

**A STUDY OF ROMANS**  
**ROMANS 6 – PART 1**  
**Taught by Bruce Bickel**  
**September 26, 2012**

Good evening. Welcome to our Family Fusion study on the book of Romans, Chapters 5, 6, 7 and 8. You have the new handout. Remember, the handout that you have now, which is Lesson 3, will also be for Lesson 4 next week, so be sure and bring that back. I'll have extra copies for you. The handouts I gave you will cover two weeks. We have four chapters, so you'll have four handouts, and they'll cover each of the two weeks. With that in mind, thank you for your faithfulness. I'm glad we're friends tonight, since we're rather closely seated together. Let's ask the Lord to be our Teacher.

Heavenly Father, we just come to you humbly, realizing that apart from the work of your Holy Spirit, nothing that we will ever do will be significant eternally. We're trusting your Holy Spirit to be our Teacher, that he will guide us into all truth, and that you will only let us hear those things that are consistent with your nature, your glory and your attributes. We just pray this for Jesus' sake. Amen.

I'd like to read a portion of our Scripture for us. I'm going to take you back to Romans 5, beginning at verse 18. As you know, this was a letter. It was just one consistent paragraph. We divided it centuries ago to make it more readable. Really, what we're going to continue tonight in the beginning of what we call Chapter 6 is really a continuation of the last paragraph of Chapter 5. So let's go back to Chapter 5, beginning at verse 18, and we'll read several of the verses of Chapter 6 where we'll be tonight.

This is the Word of the Lord, “<sup>18</sup>Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men. <sup>19</sup>For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous. <sup>20</sup>Now the law came in to increase the trespass, but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more, <sup>21</sup>so that, as sin reigned in death, grace also might reign through righteousness leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” (Romans 5:18-21)

“<sup>1</sup>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. <sup>12</sup>Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions. <sup>13</sup>Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness. <sup>14</sup>For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace.” (Romans 6:1-14) May God be pleased to open our eyes that we might behold wonderful things from his Word.

In this chapter, Paul is not quite finished yet with what we just read in Chapter 5. He continues on with the thought that he left us with in Chapter 5—that's why I wanted to read that—and that is the theme of the assurance and certainty of our salvation. If one is justified, we are in a position to know that the whole of redemption is going to be guaranteed to us, and it will be ours. That's his whole theme of these

four chapters in Romans 5, 6, 7 and 8. It is the assurance of salvation and the guarantee that you will be glorified at the coming age.

He wants us to realize that nothing can come between us and the guarantee that we get for our glorification. He goes right from justification to glorification. Now in between is sanctification. There are some who believe that Romans 6 is talking about sanctification. I don't think it is because he's really just continuing his discussion on justification, because he's now going to take on some objectives. You see, he's basically told us in Romans 5:12-21 that at one time you were joined to Adam. Now you're joined to Christ, and he continues that dialog. You see, in Christ, we are now under the reign and rule and dominion of grace. Our future, therefore is guaranteed because you are united with Christ. We have a certainty, Paul tells us. That's his whole point in going into Romans 6, that the wonderful act of justification is an initial move, which leads to all the other blessings and the guarantees that we have.

At the end of Chapter 5, which I just read, he makes a very momentous statement in verses 20 and 21, when Paul says this, “<sup>20</sup>Now the law came in to increase the trespass, but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more, <sup>21</sup>so that, as sin reigned in death, grace also might reign through righteousness leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” Now in order to prevent some false understanding and some false deductions being drawn from those two statements that I read in verses 20 and 21, he takes up some objections, immediately, in order to make it clear, once and forever, what he is saying and what he's not saying.

One of the great things that I enjoyed about studying the Puritans when I was at Oxford, when I read 3,000 Puritan sermons to do my doctoral work, one of the things I always appreciated about the way they organized their sermons—they had doctrine, illustration, application, objection. They always dealt with objections, because they realized this. Somebody is likely to come to some false deductions and insinuations because they may not have understood what I said, so part of their sermons, the reason that they were so powerful, the last half hour of their sermon was dealing with potential objections that somebody might say based upon the doctrine that they just taught. That's exactly what Paul is doing. It would be my assumption that the Puritans learned it from Paul, because that's exactly what he's doing.

