**New Life in Christ**

August 14, 2021

Romans 6:1-23

Key Verse 6:4 “We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.”

There is the difference between the believer’s position in Christ and his practice. His position is his standing in Christ. His practice is what he is in everyday life. Our position is that we are perfect because we are in Christ. Our practice should correspond to our position. But we know that we fall short. It will never correspond perfectly until we see Jesus Christ in heaven, but we should be becoming more and more conformed to his image while on earth. It is called sanctification. Let me give you an example. Suppose someone was born and grew up in Amazon jungle, and suddenly became a Canadian citizen. He should learn Canadian culture. Otherwise, he will have culture shock. Likewise, if we do not grow in Jesus’ image, and go to God’s kingdom, we will have culture shock. In today’s passage Paul teaches how we can overcome the power of sin and become like Christ. I pray that we all may allow Christ to lead our life so that we may live a holy life as children of God. Paul says, “Count yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.” Being dead to sin, we are freed from the tyranny of sin. Being alive to God, we now have access to the power of God as our source of strength to live a dynamic new life.

**First,** the tyranny of sin over us is broken (1-11).In the previous passage Paul concluded that where sin increased, grace increased all the more. God’s grace is greater than all our sin. Praise God! However, to the sinful mind, this glorious truth can be terribly abused. Look at verse 1. “What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase?” To some, God’s amazing grace looks like a license to sin. They twist Jesus’ words, “He who has been forgiven little loves little,” and conclude that they have to commit more sin in order to experience God’s grace more. This kind of attitude makes people treat sin not seriously and causes people to fall into the temptations to go on sinning. Abusing God’s grace is a worst sin. In John 5, Jesus gave a warning to the man who had been an invalid for 38 years after healing him by his mercy: “See, you are well again. Stop sinning or something worse may happen to you.” Here Paul refutes their nonsense. Look at verse 2. “By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer?” Paul’s answer was “by no means.” It was a definite “no.” A dead man cannot sin. A dead man has nothing to do with immorality, lying, and cheating.

Look at verses 3-4. “Or don’t you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.” Paul explains our new relationship with Jesus through the water baptism. It is like a believer being immersed in death’s dark waters and the new man in Christ rising to live in newness of life. It is like a believer attending the funeral of the old self when he is baptized. As he goes under the water, he is saying, “All that I was as a sinful son of Adam was put to death at the cross.” As he comes up out of the water, he is saying, “It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me.” (Gal 2:20) Our life goal has been changed from self-centered life to Christ-centered life by God’s grace. In the past we declared, “I am my own king.” We lived according to our sinful desires. As a result, we lived as the enemies of God. Now by the grace of God we were justified freely through faith in Jesus. Now Jesus is our King. We would like to do what Jesus wants us to do.

Someone might ask, “Why do I sin again and again though I died to sin? Why does my old habit pop up again though I died to sin? What’s wrong with me? I am frustrated! I don’t like me. Oh, what shall I do? Help me.” Of course, we would love to be like Jesus as soon as we are justified through his grace. We would like to be a saint overnight. But that will not happen. Why? The process of sanctification occurs throughout our entire life. It is not a one-time event but a life-long struggle. Though we are justified freely through the grace of Jesus, we do not become holy miraculously. When Paul said, “We died to sin,” he meant that sinners died to sin but sin still remains. Though we were freed from the power of sin, sin still exists and makes every effort to come into our new life. This struggle will continue until Jesus Christ comes again and destroys sin completely. How can we solve our reoccurring sin problem? We have to acknowledge that we died to sin. When sin knocks our door with a sly smile and wants to play with us, say to him, “Who are you? I don’t know you. I don’t recognize you. My old self had a funeral long time ago.” No one can overcome the power of sin with his own willpower or human efforts. Earnest Hemingway, an American novelist, tried to overcome sin of homosexuality with his willpower. Eventually he shot himself. We can overcome our sinful nature by claiming the fact that we died to sin.

Before becoming a Christian, St. Augustine lived as an intellectual hedonist. Such people think that if they deny themselves any pleasure they will die. But when Augustine accepted Christ, he was totally changed. He died to his sin of intellectual hedonism. Once, he met a former girlfriend on the street. She walked toward him with seductive intent, saying, “Augie, it is me.” But Augustine turned and ran the other way, shouting over his shoulder, “Yes, I know, but it is no longer me.” He meant that he had completely changed. He was not the same person she had known. His old self no longer lived. He was freed from sin. In this way, Augustine became “St. Augustine.” God does not want us to remain as slaves to sin after we accept Christ. Through the cross of Christ we died to sin. Through the cross of Christ we are freed from the power of sin. Let’s accept in our hearts that there is victory over sin. In Christ, we died to sin; we are freed from sin. Look at verse 9. “For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him.” The good news is that Christ’s resurrection broke the tyranny of sin over us.

