



Topic:
Broken Chains
(Overcoming Those Things That Have Me Bound)
~Romans Chapter 6~

For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.
~Romans 8:2 (KJV)~

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The Bible sounds a definite call to God's people to overcome a multitude of things: Satan, sin, the world, the flesh, and this fallen human life. Those who love the Lord Jesus sense a corresponding echo within, calling them to live an overcoming life. The first qualification of an overcomer is faith. First John 5:5 asks, "Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?" Belief in Christ is the initial, most fundamental component of overcoming. Nevertheless, simply believing does not guarantee that at the end of our life's journey we will receive an overcomer's reward. While all overcomers are Believers¹, not all Believers will be overcomers. Believing is only the initiation into the overcoming life. From this initial step springs the work of becoming dead to sin and resurrected to new life. This occurs as the Believer takes on the identification and association with Christ's death, burial, and resurrection. Our scripture lesson for this series study is taken from Romans chapter 6, 7, and 8. These chapters have been labeled by some as the "Divine Sandwich". Contained within these chapters is the spiritual nutrients necessary to build oneself into a strong spiritual vessel unto honor, sanctified, and fit for the master's use, and thus prepared for every good work (2 Timothy 2:21).

INTRODUCTION

Up to this point in his letter to the Romans, the Apostle Paul has shown people's need for salvation, God's gift of that salvation through the death of his Son, and God's grace in forgiving the sins of all who accept him.

The next section of the letter (chapters 6-8) deals with *sanctification*—God progressively separating believers from sin and making them more like himself. Justification is the first moment of sanctification; it is when we pass, through Christ, from death to life. Sanctification is the step-by-step process when the Holy Spirit works in our lives and conforms us into the image of Christ.

Chapter 6 deals with the believer being dead to sin; chapter 7, with the Believer being dead to the Law; and chapter 8, with the believer alive in Spirit-given victory. All three chapters are an explanation of the little phrase in Romans 5:17—"reign in life." Chapter 6 tells us how sin no longer reigns over us (6:12); chapter 7 explains how the Law no longer reigns over us (7:1); and chapter 8 explains how the indwelling Spirit gives us life and liberty (8:2-4).

¹Throughout this handout, use of the word "Believer" will also, at times, be referred to as "Christian". Both uses identify one who professes belief in the teachings of Jesus Christ.

FOCUS OF OUR STUDY (Romans Chapters 6)

As we spend the next few weeks of our study in Romans chapters 6, we will explore what it means to be dead to sin and alive in Christ. Once we have come into a knowledge of our position in Christ and thus let him, by His Holy Spirit, rest, rule, and abide in our life we will see the chains of those things that have bound and held us captive broken. Our desire is that we live a free and separated life victoriously in Christ Jesus.

ROMANS CHAPTER 6

The Apostle Paul begins this chapter by describing the miraculous power of the gospel; it sets people free from sin's control. It's not that Christians don't or can't sin anymore, but that they are free to choose between doing wrong and doing right. This Christ-bought freedom brings great responsibility. Believers must use their God-given opportunity to make right choices, replacing sinful thoughts and actions with righteous ones. Failure to do so means choosing to remain enslaved to sin. But the rewards of serving God include abundant joy and eternal life.

Verse 1. What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? Paul realized that his statement in 5:20, “where sin abounded, grace abounded much more”, would be interpreted by some to suggest that they ought to sin more in order to experience more grace. Many expound this object as coming from a Jew, and imagine a sort of dialogue between him and the Apostle.

It was essential for the Apostle to vindicate his doctrine, not only from such objections as he knew would be made by the enemies of the cross of Christ, but also to Christians themselves, whom he was directly addressing. We see in his answer in the following verse, to the questions thus proposed, what an ample field it opened for demonstrating the beautiful harmony of the plan of salvation, and of proving how every part of it bears upon and support the rest.

Verse 2. Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?

Paul denies the possibility outright. The idea that someone would claim to believe the gospel while planning to continue in sin is preposterous to Paul. He knew people would think that way and would be wrong. The point of the gospel was not to find an excuse for sin, but to give freedom from sin. **Died to sin.** To make his answer clear, Paul introduces a new concept—we *died* in relation to *sin*. Up until this point he has written about the accomplishments of Christ's death. Here he teaches that because Christ died for our sins, those who believe in him actually *died to sin*.