He takes on a couple of questions that immediately deal with the issue of what he just said in verses 20 and 21, and that is this. Does grace lead to lawlessness, which is Antinomianism? Antinomianism is against the law. It means that you don't regard the law as important anymore; you can just do what you want. That's called antinomianism—anti against the law.

His first objection is this. Based upon what I just said, does that mean you just go on sinning because of grace? That's an objection, you see, people are going to throw at him. The second one is this, “Well if that's the case, Paul, then what's the purpose of the law in the believer's life?” He will deal with the purpose of the law in the believer's life in Chapter 7. In Chapter 6, he deals with this tendency to breed what is known as antinomianism. He deals with that in Chapter 7, the relationship to the law, and so he pauses in his instruction about the benefits of justification and about the finality of our salvation to deal with these two possibilities.

Let me make a point here that I think is very critical for us to understand. The true preaching of the Gospel of the New Testament, the doctrine of salvation by free grace, will always generate these two questions. It's a natural consequence of preaching the doctrines of grace, that somebody is going to say, “Oh, you mean you can just go on and sin without being obedient to the law?” It's a natural consequence of teaching salvation by grace. In fact, I would go on as far as to say this. It's a true test of preaching—New Testament preaching—if you don't get those questions, then you're not teaching the Scripture. You're teaching a works-righteousness mentality. Look at it logically. If you're teaching a Gospel other than the Gospel of free grace, there's no need to ask that question. Here's the logic of a works-

righteousness mentality. You've got to stop sinning to get to heaven. Now that eliminates the possibility of somebody saying, "You mean you just go on sinning?" You see, there's no possibility of that question because they've eliminated it by saying, "You've got to stop."

The other thing is this. What do you have to do to earn your salvation? You've got to stop sinning during your salvation. There's never going to be a question of, "You mean free grace means I can just go on sinning?" In my judgment, friends, when you listen to the pulpit, if these questions are not being asked, then the preacher is probably not teaching a New Testament Gospel. He's teaching a works-oriented Gospel that's going to eliminate the possibility of these two questions. No do you follow that? You see, the logic is this, "Well Bruce, if what Paul says is this, sin increased so that grace would abound more. So you're telling me that I need to go sin more." No, that's not what he's saying. But you see, if you're talking about free grace as a means of salvation and justification by faith alone, the logical conclusion is you're going to ask that question. So Paul takes on these two objections. It's very logical.

But when you preach a Gospel that's other than the Gospel of free grace and salvation, there's no need to ask that question because it's all up to you. The whole issue is I've got to stop, so it means I'm not going to do it. Logically, you see, Paul is very, very astute in taking on the two major objections. I would go on to say that when you listen to the Gospel presentation, if people are not asking this question in Romans 6:1-2, you're not hearing the Gospel. You're hearing a man-made American version of a works-oriented salvation that says it's up to you, because what we just learned is this. It's not up to you. It's not up to me. It's something that God in his sovereign grace does.

Paul takes on these objections. You see, it's a good test of Gospel preaching. You see, that was the Roman church's response to Martin Luther. They said, "Wait a minute. You're talking about justification by faith alone? You mean it's not the church that justifies you by giving you grace? It's something that God does apart from the Roman Catholic church? You're a heretic, Luther." They branded him a heretic because they were saying this, "Well then what you're saying, Luther is this. We just ought to go on sinning so we get more grace." You see, that's exactly what the Roman Church did to Luther and to all the other Reformers, because they grasped something that the Scripture was teaching. It was so radically different that the logical conclusion was exactly what Paul deals with here in Romans 6.

