



# HICKORY GROVE

BAPTIST CHURCH

## **Dead to Sin – Alive to God**

September 1, 2019

Romans 6:1-11

Clint Pressley

*6 What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? <sup>2</sup> By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? <sup>3</sup> Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? <sup>4</sup> 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.*

*<sup>5</sup> 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. <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>8</sup> Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. <sup>9</sup> We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. <sup>10</sup> For the death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God. <sup>11</sup> So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.*

*(Pastor prays)*

On September 26, 1992, I found myself standing on the front porch of Mr. Robert Smith's farmhouse deep in the heart of southwest Mississippi. In the approaching distance I could hear the hoofbeats of Mister Robert's horse named Prince. He was pulling a gentleman's buggy, inside of which was my bride-to-be, Connie LaBelle Smith. We stood there on the porch of that dairy farm and as the katydids sang, we promised under the lordship of Christ to be husband and wife.

Now, that event was important and should be celebrated, each year. But I would argue that the ceremony is the easiest part of being married. That marriage has a starting point, that was

easy. I just stood there and agreed. It's the faithful *living out* of those vows that takes effort. That's where intentionality and discipline and growth take place.

What is true about marriage is even more true about being a Christian. Being a Christian starts with a one-time event. It starts when you believe in the atoning death of Jesus. That He died on the cross for your sins and that God raised Him for your life. God's grace alone saves us through faith alone in Christ alone, that's justification. You just stood there and God's grace saved you. You might not even remember what you said or the date, but He justified you.

But that wasn't the end of the story. That was the beginning.

Now that's what chapters 1 through 5 in Romans were about, the one-time act of justification, having your sins forgiven and your life changed through faith in Christ. Now Paul is turning our attention from the grace that *saves* us to the grace that *changes* us. That is called sanctification.

It's important to get the difference between justification and sanctification right. Ray Patchett says it like this:

- Justification is the moment you trust Christ. Sanctification is lived moment by moment.
- Justification delivers us from the penalty of sin. Sanctification delivers us from the power of sin.
- Justification is an event. Sanctification is a process.
- Justification happens once. Sanctification is gradual and continuing.
- Justification is the work of a moment. Sanctification covers a lifetime.
- Justification gives us the merits of Christ. Sanctification gives us the character of Christ.

And I think Paul is now moving from justification, what *happened*, to sanctification, how we *live* it. Romans 6 is not about the *penalty* of sin as much as it is about the *power* of sin and how we fight against it. Here is *prevention theology*. How do we win? How do we live in grace? Because...

### **Grace Received Means a Life Changed**

It means what verse 11 says. You are dead to sin and alive to God, there is a change.

### **Real Change Means Aggressive Living**

I say aggressive because that's how verses 1-2 feel. Paul has just said where sin increased, grace abounds even more. And he follows it up with a question and answer in verses 1-2. **6** *What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? <sup>2</sup> By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it?* Since your sins are never going to outrun grace, shouldn't you just live anyway you want? Verse 1 says, are we to continue in sin that grace may abound?

Let's pause here and think about what Paul is asking. What does it mean to *continue in sin*? The word Paul uses is *Epimenomen*. Paul is saying that sin is habitual and persistent. It means to live somewhere as a permanent resident, to *reside* in sin. This is not the occasional falling into sin as every Christian does. Paul is talking about intentional, willful sinning as an established pattern of life. He's asking, can you be saved by the blood of Jesus and stay in that lifestyle? In verse 2 he answers the question, *genoito*, by no means! God forbid! There is this sense of outrage that an idea of this kind could be ever thought true! This produces revulsion in Paul's heart. He's disgusted at the very suggestion of it!

And unfortunately that's where many professing Christians are living. We want to love Jesus and want to party, too. This is not about a little *corner* of your life, this is about *all* of your life: How you dress, how you eat, how you spend money, what shows you watch, what video games you play, who are the people you are closest to, how do you work, how do you give, how do you argue?

Paul's point is that something decisive has happened.

