

15. Die to live

July 20, 2008

One Tuesday morning I was driving my truck in Tucson. I was on Speedway between Kolb and Wilmot, I knew that a motorcycle cop from the Tucson Police Department usually sits at Dorado Club Drive for speeders.

In my pure stupidity, I continued at 55 miles per hour in 40 mile zone. Wouldn't you know, there was a Tucson's finest aiming his radar gun right at me and as soon as I passed by him, he gunned his motorcycle and followed me. I pulled into a parking lot near by and spread my fingers over the driver side door and waited for him to tell me what to do next.

He came over and asked for my driver license and registration. When I took out my wallet to pull out the driver license, he noticed my Sheriff's Department ID. He asked me, "You work for the Sheriff's Dept?" I answered, "Yes sir, I am a chaplain and I am guilty of speeding." The officer said, "A chaplain, huh?"

Now if the officer chose not to give me a traffic ticket and let me go, that would have been 'mercy' which is not getting what I deserve. If he gave me a ticket according to the law and paid my fine for me, that would have been 'grace' which means I am getting what I don't deserve.

Grace is one of those words that we need to define time to time. It is 'charis' in Greek and 'gratia' in Latin. It sounds very much like "gracias" in Spanish. By now, you are totally stunned that I just spoke four languages fluently.

Sometimes friends ask me to pray before the meal, "Would you say a grace for us?" Since I am a smart aleck, I say, "grace." Many people think that grace is nothing more than a short prayer before a meal. Not!!!

For over 150 times the NT uses the word 'grace', it always means, "God's loving attitude toward humanity" or "a God's favor shown to unfavorable person."

A. CONTINUING IN SIN?

Romans 6:1 What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?

We have to quickly review what we have learned so far:

The apostle has been painting a beautiful picture for the people of God. Having been justified by faith, born-again Christian believers are standing in grace and rejoicing in glory. Having formerly belonged to Adam, the author of sin and death, they now belong to Christ, the author of salvation and life.

Though the law revealed our sins ever more, but the grace of God is abounded all the more. It is a splendid vision of the triumph of grace against the grim background of human guilt, despair and hopelessness.

Many legalistic critics would scream at the top of their lung, "What about the sinful nature of human, what about their daily sins? How are you going to handle that?"

Apostle Paul was already anticipating their accusation and prepared to answer. Justification we've learned is the one time act of God to declare a person who just

became a born-again Christian holy and righteous and just as if he or she has never sinned. But sanctification is on-going work of the Holy Spirit to keep us holy and righteous in the Father's sight since we are still living in our mortal sinful bodies.

Remember, God loved us just as we were, but He loves us too much to leave as we are.

In other words, the person who truly became a believer of Jesus Christ would not want to hurt the heart of God by committing sin willfully and continuously.

Would he have a struggle with sins? Absolutely.

Would he sin against God time to time? Most likely.

Would God cleanse and forgive him again and again? Without a doubt.

What I am saying is that the true believer of Christ would not use grace as permission to sin freely, because he loves God.

B. DIE WITH CHRIST AND ALIVE WITH CHRIST

Romans 6:2-5 Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it? 3 Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? 4 Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. 5 For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection,

Apostle Paul denies the critics' accusation vehemently with a phrase "Certainly not." "Certainly not" is translated in many different ways:

King Jimmy Version – God forbids

JB Philips Version – What a ghastly thought!

New International Version – By no means!

New Joonho Kim's Version – Are you out of your mind?

Then apostle uses an illustration of baptism to help us understand it.

The Greek word 'baptizo' has two basic meanings:

- 1) A literal meaning: to dip or immerse
- 2) A figurative meaning: to be identified with.

It appears that Paul had both the literal and the figurative in mind in this paragraph, because he used the readers' experience of water baptism to remind them of their identification with Christ. Many of you have been baptized before. When you go down into water, you identify your death with Christ as a sinner. About 10 minutes later when I pull you out of water, you identify resurrection with Christ as a new person in Christ.

Baptism does not give salvation to anyone because it is nothing more than an individual declaration to identify himself or herself with Jesus Christ our Savior and Lord. It is an outward symbol of inward decision like a circumcision that apostle Paul talked about in chapter 2.

I asked you to underline the word 'newness'. In Greek it is 'kainotes' which means "speaks of life that has a new or fresh quality."

This tremendous spiritual truth is illustrated in the miracle of the resurrection of Lazarus in John 11. When Jesus arrived at Bethany, Lazarus had been in the tomb

four days. It means that Lazarus was so dead and he was starting to decay and stinky.