I would say this, just as we move into this. If the grace that you have doesn't motivate you to obedience, then you don't have grace at all. If the grace that you have doesn't motivate you to obedience, then you don't have grace at all. It just means you don't understand what it means to be justified. You see, that's the problem with the Gospel we preach today. It is so man-centered because we really think this. All I have to do is stop and I'll make it. All I have to do is stop. Well I'll tell you what, folks. I can't stop, apart from the grace of God. You see, who can really stop? We can't. That's why he goes into this whole dialog on salvation by free grace and justification by faith alone.

Let's move into our study. Look at our union with Christ in verses 1-10. First of all, he says we've been crucified with Christ. We need to understand a couple of things here. First of all, the word "we" is very important to our understanding of this passage. Paul is saying that if a person really understands what he has just taught us in Romans 5:12-21, about you were in Adam, now you're in Christ, that's who he's saying the "we" is. He's saying the certain of us understand that by God's grace. And you realize what you are now and what you used to be and the contrast of what you used to be and what you are now, and where you stand in Christ, that's his whole point, being in Christ, and who you are now, you'll never ask this question. You just understand that. If you understand the difference between I was in Adam, now I'm in Christ, if you understand what that means, you'll never ask this question. The grace that you have will be the grace will motivate you to obedience, not ask this question. You see, that's what Paul is saying. The "we" is very, very important. He's not saying everybody understands this. Now he's not

saying that as a matter of pride or ego. He's just saying if you don't understand that, what I just wrote to you in Romans 5:12-21, if you understand that, you'll never ask this question, because you know that it's an impossible question to ask, because you're no longer in Adam. You're now in Christ.

Next he says we are dead to sin. There's a lot of dubiety here in the translations and various commentators about what that phrase means. Some people say well it means to be dead to sin. You see, we try to interpret this based upon our experience or a feeling. Paul is not dealing with feelings or experience. He's dealing with facts. You've got to understand the next verse is strictly on the fact basis, not the feeling or experience. Somebody says, "Well how can I be dead to sin when I experience it?" That's not what he's talking about. Some people will say that that phrase "we are dead to sin" means this. You just renounce sin. I don't want to do sin anymore. Others say "We're dead to the guilt of sin. I've been set free from the guilt of sin. That's what it means." Or some people have said, "We have died to sin. There's a process that I go through. I die a little bit today and I die a little bit tomorrow and I die a little bit next week and next year and every year become a little bit more dead to my sin." That's not what Paul is talking about. He's not talking about experience. He's not talking about what you feel. He's talking about one thing. How does God view you and where are you positionally? Are you in Adam or are you in Christ? That's what he's dealing with.

One of the things we need to understand, just quickly, is what we refer to as hermeneutics. Hermeneutics is the science of biblical interpretation. A lot of times when I'm talking with people, I'll say, "What is your hermeneutic?" They'll say, "I don't have one," or "My hermeneutic is what I feel or what I experience." Let me just give you just three little issues dealing with a biblical hermeneutic that will protect you from misinterpreting the Scripture. Three things you've got to look at. That's what I have to do with this passage before I can teach you.

The first is you've got to look at the historical background. To whom is he writing? You've got to understand the historical background of those particular verses in that particular passage. The second thing is you've got to look at the grammar—verb tenses. You've got to look at the word meanings. What do they mean? When you look at the verb tenses of the Scripture, you'll never see a verse in the Scripture dealing with assurance and salvation that's in past tense. Never past tense verbs. It's never this, "I invited Christ into my life, therefore I'm saved." It's always present tense verbs. You know you're a believer because of today, not what you did 20 years ago.

You see, this whole Scripture says this—your salvation understanding is a present tense reality. It's every day, every, day, and it'll be later tomorrow and the next day. You'll understand it every day in a present tense reality. It's not that you stuck your stake in the ground and put your name on there and say, "Oh, how do I know I'm a Christian? Because I went back and did that 20 years ago." You never see past tense verbs describing assurance of salvation. It's always present tense reality. You know because you know. Today you know that. Yesterday you knew that. And tomorrow you'll know it. That's what Paul is teaching about. We have to do the same hermeneutic here, when you look at the verb tenses in this particular passage.

