



Sermon Notes | Baptism into Christ | Romans 6:1-4

INTRODUCTION

We return to our study in Romans, the New Testament letter that teaches us about the 'Gospel of God'.

Romans 1:1

"Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God."

Paul opens the letter with the declaration that he is not ashamed of this 'gospel', in fact, he proclaims this fact. It is his confession.

Romans 1:16

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek."

Why? The 'Gospel of God' is the 'the power of God for salvation', for everyone who believes, both the Jew and the Greek, without distinction.

We have seen this. In the wake of the 'inability', the 'unrighteous', and the 'depravity of man' in chapters one, two and three, and in spite of man 'suppressing the truth', and being 'given up to themselves', and that there are 'none righteous', and in spite of there being 'no fear of God in man's eyes', God made a way for 'salvation' for men and women of all kinds, through 'faith' in His Son, Jesus Christ.

Romans 3:21-26

"But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and Prophets bear witness to it --- the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus."

Humanity was not left to themselves. Humanity was/is offered 'salvation'. In contrast to man's 'depravity', the 'righteousness of God', revealed in Christ Jesus, was administered to all 'those who believe in faith', faith like Abraham himself received.

Romans 4:11

"He [Abraham] received the sign of circumcision as a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised. The purpose was to make him the father of all who believe without being circumcised, so that righteousness would be counted to them as well ..."

'Faith' was first! The purpose for this was so that Abraham would be the 'father of all who would believe'. Abraham received the 'sign of circumcision' as a seal of the 'righteousness' he had by 'faith' before he had circumcision. 'Faith' came first so that 'righteousness' would be counted to them also. 'Righteousness' is counted to all of 'faith', the 'righteousness' of life, the 'humanity of life' contrasted/compared to the 'humanity of death', a 'humanity' in Adam, mankind's default 'humanity'. This was the contrast of Romans chapter five. All 'humanity' was created in Adam. He was our 'representative', thus 'humanity was present with Adam in the Garden, and thus "all" 'humanity sinned. From this 'original sin, 'death reigned' in all of humanity. However, under the 'headship and lordship' of Jesus Christ, one's position changes. One moves from death to life. One moves from guilty to not guilty. This new free status is made only that way, through Jesus, and by faith.

Now in Chapter six we take up more about this transition. It is a transitional change that has implications, must have implications. Union with Christ, righteousness, and faith, must have implications if it is the real thing. 'Justification' is not just just a new position. It is more. It is the beginning of 'new life' and of 'sanctification'. 'Justification' begins the process of 'sanctification' and of being 'set apart'. It is the 'process' that moves us from 'justification' to 'glorification'. Our position changes before God, and now we live under God in light of that change. Paul will cover this in the next chapters (six to eight). The doctrine of 'sanctification' answers many questions for us about having a 'new head' and 'lordship'.

So, what are the new implications of 'justification', of this 'new position' of being under God not Adam?

Romans 6:1-4

"What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life."

All of this to say, 'all of us' have been 'baptised' in Christ Jesus, and as a result, we are now 'dead to sin'.

I. DEAD TO SIN: (v. 1)

Romans 6:1

"What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound?"

Paul likes to employ this approach of starting with questions to 'convey God's truth'. He uses the same format elsewhere as well. It is a mechanism to 'pull us in', to 'engage us', to 'help us track' with his message.

Romans 4:1

"What then shall we say was gained by Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh?"

Romans 7:7

"What then shall we say? That the law is sin? By no means! Yet if it had not been for the law, I would not have known sin. For I would not have known what it is to covet if the law had not said, 'You shall not covet'."

So, Paul questions here, 'Are we to continue in sin' so that grace may abound? No. Paul also demonstrates that the Holy Spirit knows our thoughts, knows how we are tracking, and knows where our thoughts will take us.

Romans 5:20-21

"Now the law came in to increase the trespass, but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more, so that, as sin reigned in death, grace also might reign through righteousness leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

So, where sin increases, 'sin reigns', but where 'sin reigns' 'grace is more'. Yes, God's marvellous 'grace abounds more', but there must be understanding about this.

A man once spoke of his sin to the pastor. "I sin, sin, but I am thankful for God's grace. Yes, I know my sin. I remain in sin, and sin increased, but grace abounds." It was 'right sounding' at face value, but it is a picture of someone who is 'remaining in sin', and with that, a problem exists. His sin remained. His sin increased. It was 'persistent sin'. Initially it may have sounded right, but this man was 'hiding' behind 'grace'. Yes, God is 'gracious', and who does not sin? But thinking like this 'pacifies' our wrong habits and our sinful ways, and this is not right. Such thinking is 'antinomianism', the belief that the Christian is not required to attend to 'the law', is not obligated to heed 'moral law'; that 'grace' releases the Christian from 'the law' so that he/she functions as though there was 'no law'.

