

WALKING THROUGH ROMANS – PART 10

ROMANS CHAPTER 6:1–14 – GRACE AND FREEDOM: DEAD TO SIN

The driving question remains: Has God remained faithful in a fractured world?

In the previous lesson, Paul placed Adam and Christ beside one another through a juxtaposition. Through Adam came sin, condemnation, and death. Through Christ came grace, justification, and life. While Adam's actions introduced humanity to a fractured condition, Christ's work provided a path toward restoration. Paul demonstrated that grace exceeded the damage caused by sin and that Christ's work surpassed Adam's failure.

As Romans 6 begins, Paul anticipates another question. If grace increases where sin increases, does grace provide permission to continue sinning? Having spent significant time emphasizing grace, Paul now addresses a dangerous misunderstanding. He transitions from discussing justification to discussing transformation. The question is no longer simply how people are made right with God. The question now becomes how people should live after they have been made right with God.

BUCKET 1 – ROMANS 6:1–4

Paul begins by confronting a misunderstanding about grace.

He asks, "Should we continue in sin in order that grace may abound?" His answer is immediate and emphatic: "By no means."

Paul rejects the idea that grace provides permission for continued sinful living. Grace is not intended to become a license for wrongdoing. While grace is God's undeserved and unmerited favor, it was never designed to encourage believers to remain in the very condition from which they have been rescued.

This question flows naturally from Paul's previous discussion. If grace increases where sin increases, some might conclude that more sin creates more opportunities for grace. Paul immediately exposes the flaw in that reasoning. Grace is not evidence that sin should increase. Grace is evidence that God has provided a way out of sin's control.

Paul explains that believers have died to sin. This does not mean believers will never struggle again. Humanity continues to wrestle with the realities of the human condition. However, the relationship to sin has fundamentally changed. Before Christ, sin exercised dominion and control. Through Christ, believers are no longer enslaved to sin's authority.

Paul then introduces baptism as an image of identification. Baptism symbolizes participation in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Believers identify with Christ's crucifixion, burial, and resurrection through this sacred act.

Just as Christ died and was raised, believers are called to walk in newness of life. This phrase points to more than a change in confession. It points to a change in direction. Disciples are not merely individuals who verbally confess Christ. Disciples are individuals whose lives are increasingly shaped by Christ.

Paul introduces the theological concept often described as union with Christ. Believers identify with Christ's death and resurrection. Through that union, a new life becomes possible. Grace is not permission to remain the same. Grace provides the foundation for transformation.

If believers claim a new life in Christ, that new life should gradually reshape how they think, live, and respond. Grace is not intended to excuse old patterns. Grace creates the possibility of a new direction.

BUCKET 2 – ROMANS 6:5–7

Paul continues developing the concept of union with Christ.

He explains that if believers have been united with Christ in a death like His, they will also be united with Him in a resurrection like His. This section focuses heavily on Christology, the study and understanding of Christ and His work.

Paul states that the old self was crucified with Christ. This should not be understood as a literal crucifixion but as a theological reality. The old self refers to the former way of life shaped by sin's control. It represents the patterns, desires, and behaviors that existed before surrendering to Christ.

Paul teaches that this happened so that the body of sin might be destroyed. The word destroyed does not mean annihilated. Rather, it carries the idea of rendering something ineffective, powerless, or unable to exercise the same level of control.

Sin does not simply disappear from a believer's life. However, its dominion is broken. Its authority is weakened. The believer is no longer required to live under its mastery.

This introduces another significant theological concept: liberation from sin's dominion. Believers are delivered from the controlling power of sin. Sin is no longer the master. Christ becomes the governing authority in the believer's life.

Paul's emphasis is not merely behavioral modification. His emphasis is identity transformation. Many people continue to treat old patterns as permanent identities. Paul argues that transformation begins when believers stop defining themselves by who they used to be.

The old patterns may have existed, but they no longer determine identity. What once controlled the believer does not have the authority to continue ruling the believer. Through Christ, a new identity emerges.

Transformation occurs when believers stop viewing themselves through the lens of their former failures and begin seeing themselves through the work Christ has accomplished on their behalf.

BUCKET 3 – ROMANS 6:8–11

Paul now shifts from Christ's resurrection to the believer's mindset and identity.

He explains that because Christ was raised from the dead, death no longer exercises dominion over Him. The resurrection is more than an event. It is a declaration of victory. Christ's resurrection demonstrates His triumph over death, sin, and every opposing power.

Paul's original audience lived under Roman authority and the rule of Caesar. Caesar was often viewed as lord and savior within the empire. Paul's declaration that Jesus is Lord and Savior directly challenged those assumptions. Christ's resurrection demonstrated a power greater than any earthly authority.

Paul then turns his attention toward believers. If Christ has defeated sin and death, believers must understand their relationship to sin differently.

He states that believers should consider themselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus. The Greek word *logizomai* means to calculate, reckon, regard, or consider something to be true.

Paul is calling believers to adopt a new understanding of themselves.

Believers are no longer required to view themselves primarily through the lens of past failures, mistakes, and sinful patterns. They are called to see themselves through the finished work of Christ.

This does not mean perfection. It does mean a new identity.

Transformation involves both spiritual reality and renewed perspective. Believers cannot consistently live differently while continuing to think the same way. Transformation requires a renewed mind.

Paul's argument anticipates what he will later say regarding the renewing of the mind. Spiritual growth requires believers to align their thinking with what Christ has accomplished. Identity is no longer rooted in who a person used to be. Identity is rooted in what Christ has done.

When believers see themselves through Christ's victory rather than through their past, transformation becomes increasingly possible.

BUCKET 4 – ROMANS 6:12–14

Paul concludes this section by shifting from theological explanation to practical instruction.

Believers are told not to allow sin to exercise dominion over their mortal bodies. They are not to present themselves as instruments of unrighteousness but as instruments of righteousness.

Paul emphasizes participation. Believers are no longer called merely to understand grace. They are called to respond to grace.

The language of presenting carries the idea of yielding or offering oneself for service. Paul challenges believers to intentionally yield themselves to God rather than continually yielding themselves to sinful desires and behaviors.

This reflects an important principle: whatever a person continually yields to will eventually shape that person.

Paul reminds believers that they are no longer under the law but under grace. The law exposed sin and revealed humanity's inability to meet God's standard. Grace, however, provides the power necessary for transformation.

Being under grace does not mean morality no longer matters. It means grace becomes the governing influence shaping a believer's life. Grace does not remove responsibility. Grace creates the opportunity to live differently.

Paul's argument reaches its climax with a powerful reminder. Grace does not free believers to sin. Grace frees believers from sin.

Believers are no longer called to live under the dominion of an old life. Through Christ, a new direction becomes possible. Grace is not merely something to celebrate. Grace is something that should actively transform how believers live.

FINAL TAKEAWAY

Paul moves the discussion from justification to transformation.

Believers have been made right with God through faith, but they are also called to live differently because of that relationship.

Grace is not permission to continue in sin.

Grace provides the power to move beyond sin.

Through union with Christ, believers identify with His death, burial, and resurrection. Through that identification, sin loses its dominion, identity is transformed, and a new life becomes possible.

The question is not whether grace exists. The question is whether we will allow that grace to transform how we live.