The last thing is the context. Where does this verse fit in the context of others? That's why I wanted to read 5:12-21 before I read 6:1-10. You see, they're all in the same theme. All he's dealing with now is objections to what he previously said. You have to take these verses—Chapter 6:1-10—in the context of the rest of Chapter 5. Do you follow that? You with me? What's it called? Hermeneutics. What does it mean? The science of biblical interpretation. What are the three things?

**Audience Member:** Historical background, grammar and context.

Historical background, grammar and context. Let me give you a grammar lesson. Paul uses the aorist tense in the Greek text of the original language. That means that he's pointing to an event that happened in the past in your life, and it's a once and for all an act that has happened and has been concluded when he said, "You died to sin." He's not talking about a process, that you're going to die a little bit today, a little bit tomorrow. He said there's an event in your life that happened in the past that is now continued, it stopped, and it's once for all, and it's done. That's what he's talking about. Something happened to you when you went from Adam into Christ. In that, you died to sin. Now he uses the same verb tense in verses 6, 7, 8, 10 and 11. Look at the verbs there. They're all in the aorist tense, which means I'm talking about facts, not an experience. I'm not talking about your feelings. I'm not talking about if you feel dead to sin; I'm telling you that you are, according to God.

He's talking about your position now being in Christ, you're in union with Christ. This is how God views you. He views you as dead to sin. That's a fact; it's not a feeling. I wish had more feelings like at times. Sometimes I don't feel that. I have to go back and say, "That's irrelevant. My feelings or experience mean nothing. It's the fact that this is what Jesus says about me. You're dead to sin, Bruce. You're dead. That's a past tense event that has no impact upon your life."

How do we understand what the meaning of that is? Paul is not talking about something that we do. Nor is he talking about something that is a process—I die a little bit every day. He's talking about something that happened to you the moment you were justified by faith alone. At that moment, something happened to you that is eternal. It's a fact, not a feeling. It's a fact, not an experience. You see, it's best understood as this—dead to the reign of sin. That's what it means—dead to the reign or realm of sin.

He's contrasting the reign of sin with reign of grace. That's verses 12-21. That's why I have to say you've got to understand these verses in the context of what was previously written. You see, God is teaching Paul to teach us. When you're justified by faith alone, remember, when did I justify you? It's those four words we talked about last week. Paul says you were justified when you were absolutely weak. You couldn't have any strength to do anything to please God. That's when he justifies you. That's when he changed his view of you. It's when you were ungodly, and you gave no semblance of being created in the image of God. That's when he justified you, changed his view of you. He did it when you were an abject failure in everything in your life. You missed the mark. You were a sinner. That's when he justified you. He did it when you were an enemy. You see, that's when he justified...that's when he changed his view of you. At that moment, you were translated from being in Adam to being in Christ. Now you're in Christ. You're not in Adam anymore.

One of the things that happened is in that transfer, you died to the realm of sin. Because you see, in Adam is the realm of sin. In Christ is the realm of grace. We are now in the realm of grace, not in the realm of sin. That doesn't mean that you live a sinlessly perfect life. He's not talking about your conduct. He's talking about your position in Christ. He's not talking about how you live your life. That's sanctification. He's not talking about that. He's saying this is how I view you. This is how I view you.