Living in sin or dying to sin.

- Living in sin describes a lifestyle of habitual sinful practices. It is a life where sin reigns. Death is the currency of that kingdom. The subjects are slaves, and their future is hopeless. Why would anyone, given their freedom, want to remain in such a place, living such a life?
- Dying to sin describes the most frequent way a slave gained freedom (by dying) to illustrate one aspect of the salvation that God has given us through Christ. The problem of sin is so deeply rooted in us that radical action is required to eliminate it. In another place, Paul described this process: “For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves”. Unless we consider ourselves dead to sin (6:11), sin will continue to influence us.

Paul speaks of this death as fact and concludes, therefore, that believers cannot **live any longer in it. How have we died to sin?**

- In the legal sense, we died in the sight of God’s judgment.
- In the conversion sense, believing in Christ is dying to sin.
- In the baptismal sense, that burial implies we have died with Christ.
- In the moral sense, sinful desires may be present, but they are mortally wounded.
- In the resurrection sense, we exchange our sinful life for Christ’s resurrection life.

Verse 3. Do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Paul uses the common experience of believers being baptized as a picture of being identified with Jesus Christ. He shows that the believer’s sanctification rests on the same foundation, and springs from the same source, as their justification, namely, their union with Jesus Christ.

Verse 4. Therefore, we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in the newness of life. The death of Christ was the means by which sin was destroyed, and His burial the proof of the reality of His death. Christians are therefore represented as buried with Him by baptism into His death, in token they really died with Him, and if buried with Him it is not that they shall remain in the grave, but that, as Christ rose from the dead, they should also rise. The Christian’s baptism, then, is the figure of their complete deliverance from the guilt of sin, signifying that God places to their account the death of Christ as their own death. As He died, we die to our old, sinful lifestyle, and a *new life* begins. Thus, coming up out of the water symbolizes our resurrection to that new life with Christ, as well as the promise of a future bodily resurrection. It is also a figure of the Christian’s purification and resurrection for the service of God.

Verse 5. For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection. The “*if*” used in this verse means “*since*” or “*in view of the fact.*” It is a fact that the Believer is united together in the likeness of His death and resurrection. This is the Believer’s salvation that as Christ was raised from the dead, so has he been raised from the dead. The Believer has been *united* together with Christ. This united means that the Believer has been made to grow together with and in Christ. Because of the Believer’s union with Christ he will grow in the likeness of His death and resurrection. This likeness shows the Believer’s recognition in Christ. The Believer’s death to sin resulted in resurrection to a life-change with Christ. We are now free from the reign of sin in our life. This is what the apostle Paul referred to in Philippians 3:10 as the “power of His resurrection.”

Verse 6. Knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin. Knowing this—that is, assuming it as a thing with which they were already well acquainted, or a thing which they should know. When we have been united together with Christ in His death and resurrection, it means that our old man (the body of sin) has been destroyed. The “old man” represents the Christian before he or she trusted Christ, the person who was ruled by sin and was God’s enemy (5:10). All Christians died (old man) with Christ on the cross, as they were all one in Him, and represented by Him. If, then, their old man has been crucified with Him, it cannot be that they will for the future live according to their old nature. The design of the Believer’s crucifixion with Christ is that he may not henceforth be a slave to sin.

Verse 7. For he who has died has been freed from sin. This death does not mean natural death, but death in all its extent, signifying “the second death,” the penalty of which Christ suffered, and therefore all His members have suffered it with him. Death, by its definition, means to be released to a state that cannot be reversed. The tense of the expression *has been freed* indicates a past action that has a continuing effect—we have been freed from sin and will continue to enjoy that freedom.

Verse 8. Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him. Now here can rather be said, “since”—Believers are one with Christ in His death, they have the certain prospect of forever living with Him. That life here mentioned is the life after the resurrection; the life after the Believer has been resurrected to a new man. The truth is that from the point of the Believer’s death and resurrection, he now sits in a place with Christ where Christ reigns within him causing the Believer to live with Him. This living with Him is living a life of victory over sin.