It is a Jack and Jill response, that God's 'grace' covers it all, but this is wrong thinking. Jill states, "I am in this marriage, and I offend Jack with my sin, but Jack forgives my sin, and brings 'grace'. The more sin that happens, the more Jack's 'grace' is amplified." That God's 'grace' covers it, sounds like a Christian belief. We argue that the Old Testament was a time of Law, but now the New Testament has begun. Now 'grace reigns'! And indeed 'grace' does reign, but sin remains also. So while it sounds good, sounds Christian, it is but 'cheap grace' that fails to do away with sin. Jill admits she increases in her offences; that is just "the way she is", or "who she is". The more she sins, the more Jack can demonstrate his 'grace'. "I sin, and he forgives. I see Jack's 'grace' is amplified by my sin." But, Jill, do you really love Jack with this mindset? And what about

Jack? He is overlooked. He is not given his proper honour. You, Jill, are more concerned by how 'you' are appeased, rather than how you respond to Jack. You have lost sight of the one who is 'giving the grace'.

So we do to God! Such belief is 'violating' the 'heart of grace' by living this way. Yes, God's 'grace' covers it, but what of the 'glory of God'? Are we to continue in sin? Paul states NO! Perish the thought. BY NO MEANS! True Christians cannot do this. Enough of such thinking.(More about this in chapter seven.) How can we still live in sin if we are dead to it?

Romans 6:1b-2

"Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it?"

Romans 3:21-26

"But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it --- the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as propitiation by his blood, to be received in faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus."

Romans 5:16-21

"Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men. For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous. Now the law came in to increase the trespass, but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more, so that, as sin reigned in death, grace also might reign through righteousness leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Faith in Christ. The righteousness of Christ. Being justified in Christ. In Christ we are made free from sin's penalty and free from sin's power. Christ was victorious over Adam's sin. Adam is no longer the 'head' and the 'humanity of death' no longer 'reigns'. In Christ, we are under 'new headship', new ownership, and sin has lost its hold on you. Only under Adam's 'headship' does sin remain. In Christ, we can now live as we 'ought to'. If we are truly in Christ, it will not be a life of sin. For the true believer, it is impossible to live and remain in sin. You cannot hide behind 'cheap grace'. You may sin, but you cannot live in something you are dead to. It is like the status of the butterfly which no longer crawls as a caterpillar. It is a 'new creation'. The butterfly now flies, uses its wings, lives and acts as the 'new creation' that it is.

So too in Christ. In Christ, we "died to sin".

Romans 6:2

"... How can we who died to sin still live in it?"

That we have 'died to sin' dismantles the idea of 'watered down', the modern church vision of 'respectable sin'. It dismantles the watered-down modern church habit of accommodating 'respectable sins'. It is a matter of identity! It is not who we are anymore. In Christ we are 'dead to sin'. All the 'I cannots' now become 'I can' through Spirit-strength in Christ. In Christ we are a 'new creation'. How are we no longer in sin? By professing 'faith', we are 'baptised' into Christ, 'baptised' into Christ's death, and thereby we have become 'dead to sin'.

Romans 6:3

"Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?"

If 'death to sin' exists, how so? We think of 'baptism' being one type, the 'baptism' of water, an external event. But there is yet another 'baptism', a prior 'baptism', a 'spiritual immersion' in the Spirit. This initial 'baptism' happens 'internally'. It is a 'spiritual baptism' which happens before the 'water baptism'. The 'water baptism' is an outward picture of this first 'spiritual baptism'. We are not talking about a second blessing, as in the next tier of Christianity. It is not an anointing that results in speaking in tongues today; which is the unbiblical modern teaching in many professed churches today. 'Spirit baptism' occurs at conversion. 'This being 'immersed in the Spirit' comes from the Greek word 'baptizo' meaning to dip, immerse, to saturate, the result being the 'complete union' of two parts. It is the picture of the white cloth being dipped, or 'baptised', 'fully' immersed into the coloured dye, then being pulled out, having a new effect, 'one with the cloth'. In the same way, our soul has been 'dipped', immersed and 'baptised' in Christ, the Son of God. It is the Spirit poured out on us through Jesus. It is tied to our conversion, our regeneration, our salvation. It is not our doing. We do not do it. It is done to us. Holy Spirit does it to us through Jesus Christ.

Titus 3:5-6

"... he [God our Saviour] saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior..."

Romans 5:5

"... and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us."

'Poured richly' "through Jesus Christ"! It cannot happen apart from Jesus Christ; no pouring, no indwelling, no 'baptism', without Christ. We become one with Christ. We gain 'union with Christ'. We gain a 'new identity' with Christ, becoming one in Him, 'union' with Him. It is something new! Once 'baptised' in Christ at salvation, it is done, once and for all. It is a permanent event. We cannot lose this new identity (anything else

is false teaching and bad theology). It is a one time 'spirit baptism' at conversion, a permanent immersion. Such is sealed and guaranteed.

