were ordained unto life believed." In other words, God renewed the hearts of some so that they heeded and embraced that gospel as they ought to have done but none ever would do unless God gave them a new heart, and that new nature which makes a sinner willing to believe on Jesus Christ, that same new nature shows itself in his manner of life.

And the Bible also teaches that not only is faith the result of the work of the Spirit in the heart making a sinner willing to trust in Christ and embrace Christ as he is freely offered to all men in the gospel, but the Bible also teaches that faith, real faith in Christ is never without repentance of sin along with it. There is no such thing as trust in Christ without

turning from sin. Let's think about this, in Genesis 3:5 the serpent said to the woman when he was tempting her to eat of the forbidden fruit, "ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." What was he saying? He's saying strike out independently. Don't just take God's word, find out for yourself. Assert your independence of God in knowledge, in experience. You will be as gods if you just break free of dependence upon God. The essence of sin is the desire to be independent of God. That's what sin essentially is, when a creature seeks to be independent of his Creator.

Well, now faith in Christ means depending upon Christ alone for acceptance with God so there can be no dependence upon Christ and upon God's word and promises of mercy in Christ without a turning from that evil desire to be independent of God. When a sinner trusts Christ, he's saying, "I will take God's word for it and I will depend upon Christ for acceptance with God." And so he turns from that desire to be as gods, to be his own, the god of his own knowledge and salvation and everything else. He says, "No, I will depend upon Christ and upon what God has said about Christ as the Savior of sinners." And where there is faith in Christ, there is a turning from, a repentance of sin, and it will show in a changed life in the fruit of repentance. So the forgiven man is a changed man. He begins to love the Lord. He doesn't try to obey God in order to be forgiven, he loves God, he's thankful to God, he desires to obey God because he is forgiven and it will show.

Now this means that where someone professes faith and there is no change of life at all, that profession of faith is false. It's false. If there is no change, there has been no conversion. We all know that this countryside is littered with such false professions, people saying they're saved but there's no change. And the number of such false professions has, it can happen anywhere but it has been increased by unbiblical methods being added to the preaching of the gospel, getting people to put their hand up at a meeting or to come to the front or to sign a card. Where does the Bible say that anyone should do any of these things? We'll not be asking you to do any such thing. Mr. Allen and I are both very happy to talk with anyone and pray for them, but we won't be giving you a formula to repeat and then tell you you're saved for this reason: all those things can be done without being born of the Spirit and without true faith in Christ and repentance of sin. You don't need a work of the Holy Spirit to put your hand up or to sign something or to repeat a form of words but you do need a work of the Spirit to repent of sin and trust in Jesus Christ the Lord.

And where someone has professed to be saved and there's no change, perhaps a little bit of interest for a little while but then life back to normal, there is no real faith in Christ. But some people maintain a false profession long-term. They continue to profess but there's no actual change in their lives. But perhaps you're an unbeliever, you're unconverted and you say, "Right, what that man is saying is absolutely right and, you know, that's why I don't get involved in this business of salvation and the gospel. I don't mind hearing it from time to time but that's as far as it goes because, really, I'm tired of the hypocrites who claim to be saved and you can't trust them, you can't trust them in business. That's why I don't get involved in this stuff." Perhaps that's what you're saying, admit you say, "I've met people who are supposed to be saved and yet they're dishonest."

In fact, perhaps someone like that owes you money and you say, "Right, why should I take any notice of this gospel when So-and-so who is supposed to be saved and yet you can't trust him? Yes, there are others, good enough people, but I'm finished with it. I don't want to be involved."

And that's the excuse you give to yourself and possibly to others. You say, "I take no notice of the gospel personally because, really, I'm not sure that there's anything in it. I've seen the way some of these people live." And this is your cherished excuse. You love this excuse. You would call it a reason but it's an excuse for having kept away from Christ. This is your one great weapon in your gospel proof armory that there are hypocrites. Do you think God will be brushed off with this wretched excuse? That you despise the gospel of his Son on the flimsy pretext that you know some people who are supposed to be saved and they're hypocrites? So what? The Bible tells us about hypocrites. There were hypocrites in the Old Testament, there were hypocrites in the New Testament, so what have you really discovered that the Bible is true? Well, we've been telling you that all week. God sends his word to you. Suppose the whole world were full of hypocrites, he will call you to account for what you have done with his truths.

And you know it isn't the real reason anyway. The reason you don't come to Christ is because you have no desire for him. It's not because you've met hypocrites. Yes, you've met people who are false, empty, hollow, shallow in their profession of being Christians and you say there's nothing in it, there's nothing in this Christianity, the fact of the matter is you don't want there to be anything in it. But there is. It's the truth of God, that God be true and every man a liar. God sends his gospel to you and it's the truth. What others do with it, leave the hypocrites to themselves but you must come to the Lord Jesus Christ, you must seek forgiveness, acceptance, peace with God, deliverance from wrath, and eternal life, from God through our Lord Jesus Christ. What others do they will give account for but so will you. You must seek the Lord in truth, in reality.