Verse 9. Knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him. Because of Christ’s death and resurrection, his followers need never fear death. Allowing this truth to permeate our being will change the way we live. We know that we will live with Christ in eternity, but we also live with Him today. That assurance frees us to enjoy fellowship with Him and to do His will. This will affect all our activities—work and worship, play, Bible study, quiet times, and time of caring for others. When we know that we don’t have to fear death, we experienced a new vigor in life.

Verse 10. For the death that He died, He dies to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God. Because Believers are living in a time of transition, this verse offers advice in how that time should be spent. The effect of the death of Believers to sin is that sin shall not have dominion over them. Just as Christ died to deal with sin once for all, so we have died to sin. The *once for all* emphasizes the finality and completeness of Christ’s work. He died to sin once, and but once, because He fully atoned for it by His death. God’s great plan was to liberate us from sin’s ruling power. Thus, our perspectives, attitudes, relationships, and desires will change, in light of the incredible events that have taken place on our behalf— death to sin and the ability to come to God and live for Him.

Verse 11. Likewise, you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord. If we have identified with Christ, what is true for him can be true for us. Believers are here commanded to reckon themselves to be really and effectually dead to sin—dead to its guilt—and alive unto God in Jesus Christ, as it ought to be rendered. Just as a dead body cannot respond to temptations, allurements, influences, or enticements, neither can we respond to them. We are alive in God because we have been given new life and a new lifestyle, and we have been given the sure promise of eternal life.

Verse 12. Therefore, do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lust. Since the apostle Paul knows it is true that we are in fact dead to sin and alive to God, he therefore advances the imperative that we are no longer to let sin reign in our mortal body. Sin is pictured here as a ruling master that must not be allowed to mount the throne and “call the shots,” as in the days of the former man (old man). He is a defeated king and must be kept down. If this is not done, he will assume a position of authority from which he will demand that we carry out his sinful desires and urges. Because the believer is dead in Christ to sin and resurrected in overcoming power, he no longer has to give event to sin’s beckoning.

How to revolt against the reign of sin in our bodies?

- Identify personal weaknesses.
- Recognize temptations.
- Confront sinful desires.
- Stay away from known sources of temptation.
- Practice self-restraint.
- Consciously invest time in good habits and service.
- Depend on grace.
- Let the peace of Christ rule in your heart!

Verse 13. And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instrument of righteousness to God. This surrender, against which the Believer is cautioned, is to sin. While we are in our bodies, there will always be the chance that some actions will be sinful or used as a tool to distort our relationship with God or with others. Because our bodies are mortal (decaying and dying), we should not yield to sinful desires and temptations. The sure way to ensure that this does not become a dominant reality is to freely and willingly present our whole (or the all of who we are) to the Lord Himself to be used in righteous causes and not to sin to be used for its ends, namely, unrighteousness. Remember, we have a choice. We have been given new life by God; thus, our bodies are to be used by God for promoting life. Knowing that the temptation to sin is always presenting itself in the face of the Believer, Paul beseeches (urges or pleads with) the Believer, in view of God's mercy, to offer his body as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which Paul says is the Believer's reasonable service (Rom 12:1).

Verse 14. For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace. The propensity or inclination to sin shall not have dominion over the Believer – it has neither right nor power to do so. Sin cannot and will not ever again reign over the Believer and enslave him because he is not under the law, but under grace.

What does it mean that we are not under the law?

- We are not under the law's demands, as were the people of the Old Testament.
- We are not under the curse implied by the impossible standard of the law (Gal 3:10-14).
- We are not under its system of requirements, the ceremonial laws that had to be meticulously kept.
- We are not under the fear of failing the just standard of the law.

God delivers the Believer from sin; and if he again become subject to it, it will be the effect of his own choice or negligence. The Believer is not under the law. That law which exacts obedience, without giving power to obey; that condemns every transgression and every unholy thought without providing for the removal of evil or the pardon of sin. To be under grace means to be under the merciful and beneficent dispensation of the Gospel

Verse 15. What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? Certainly not! Being under grace and under the mastery of Christ allows us the freedom not to sin. Any attitude that welcomes, rationalizes, or excuses sin is not grace, but slavery to sin itself. When we were under the law, sin was our master, for the law could not help us overcome sin. But now that we are bound to Christ, He is our Master, and He gives us power to do good rather than evil.

