

Romans (6:1-10)

The Living Dead

Part 20 – December 5, 2004

PAUL IS DEAD-ON

In these 10 verses, Paul uses variations of the word, “dead” a total of thirteen times! “Dead” is a strange word. We not only use it to convey the obvious, but we’ve incorporated it into many different expressions:

A captain can bring his ship to a *dead stop*, in *dead silence*, on a *dead sea*, in the *dead of winter*. Even if his crew is *dead set* against it; being *dead sure* a torpedo could hit ‘em *dead center*.

- If you catch me ‘red-handed’ I’m caught: *dead to rights*.
- If I have a project that fails, it’s: *dead in the water*.
- If I’m standing right in front of you, I am: *dead ahead*.

A jury can be *dead locked*; a lock can be *dead bolted*; and a bolt can be *dead weight* ... especially to a *dead-beat*.

- Be aware of the words: dead, death, and died as we read.

What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? 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. If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection. For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin – because anyone who has died has been freed from sin. Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him. The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. – Romans 6:1-10 NIV

BY NO MEANS

In chapter five, Paul puts a radical emphasis on justification *by grace through* faith: just as we are condemned through Adam’s one transgression, we are now justified through Jesus’ one act of righteousness.

This makes it dangerously clear, in that it can be easily distorted and/or taken advantage of. That's why Paul begins with: "What shall we say, then?" About what? What's he referring to? To the previous verse in chapter five.

But where sin increased, grace increased all the more ... - Romans 5:20 NIV

Paul knows the argument that's coming: "You can't tell believers God loves them in spite of their sin; or, they'll keep sinning." So, Paul plays his own "worst critic" and argues for them:

What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? - Romans 6:1b NIV

Here's the big objection to justification by grace through faith apart from works: it seems to open the door to rampant sinning at worst, careless living and indifference to holiness at best. And so, before his full answer, Paul wants them to know how he feels about this subject (just so they're clear).

By no means! - Romans 6:2a NIV

There is no stronger way (in Greek) to say "NO!" Other versions say: "God forbid!" "Certainly not!" "May it never be!" "Far be the thought." And: "No, no, no!"

DEAD TO SIN

And then Paul gives a very brief answer:

We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? - Romans 6:2b NIV

Q: In what sense have we died to sin?

Q: Is Paul saying that once we're converted we never sin again?

No, look at the wording. Paul's talking about "living in sin," continuing in an unchanging pattern of willful wrongdoing.

Q: Have you heard someone say, "He/she is dead to me!"

It means they've broken all relationship, connection, and bond with that person. They want nothing to do with them anymore. In that way, a true believer desires to be "dead to sin."

- Authentic faith will show up in my lifestyle.

Who's more miserable than a true believer habitually sinning? Over the long haul, no one can live with their own hypocrisy. They either change their beliefs or their behavior.

BAPTIZED INTO HIS DEATH

Paul chastises those who would even ask such a question:

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. – Romans 6:3-4 NIV

We're not saved by *baptism* (remember the thief on the cross). But, it signifies and symbolizes something very significant.

- When Christ died, he took our sins with Him.

He was covered in my mucky transgressions on the cross. This is how I was "buried with Him".

- Then He rose spotless, conquering sin and death!
- And the sinful part of me was left in the grave!
- I'm spotless! And, "we too may live a new life"!

We baptize through emersion (dunking) because it's symbolic of the fact that we're *dead* to sin through what Christ has done.

- We go under the water, as though buried *with* Him.
- And, we come bursting forth, now spotless *in* Him.

If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection. – Romans 6:5 NIV

- He creates the union by grace; we embrace it by faith.

THE OLD MAN

I've heard some teach that being "dead to sin" means we should be as unresponsive to the lure of sin as a *corpse*. Because, when someone is dead they are free from temptation. Well, that ain't how it works in my life!

For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin – because anyone who has died has been freed from sin. – Romans 6:6-7 NIV

See where it says, "done away with"? The Greek verb there doesn't mean "to become extinct." It means to be defeated, or deprived of power.

Jesus didn't die on the cross to take away our free-will, but to "free [us] from [the dominion of] sin". Therefore, I still have a sin nature, but it's been rendered powerless over me.

Q: What does that mean?

A: It means I don't *have* to sin.

- Sin must have my permission to destroy me.

I have been given the power to triumph over *any* temptation. Yet, 1 John 1:8 says only liars claim to completely free from sin. Being freed from the mastery, the enslavement, and the dominion of sin is not the same as being sinlessly perfect.

Q: But if I have the power, why won't I always triumph?

A: Because I won't always rely on my union with Christ.

Q: Why?

A: selfishness, rebellion, emotions, fatigue, pride, etc.

But sin has lost its standing as the defining, dominating direction of my life. Because, in my truest position in Christ, and my connection to what He's accomplished:

- I am dead to both sin's *penalty* and its *power*.

Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him. – Romans 6:8-9 NIV

By coming in human form, Jesus subjected Himself to the mastery of physical death. However, His victory over sin included turning death itself into the prime example of His absolute authority.

The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. – Romans 6:10 NIV

"He died to sin, once for all". He took care of the sin problem for all who are in Him. If we can grasp this, we'll be a very happy, holy people.

- Jesus not only died *for* us, He died *as* us!

As far as God is concerned, we're already on the resurrection side of the grave.

- Eternal life began the moment we put our faith in Jesus!

And you can be *dead sure* about that.