Secondly, what the real Christian has learned. What the real Christian has learned. Verse 21, "What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death." The apostle is speaking to these Roman Christians and he appeals to their present state compared with the past. He says, "What fruit had ye in those things whereof ye are now ashamed?" What profit did our ungodly ways bring us? Did we have the happiness that the devil promised us? Did we have the satisfaction that sin seemed to offer? No, they did not profit at all, those ways of sin, and the Christian looks back, if he can remember such days, he looks back on those former ways with shame. He now sees them in their vilest because he now has a love to God in him and therefore a hatred of sin, and he sees sin for what it is, the disgusting thing, this offensiveness to God. And he also knows that the ways of sin lead to death, eternal death, the pains of hell forever.

So the Christian looks back with disgust upon his former ways. He doesn't glory in it. True believers are ashamed of their sins. They don't glory in their sins to make an exciting story of it. They're ashamed. But those of you who are not converted, those of you who are not trusting Christ, you haven't learned this yet. You still think there's something in sin. Often young people when the gospel is brought to them, they say, "Oh,

but I want to have a good time. Maybe I'll think about it later." Well, who knows whether later will be given them but they say, "Maybe later, but I want to have a good time." What does that really mean? It means this: that they think that fellowship with God, peace with God, communion with Christ, fellowship with Christ, knowing the Lord, following Christ, believing his word is a bad time. That's what it means, that the thought of being a Christian is so repulsive that they really don't want to think about it now. Their sins are so precious that they don't want to contemplate relinquishing them now. Perhaps later on as a sort of insurance policy because they'd like to think that when they die everything will be all right, as if repentance just comes to order. But it doesn't.

But really that's what that's saying, that's what that is saying, that wallowing in sin is a good time and being a Christian would be a bad time like when the Lord said to Israel, "But if it seem evil in your eyes to serve the Lord." Evil in your eyes to come to Christ and to the Father by him. Evil in your eyes to come to the Savior who promises rest to sinners and peace with God and life everlasting. And it seems evil in your eyes compared to the ways of sin, do you see your contempt for Christ? But you say, "Oh no, I'm not like that. I'm not for going out on the town, the clubs and pubs and all the rest of it. I like a quiet life." But a quiet life without Christ, without forgiveness, a quiet life on the way to hell, perhaps quietly making your pile for the envisaged retirement and you don't want anything to disturb that quiet life, you think yourself happier without Christ, you're like someone who is born in a dungeon, a dark dungeon, they've lived all their lives in this dungeon, and they think that's normal and that that's all there is and they don't want to contemplate anything beyond it. No desire for change.

Let me ask you: are you a nice person? Well, I hope you are a nice person. There's no great advantage in being a nasty person so are you a nice person? I'm sure you are but nice without Christ? So you're a nice person and you like to think you have a nice family, and you have a nice house, and a nice car, and you go on nice holiday, and you know nice friends, and when you die you'll have a nice funeral and people will say what a nice person you were. But there's one thing wrong with it all, you'll be in hell. Nice as you were, you'll be in hell. Irreversibly, irrecoverably because you did not seek the Lord. You wanted a nice godless life. Oh, you didn't mind going to church, that was all right, but nothing that interfered with the tranquility of life.

Christians have seen through all this. They've seen through sin. What fruit had you? What profit was there? What benefit in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? Sin whether in its nice forms or its nasty ones does not bring blessedness and it does not bring peace with God, it does not bring life eternal, it does not bring a place in heaven, it brings the wages of death which is death. Is the way of sin so wonderful compared with Christ, the Son of God who came to save sinners freely offered to you in the gospel?

Thirdly, the gift or the wages. The gift or the wages. Verse 23, "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." Salvation in Christ is of grace, the undeserved favor of God. It cannot be earned or merited in any way. Salvation is undeserved, condemnation is deserved, that's why it speaks of the

wages of sin and the gift of God. When sinners are damned, they deserve it. When sinners are saved, they don't.

Do you want to get what you deserve? Well, then go on in your sin, your unbelief, go on saying, "I don't want this gospel. I don't want to hear about this Savior." And you will get what you deserve, but what you deserve is death, eternal death, outer darkness, everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his power where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth. That's what we all deserve but salvation is undeserved. Salvation is the gift of God. Salvation, eternal life comes to sinners through the Lord Jesus Christ and him alone.

Turn then, turn, turn, turn and seek the Lord Jesus Christ. Seek him as he is promised to be found of sinners who seek him. "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found. Call ye upon him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts." We stressed that the other night, you've got to forsake your thoughts, your thoughts, your self-centered thoughts, your proud thoughts, the idea that you're not a sinner, the idea that God is not holy and just and punishes sin, the idea that you can have a quiet but godless life and everything will be all right in the end. These thoughts must go and you must come to the Lord Jesus Christ, the Savior of sinners. "This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." Worthy of all acceptance. It ought to be seized upon eagerly by sinners. It's only because we're so wicked and so sinful that without the Spirit of God we don't see the good news as good news. But it is good news that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners and that message, that truth is worthy of all acceptance. It ought to be eagerly embraced and wholeheartedly rested and trusted in, that the Savior is the Lord Jesus Christ. He never sinned. He bore the punishment of sin and none perish who trust in him alone. Amen.