We talk a lot about self-esteem. Well in my mind, self-esteem is a disease, not the cure. I want you to know this. The less self-esteem I have, the more understanding of grace I get. See the less esteem I have of me...how can I esteem myself? How can I have the ego-centeredness to say God loved me when I was a sinner, when I was ungodly, when I was his enemy, and I was absolutely weak? You see, what we try to do is we try to get people to feel good about yourself. I wish I felt good about myself. I don't. But I feel wonderfully just overwhelmed with grace and mercy and thanksgiving for how God sees me. You see, that's what changes your life. It's how does God see you, not how you see yourself. You see, if I look at myself, there's just nothing there. But then I go to the Scripture and look at the fact that said, "Bruce, you were in Adam, but now you're not. This is how I look at you. You're not in Christ. You're not in Christ." You see, when you look at that, that radically changes your life and how you think about

yourself and how you're going to act. That leads you to sanctification and holiness. But you've got to look at yourself correctly. I wish I had self-esteem. I could use a little. But you see, it's not what you're after. You've got to look at yourself. How does God view you? You see, it's so easy just psychologically say, "Let's just feel good about yourself. Look what you did."

I have a friend that I've been mentoring at work; a very godly young man. We were talking; we're studying together an inductive study of the book of Philippians. He was saying, "My wife really knows that I'm not satisfied in my job. It's frustrating. It's not my life's career. It's just difficult where I work. I'm having a real hard time. She understands that and she said, 'What's your attitude toward work? You have such a different attitude.' You know, my attitude toward work is irrelevant, because it has nothing to do with my value, it has nothing to do with my worth, it has nothing to do with my significance. It has nothing to do with my security. Because that's all wrapped up in Christ." You see, when I take my view of who I am in Christ, guys, I can go to work and say, "I'm thankful I've got a job. I'm going to do as well as I can because I'm in Christ, and my job has nothing to do with my worth, my value, my sense of significance and security." It's all wrapped up in the fact of what Paul is saying, "You were in Adam, but now you're in Christ." You see, we're looking for the experience at work. What you need to do is take the fact to work. Take the fact that you're in Christ. God's changed his view of you. Take that to the office and see what happens to your conduct. You've got to think that way. That's why Paul says, "Do not be conformed to the system of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind." You've got to think right.

What Paul is saying is this. This is not an experience I'm talking about. I'm talking about facts. When God justifies you, you went from Adam to Christ. You're no longer under the reign of Adam anymore, which is the reign of sin. You're now under the reign of grace, which is the realm of Christ. That's the contrast, you see, of 6:1-2 with all the verses in 5:12-21.

In Romans 5:21, he said this, "By sin the one," that's Adam. He contrasts that with the righteousness of the one—that's Christ. There's your contrast. He also says, "by the disobedience of the one," Adam, "we became sinners." That's the reign of sin that you were in. "By the obedience of one," Christ, "we became righteous." That's the realm of grace. If you're justified and you are in Christ, you see, you're no longer under the rule, the power or the realm of sin. You're now under the rule, the power and the reign of grace, because you went from being in Adam; you're now in Christ. I'm not talking about how you live; I'm talking about facts. You see, there's all the difference in the world, friends, between a person's status and position and their experience. Paul is not talking about your experience.

Look at Colossians 1: 13-14. Wonderful little book of Colossians. <sup>13</sup>He has delivered us from the domain of darkness." That's the realm of sin. That's in Adam. <sup>13</sup>He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, <sup>14</sup>in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins." That's a fact; that you were transferred from the realm, power and rule of sin. You're now transferred to the realm, power and rule of grace. That means to go from one to the other, you had to die to it. You're dead to the realm of sin, and now you're under the reign of grace.

Let me try to give you an illustration. I always try to think of illustrations. Forgive me if these are too simple. I struggle with some of these because I'm trying to make this piece to the point of understanding. Just let me try it this way. Let's say you had two roads. One road leads you to the realm of sin. There's another road over here that leads you to the realm of grace. As we saw in Romans 5 last week, the road we were on, because of the sin of one man (Adam), we all became sinners. That means you're in this field. You're under the realm of sin. You're in that field.

When God changed his view of you and justified you, he transferred you from this field to this field, and you're no longer in this field anymore. You're now in the field, the reign of grace. The Apostle John

says a wonderful thing about this transfer. He says this in 1 John 5:18, “The evil one does not touch you.” Do you realize this? That when you’re transferred from the domain of darkness—that’s Paul is referring to—when you’re transferred to this field of the domain of darkness, to the field of the Son that he loves, to go from this reign of sin to the reign of grace, Satan cannot touch you. Satan cannot touch you because you’re over here in grace.