By the power of His word, "Lazarus, come forth!" Jesus raised His friend from the dead. But when Lazarus appeared at the door of the tomb, he was wrapped in graveclothes. So Jesus commanded, "Loose him, and let him go." He had been raised to walk "in newness of life." In John 12, Lazarus was seated with Christ at the table, in fellowship with Him. Dead-raised from the dead-set free to walk in newness of life-seated with Christ. Yes, the case of Lazarus was still a resuscitation.

But for the resurrection of Jesus was not just a resuscitation, rather it was a new form of life. That is what we are going to have later.

C. WHAT WE NEED TO KNOW

Romans 6:6-10 knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. 7 For he who has died has been freed from sin. 8 Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, 9 knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him. 10 For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God.

Right living grows out of right thinking through the Word of God. So walking with Christ begins with knowing how His death and resurrection affect us. Paul says that our "old man" was crucified with Christ.

What exactly is the "old man"? I am not talking about your daddy. It is our carnal lives and attitudes and thinking before Jesus Christ. And living the new life in Christ begins with knowing. Knowing that He died to set us free from sin. Knowing that our old man was nailed to the cross with Him. Knowing that, just as Jesus rose from the dead and will live forever, we have been raised to a new life in Him that has no end.

Galatians 2:20 I have been crucified with Christ; 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 for me.

The great evangelist of the 19th Century D.L. Moody used to speak of an old black woman in the South following the Civil War. Being a former slave, she was confused about her status and asked: "Now is I free, or been I not? When I go to my old master he says I ain't free, and when I go to my own people they say I is, and I don't know whether I'm free or not. Some people told me that Abraham Lincoln signed a proclamation, but master says he didn't; he didn't have any right to."

This is exactly the place many Christians are. They are, and have been, legally set free from their slavery to sin, yet they are unsure of that truth. Because they don't know the truth by not getting into the Word of God daily.

We need to know that satan would do anything to stop us from knowing the truth of God.

D. WHAT WE NEED TO IMPUTE

Romans 6:11-12 Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

I tell ya, apostle Paul is totally from Texas. He says, "Y'all," and now he says, "reckon".

In the southern part of the United States, "reckon" means "think" or "guess," or "I suppose." However, none of these popular meanings can apply to this verse. The word 'reckon' is a translation of a Greek word 'logizomai' that is used 41 times in the New Testament – 19 times in Romans alone. It appears in Romans 4 where it is translated as "count, consider or impute." As we have learned, 'impute' means "to take into account, to calculate, to estimate." The word 'impute' is perhaps the best translation.

Does it mean we are immune to sinning? No. The apostle does not say that sin is dead but that the believer is to count himself as dead to it. He feels temptation and sometimes he sins. But the sin of the unbeliever is the natural consequence of the fact that he is a slave to sin, whereas the sin of the believer is quite out of character. He has been set free. A life no longer ruled by the tyranny of sin.

Let me put this in practical terms:

If you have an addiction to drugs, pornography, gambling, alcohol or anything that drives you to do something which doesn't please the Lord, you don't have to give into those things. Satan would whisper to your ears that you need just one more fix for the last time, right! If you are in Christ Jesus, you don't need to put up with that. You can fight back with the help of the Holy Spirit and win over it like many already have done. Our God reigns in our lives, no longer satan.

We need to put our man that is the old carnal nature to death by submerging our new life into Christ's way.

E. WHAT WE NEED TO PRESENT

Romans 6:12-14 Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts. 13 And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. 14 For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.

Living as a Christian should not be based on an impulsive decision, because if it was based on an impulse, that person would make another impulse decision to leave Christ. Rather it should come from deep inside of one's heart to surrender his life to the Lord.

That means walking away from our carnal desires, friends and family members. I am not saying that we should disassociate any non-believing family members from our lives, but we should be careful how we handle ourselves in their presence.

The longer we walk with Christ, the deeper and sweeter and richer the fellowship with Him must become. Because we get to start to understand the heart of God.

John 15:10-11 If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love. 11 These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full.

When you look at the margin of NKJV, it shows us that 'instrument' of v13 is 'weapon'. That is a great rendition. *"Do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin"* can be paraphrased as "do not hand over your weapons to an enemy that they can use your weapon to kill you or hurt you."

V14 gives us a great hope that we don't have to sin. We are not forced to sin. Satan can tempt us, but he cannot make us sin. We choose to sin against God with our own decision.

We need to present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God which is our reasonable service.

F. APPLICATIONS

- 1) The true believer of Christ would not use grace as permission to sin freely, because he loves God.
- 2) We need to know that and satan would do anything to stop us from knowing the truth of God.
- 3) We need to put our man that is the old carnal nature to death by submerging our new life into Christ's way.
- 4) We need to present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God which is our reasonable service.