Verse 16. Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness? Every man is the servant of the master to whose commands he yields himself; whether it be the sinful dispositions of his heart, in action which lead to death, or the new and spiritual obedience implanted by regeneration. All human beings are enslaved. Although this may clash with our goal of independence, the fact is that all were created for interdependence where we are mutually dependent on others. For Believer, he lives in total dependence on the Lord. Romans 14:7-8 lets the Believer know that it is unto the Lord that we live and die. Therefore, we should aim to please Him.

Verse 17. But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered. The form of doctrine or Gospel is the good news that Jesus died for our sins and was raised to give us new life or to deliver us from the body of sin that held us in bondage and captive. Obeying from the heart means that when the word was preached, we committed and gave ourselves freely and fully to God, to love Him “with all our heart and with all our soul and with all our mind” (Matthew 22:37). It is this obedience from the heart that was life changing in and through us.

Verse 18. And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness. It is impossible to be neutral. Every person has a master—either God or sin. We must understand that a Christian is able to sin, but he or she is no longer a slave to sin. We are set free from the control of our evil desires and selfish habits and are free to become enslaved to righteous living.

Verse 19. I speak in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members as slaves of uncleanness, and of lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves of righteousness for holiness. Paul uses an analogy to ensure his readers understood the extent to which he was now speaking concerning their being set free from sin and enslaved to righteousness. In his day, there were more slaves than citizens in the empire.

Verse 20. For when you were slaves to sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. What Paul is saying here is that when you served sin, you deemed yourselves free from all obligation to righteousness. Because of our bondage to sin, we had not the capacity nor the power to live in righteousness.

Verse 21. What fruit did you have then in the things of which you are not ashamed? For the end of those things is death. The question being address here is what did you gain from the things you did that were contrary to what the Lord desires? The outcome of the way you lived, when sin was your master, was death. Death is the only thing you have been able to produce after all the years you have served the master of sin. So in other words, at the end of the day, it doesn't matter how much fun I had; it doesn't matter how many friends I made; it doesn't matter how much money I made doing things against God, in the end, it all leads to death and separation from God.

Verse 22. But now having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life. The benefits are immeasurable for those who are enslaved to God and set free from sin. Bearing fruit unto holiness denotes conduct that is holy and is only produced as the result of freedom of sin, and becoming servants to God which ends in eternal life. We have entered a state of holiness and separation from anything polluted or profane.

Verse 23. For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. Here, as in the conclusion of this chapter, death is contrasted with eternal life. This death is not just physical death—everyone dies physically, believers and unbelievers alike. This death refers to a greater death beyond physical. It refers to eternal separation from God in hell. This is the wage that a person receives for his or her rebellion against God. Those in hell will find no comfort in the truth that they have been paid exactly what they earned. But instead of wages, those who believe receive a gracious gift from God—eternal life. This gift of God is freely given to the Believer on behalf of the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. It is something we could never have achieved, or attained to by our own efforts. It is unearnable. It can only be received through a personal trust in Jesus Christ *“But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name.”*(John 1:12-13)

CONCLUSION

In order to break the chains of those things that have us bound we must immerse ourselves in the truth of the gospel. The gospel is not only the means by which we are saved, but it is also the means by which we are sanctified and set free or delivered. My brothers and my sisters, we must be willing to die, at all cost, to every fleshing habit and sin that yet lives within us; we must be willing to take up the life of Christ within us and live in total allegiance and obedience to His will for our lives. Our victory comes as we live through the resurrected power of Christ that abides within us; this is God’s greatest gift unto mankind.

Next in our study, we will move on to a study of Romans chapter 7. Here, the Apostle Paul talks of the Believer being dead to or released from the Law. The Apostle shares the purpose of the Law and our desire, as ones who have been free from the Law, to live a life of righteousness unto God through Christ. We will explore Romans chapter 7 verse by verse with the end goal to rightly place the Law in its place as intended by God.

God’s peace and blessing be upon you...

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