

Sent: Wednesday, January 17, 2018 5:25 PM
Subject: Last Nite's MOB Study on Romans 6

"Even so, consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus!" (Romans 6:11)
So, who do we think we are as believers--and how then should we live?

Paul had just established, in Romans 3:21-5:21, that as a result of having believed in Jesus Christ, and receiving Him as our Savior, we have been "justified by faith"--declared righteous and given the "gift" of eternal life! And it had nothing to do with our "works" but was entirely of God's grace! We now have the hope of glory with Him!

And so, could that possibly mean that we might want to "continue in sin," and live the same kind of life we lived before, as unbelievers? That's the rhetorical question Paul asks at the start of our lesson in Romans 6. And his answer is emphatic: "May it never be!"--the strongest Greek idiom for repudiating a statement!

"How can we who died to sin still live in it?" And the answer to that question becomes the main theme and premise for the rest of chapter 6!

Paul's argument, as noted by Dr. Tom Constable, in his "Notes on Romans," boils it down to four words, or some form of them: (1) knowing, (2) considering, (3) presenting, and (4) obeying! It begins with "knowing something"! Scripture always identifies "knowledge" as the foundation and basis for Christian doctrine and practice! Jesus said "to those Jews who had believed in Him," in John 8:32, "You will know the truth and the truth shall set you free!"

And so, Paul picks up in Romans 6:3--"Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? Therefore, we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin; for he who has died is freed from sin. Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, is never to die again; death no longer is master over Him. For the death that He died, He died to sin once and for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God!" (6:3-10)

And so, Paul describes the Christian's death to sin by a reference to baptism. "Shepherd's Notes" notes that "baptism proclaims with eloquent simplicity what has happened, in a person's life!" And the ordinance of baptism, which we practice in the church, identifies the believer with the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ and is a public testimony of faith in Christ--and done in obedience to our Lord's command! (Matt. 28:19-20).

The metaphor of being crucified with Christ is not limited to this passage! Galatians 2:20 says: "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the

life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me!"

And then, back to Romans 6:11, we see the verse with the third word, "consider" (and the verse we chose for memory): "Even so, consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus!" The Greek word for "consider" here does not suggest a mere or casual thought about something but, according to John MacArthur, refers to an "absolute confidence in what one's mind knows to be true"! And so, we're to embrace by faith what God has revealed to be true!

But then we come to Rom. 6:12 and Paul's warning that we (as believers) "not let sin reign our mortal body so that you may obey its lusts, or go on presenting the members of our body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness..." All of which, by its very mention, recognizes the reality of the believer's continued vulnerability to sin! And thus, our need to recognize that sin is still a factor--due to "the flesh" and despite our being positionally "dead to sin"--and our need to repent and "confess our sin" (as we're exhorted in I John 1:9), thus restoring our "fellowship" with God!

Note the word "present" and "presenting" in Romans 6:13! Paul urges that rather than "presenting the members of our body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness, we present ourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and our members as instruments of righteousness to God"!

Paul then combines "presenting" with the fourth word, "obeying" or obedience." Having been "freed from sin, we are to present ourselves to God as "slaves of obedience, resulting in righteousness"--and "sanctification"! (6:16, 19, and 22)

All of which implies responsibilities and actions on our part in the process of what Paul calls "sanctification," in vs. 19. But it will only work as we present ourselves as "instruments of righteousness to God"! And, more importantly, as God works out His sovereign will and purpose in our lives!

And so, in chapter 6, Paul introduces us to the doctrine of "sanctification", which takes place "positionally" when we receive Christ but, unlike justification, is an ongoing process for the believer!

J. Vernon McGee, in comparing justification and sanctification, put it this way: justification is a one-time act; sanctification is an ongoing process! Justification works for us; sanctification works in us! Justification declares us righteous; sanctification makes us righteous!

And so, our first lesson on the doctrine of sanctification, which Douglas Moo titles "Freedom from the Power of Sin"--and Dr. Constable calls "The Believer's Relationship to Sin." We'll be considering the implications of this doctrine for the believer more as we move on to Romans 7!

And, as Dave Brien discussed in our large group session last nite, we need to think not only about who we are in Christ but also about where we are, as believers and followers of Christ, on that "upward slope" on the line of "progressive sanctification"! Ironically, Dave (like Dr. Constable) also left us with "four words" to consider as we go our way--prayer, reflection, confession, and thanksgiving! But our greatest resources are the Word of God--and the reason for MOB!

Have a great week, men!

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