Listen to the rhetorical question Paul asked in verse 2. A rhetorical question is more like a statement. An example would be something like: "Do you think this room is going to clean itself?" Paul says in verse 2, how can we who have *died* to sin still *live* in it? And the obvious answer is, we can't! If death to sin is real, then it's permanent. The idea that a Christian could continue to live unchecked in habitual sin is not only unbiblical, it's irrational. Salvation is not just a transaction, it's transformational. That means we **fight** sin.

That means we take drastic steps. Matthew 5:29-30 says, *if the right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away for it's better that you lose one of your members of your body than your whole body be thrown into hell.*

We **run from** sin. 2 Timothy 2:23 says, *flee youthful passions and pursue righteousness.*

We **confess** sin immediately. 1 John 1:9 says, *if we confess our sins he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

We **repent**. Luke 3:8 says, *Bear fruits in keeping with repentance.* It's one step past confession. It's a change of heart and a change of behavior. We pray.

We **pray**. Matthew 26:41 says, *watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation.* You don't sin unless you're tempted. Pray you don't enter into temptation.

Our lives, the lives of believers, are to be as different from our pre-Christ days as life is from death. It's why Dietrich Bonhoeffer would say, "When Christ calls a man He bids him, come and die." Grace received means a life changed, and real change means aggressive living.

### **Real Change Means New Living**

Paul introduces a new thought about being a Christian. <sup>3</sup> *Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?* Do you not remember what you professed and were baptized into? Do you not remember what happened to lead to baptism? Paul seemed to take for granted that people who claimed Christianity were baptized. He is not saying that *baptism* saves, he is saying that it *symbolizes* a new union, a new walk, and a new membership.

Listen to the language in the text. Verse 3 says that we have been baptized into Christ Jesus and therefore baptized into His death. Verse 4 says we are buried with Him by baptism into death and verse 5 says we are united with Him in death. In verse 6, our old self was crucified with Him and verse 8 says we have died with Christ. There is this sense of union with Christ and the cross. Galatians 2:20 says, <sup>20</sup> *I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.* And the whole point of verses 3-5 is found right there in verse 4. Let's read it slowly, it should sound familiar. <sup>4</sup> *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.* We have a new life and we are to walk in it. We are to live in a certain way as a result of dying and being buried with Christ and being raised to walk in new life.

What does it actually mean to walk in new life? It means you can't keep living in sin. Normal Christianity is a different religion, it's not in the Bible. Baptism and membership mean

something. Death to the old way of life and resurrection to a whole new way of life. The old way of life has passed away completely. It's been buried. It's final. Verse 5 says we are united with Him in death and our sins are paid for with His life. It's a promise and hope for tomorrow. He is with me and I am with him. We are secure and forgiven and hopeful and strengthened and able and comforted.

Grace received means a life changed. Real change means aggressive living. Real change means new living.

### **Real change means free living**

I say free because that seems to be what Paul is saying in verses 6-7. Let's read it together and get the whole thing. <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.* Our old self was crucified, nailed to the cross. That the body of sin might be brought to nothing.

That body of sin is our old sinful nature. It hasn't gone away but actually to verse 6, it's no longer our master. That sinful nature is there, but at the cross I've been emancipated, I'm not a slave. I'm a free man. Sin is not my Lord anymore; Jesus is my Lord. That's what verse 7 says, one who has died has been set free.

Now if you take this passage and zoom out, you're going to see the cross in every single verse. From verses 3 -13, it reminds us that ours is a faith of crucifixion. It's what Paul meant in Galatians 6:14 when he said, <sup>14</sup> *But far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.*

Can you say that? Can you join and claim Romans 6: 11? Do you consider yourself dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus? What will you do today with your sin?

I want you to bow your heads with me as we prepare for the invitation. If you need the saving power of Jesus...If you need to follow in baptism... If sin has plagued you and you need a pastor to pray with or you need to pray for someone, I invite you to lay your burdens on the altar of Jesus Christ.

*(Pastor prays)*