Ephesians 1:13

"In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit..."

Ephesians 4:30

"And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption."

II Corinthians 1:21-22

"And it is God who establishes us ... and who has also put his seal on us and given us his Spirit in ours as a guarantee."

To be 'baptised' in Christ is to become a 'new creation', and to become 'dead to sin' and 'alive to something new'.

II Corinthians 5:17

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come."

Romans 6:1-2

"What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it?"

Like the butterfly which no longer creeps along, we are now 'new' in Christ. Sin used to be our identity and our way of life, but now we are 'dead to sin'.

Galatians 3:27

"For as many of you as were baptised into Christ have put on Christ."

This is our hope. Once we were caught in our sin, but now our identity is 'new' and we no longer inch along in sin.

I Corinthians 6:9-11

"Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God."

You were, but now you are not! You've been washed, sanctified, justified, and Spirit baptised, all in one verse. You cannot separate 'sanctification' from 'justification'. To be 'Spirit baptised' into Christ blends both 'sanctification' and 'justification' one with the

other, into one package, including all. Both happen from our conversion; 'living in' and 'living for' Christ.

II. TO BE ALIVE TO LIFE (v. 4)

Romans 6:4

"We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life."

To be 'baptised in Christ' is not only to become 'dead to sin', we too walk into 'newness' with Christ. The 'baptism' of the Spirit brings us into 'union' with Christ, brings us to 'experiencing something' with Christ. We did not hang on the cross, we did not bear the sin, we did not lay in the tomb. No. But we 'benefit and share in' that experience, 'if' we are 'in Him'.

Romans 6:4-8

"We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. 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. For one who has died has been set free from sin. Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him."

United with Him: crucified with Him, buried with Him, 'resurrected' like Him. We died with Him, and will live with Him. This is our 'baptism' with Him. The work was done by Christ on our behalf, so that we might share 'with Him'. Sharing 'with Him' suggests 'purpose' in order that we might walk with Him, 'in newness of life', and 'new life' speaks of our own 'resurrection' to come, by the same 'resurrection power' which raised Him.

Romans 1:4

"... and was declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord."

Ephesians 1:7-10, 13-14, 19-20, 22-23

"In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ as a plan of the fullness of time, to unite all things to him, things in heaven and things on earth."

In him, you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory."

... and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places. ... And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all."

Paul, speaking about this 'newness of life', speaks not only of our 'resurrection' to come, but also of the new quality and character of this 'new life'. He highlights the quality of life, in that 'this newness' begins now. 'Rise and walk now, in this 'newness', Christian. It is 'newness' now, not down the road at 'resurrection', but NOW! The 'baptism' of salvation has implications. The 'newness' has already begun. The 'baptism' of water comes on the heel of the 'spiritual' baptism of salvation, and thus it is said, 'Walk now in your 'newness' of life'. It means not only are you 'dead to sin' but you are 'alive in Christ'. 'Newness' drives! It is no longer a caterpillar creeping along, but a butterfly, using its new wings. Life has 'newness'. No longer are you walking under 'Adam's sinful humanity'. Trying to act in the old way is wrong, and alarming. God has made you 'alive in Christ'. You are bound together with Him, 'dead to sin' and 'alive in Christ. To live now is Christ! It has been done by the Holy Spirit internally.

Baptism by water is the 'outward picture' of what has happened inside. Christ modelled it. It is 'ceremonial' washing, an immersion fully into water. It is a demonstration of what has already happened inside spiritually. 'Water baptism' is the first step of 'obedience' as a new believer.

This was nothing new to the Jews. The law gave instruction that pointed to this baptism picture. Let us look back to the Levitical commands to wash, to cleanse. This too represented 'newness', demonstrating the 'spirit wash', the 'internal' change that came from cleansing.

Leviticus 17:15

"And every person who eats what dies of itself or what is torn by beasts, whether he is a native or a sojourner, shall wash his clothes and bathe himself in water and be unclean until the evening; then he shall be clean."

Leviticus 22:6

"... the person who touches such a thing (unclean thing) shall be unclean until the evening and shall not eat of the holy things unless he has bathed his body in water."

God calls us to be 'baptised' into Christ. 'Baptism' marks our entrance into 'one spirit' and 'one Body'.

I Corinthians 12:12-13

"For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in one Spirit we were all baptised into one body --- Jews or Greeks, slaves or free ---- and all were made to drink of one Spirit."

The Body of Christ, the bonding into a 'church body'. It is a commitment to a local body. It is accountable to its people. It is accountable to the Word of God. It requires faithful attendance, and the worshiping of God. It requires serving the Body, witnessing to others, and protecting the unity of the Body. Thus is being 'Alive to Life' in Christ.