**Second,** offer yourselves to God (11-14).When we live in Christ, how we see ourselves should be drastically changed. Look at verse 11. “In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus.” We must not think of ourselves based on our sins. Instead, we must count ourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus. Here the words “count yourselves” have a very clear meaning. We must train our minds to believe that we died to sin and alive to God. We must declare victory by faith. We should see our old self on the cross. We respond to the temptation as a dead man would. This requires us to struggle against our former habits and desires. In reality, these things have lost their power over us. But victory does not come to us automatically. We must claim this victory by faith, like the Israelites when they entered the promised land. In Joshua 1:2-3 God said to Joshua, “Moses my servant is dead. Now then, you and all these people, get ready to cross the Jordan River into the land I am about to give to them–to the Israelites. I will give you every place where you set your foot, as I promised Moses.” God said he was giving them the land. But it was not without struggle. They had to put their feet onto enemy territory. They had to claim the promised land one step at a time. It was their act of faith. In World War II, June 6, 1944 is called D-day. It is when the Allied invasion of Normandy broke Nazi Germany’s control. But they still had to fight until Germany surrendered on May 7, 1945. Likewise, we must fight knowing that sin’s tyranny is over. With the same kind of faith, we must also claim victory over sin and new life in God through Christ.

The practical expression of this faith is explained well in verses 12-14. Look at verse 12. “Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires.” Like a defeated boxer, sin wants to get back into the ring and have another chance to reign. But we must not let sin reign. We should not be intimidated by our old master, sin and Satan. We feel like they will come and get us and destroy us. They terrify us through fear, fear of future security. We must claim Christ’s victory over sin by faith constantly. Look at verse 13. “Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness.” We must see our bodies as living sacrifices to be offered to God, day by day. For example, how we use our fingers is really important. Some use their fingers to press the TV remote, video game controller, or computer mouse to enjoy sin. We must offer our fingers to type Bible study material or dial the telephone to call Bible students. Some use their eyes to indulge in ungodly mental fantasies. They must use their eyes to read the word of God. Some use their feet to travel to places of promiscuity. We must use our feet to travel to foreign lands as missionaries. We must offer the parts of our body to God as instruments of righteousness. As we do so, we must have the attitude of one who has been brought from death to life. This means that we must acknowledge our Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior and the one worthy of our life sacrifice.

**Third,** “slaves to God” (15-23).In this part Paul encourages us to become slaves to God. In the verses 15-23 the word “slave” is repeatedly used. This word has the connotation of belonging to or being on the side of. Paul used this word to explain the core of our new life in Christ. In Paul’s time one third of the population of the Roman Empire was Roman citizens and two thirds were slaves. It was easy for Paul to illustrate our relationship with God through the examples of many slaves.

Paul said clearly that we are not under law, but under grace (14). We no longer live in bondage to sin or under the yoke of legalism. We can come to God freely through Christ and ask his grace and mercy to help us in our struggle. However, we must not abuse this grace by living at random. We are free from the law, but not lawless. Living under grace means freedom to serve the Lord, not to sin against him. In verses 15-23, Paul explains that we must have a clear direction for our new lives. Look at verse 16. “Don’t you know that when you offer yourselves to someone to obey him as slaves, you are slaves to the one whom you obey–whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness?” When we accept Christ as our Lord and Savior, he becomes our master. Submission to him sets the direction of our new lives. Paul calls this submission being slaves to obedience, slaves to righteousness, and slaves to God. Note that freedom from sin does not mean that they no longer have the sinful nature. Neither does it mean that they no longer commit acts of sin. It means freedom from sin as the dominating power in life. We need to choose whom to obey. Some people resist the idea of submission to God. They feel that they will give up their freedom. This is an illusion. Man cannot have absolute freedom. Man is not God. Man was made to serve. Either he will be a slave to righteousness or a slave to sin. Either he will serve God, or serve Satan. There is no middle ground. Slavery to sin is a nasty downward progression like being on “a highway to hell.” It is slavery to impurity and ever-increasing wickedness. The final result is death, both physically and spiritually. God gave us his one and only Son Jesus to rescue us from slavery to sin. Through his word we gain access to a new life. When we wholeheartedly obey the word of God, the power of sin loses its grip on us. We become slaves to obedience that leads to righteousness. We grow in holiness. The final result is eternal life. How wonderful it is to grow in God and live a new life in its fullness!

New life in Christ are marked by two practices: Wash one another’s feet, and love one another. Our old self never wants to wash others’ dirty feet. It is beneath our dignity. But new life in Christ enables us to wash one another’s feet. Our old self wants to love ourselves only, and don’t care about others. We are naturally selfish. C.S. Lewis says that in heaven and hell people are holding a long spoon longer than their arm. The only difference is that in hell, people are trying to feed only themselves but they cannot. So they suffer in misery. But in heaven, people feed each other and they are happy and satisfied. Can you imagine if you lived a selfish life only trying to feed yourself, but you are transported to heaven by God’s amazing grace? You will have culture shock. You will have to learn to serve others and love others. Tonight and tomorrow we will study John 13, in which Jesus teaches us two practical lessons of new life, “Wash one another’s feet and Love one another.”

In this passage we learn that in Christ we are dead to sin and alive to God. By faith, we must claim freedom from sin and new life in God through Christ. May God bless you abundantly with this new life in Christ by practicing it by washing one another’s feet and loving one another.

Big Idea: Christ freed us from sin so that we may live a new life