He can shout at you. He can yell at you. He can entice you. He can do all those things that he’s going to try to do. He can deceive you. He’s going to accuse you of your self-worth and your value. He’s going to do all those things. But why do we pay attention to him? You see, because we’re always basing our Christianity upon our experience. We need to base it upon our fact, “I know that he can’t touch me, so I’m not going to listen to him anymore. He may come after me, but I’m going to resist it, and I’m going to say ‘Get behind me, Satan!’ because I know this. I can’t be touched because I’m in the realm of grace now, because I’ve died to that old realm.” And yet we succumb to that because of the temptations. We’ll get into that in a moment as to why we have that.

You see, we no longer belong to him because you’ve been transferred from one field to the other. We tend to forget it and fall under his spell often times. Paul is not talking about your experience here; he’s talking about the fact of what happened to you. We need to realize and resist. First of all, you’ve got to realize. You can’t resist unless you realize. That’s what Paul is saying. You’ve got to think right before you act right, and then when you act right, you’ll feel right.

You see, whatever your feeling may be, or whatever your experience may be, God tell us through his Word the we, those of us who are justified by faith alone, are in Christ; we are no longer in Adam, and we are no longer under the reign and the rule of sin. You died to that. We are in Christ and under the reign and rule of grace. When we fall into sin, it’s because we do not realize who we are. That’s the real issue. You don’t realize who you are. It starts right there. Who am I? The issue is not what I think of me; it’s what has God said about me. He said, “Bruce, you’re no longer weak. You’re no longer ungodly. You’re no longer a sinner, in my eyes. And you’re no longer my enemy. You’re now my son. You’re my child.” You see, we forget who we are because we’re always looking for the next gimmick of experience, or feeling.

There’s nothing wrong with feelings. Feelings are neutral. They’re neither positive nor are they negative. The real issue is how do I manage what I know I’m feeling. You might feel insecure. That’s a legitimate feeling. The question is am I going to base my life upon what I’m feeling? Or am I going to base it upon the fact that I’ve got to realize who God says I am in spite of my feelings. That’s how you manage your feelings. You go from feel-act-think to think-act-feel. That’s what Paul says is transformation. So there’s nothing wrong with feelings. You’ve just got to learn how to manage them. I have all kinds of insecurities. Sometimes I have to remind myself, “Bruce, forget it. It’s not the issue. The issue is let me tell you who you are. Let me tell you. Let me remind you of that.” You’ve got to realize that before you can resist the evil one.

That’s what Paul means when he says, “We are baptized into Christ Jesus,” in these first six verses. Baptism here is not something that you and I do. This is not talking about the ordinance of baptism. He’s talking about something that happened to you. Past tense reality. Aorist tense. Final, never to be happened again. It’s what happened to you. What has happened to us that he has incorporated us into Christ, and that joins us into Christ.

Look at verse Romans 6:5, “For if we have been united with him (Christ).” That word “united” is a good translation. It really means, more clearly, planted together. It’s the idea of taking a shoot that has been grafted into a parent trunk so you, individually, me, individually, have been taken from the realm, rule and dominion of sin, been transferred into the realm, rule and dominion of grace. At that moment, you

were planted, you were grafted into a trunk, and that is to the person and work of Christ. That's what it means to be in Christ. You've been grafted into him. You've been united with him. It's grafting. It's a union. This happens in 1 Corinthians 12:13. It's a work done by the Holy Spirit. You see, the Holy Spirit baptizes you by taking you and the shoot that you are and implants you and grafts you into the person and work of Christ into his life. That means this—that everything that Christ experiences, you do. Not feeling wise, not experientially, but factually. That's what Paul is saying. You've been baptized into Christ. You've been united with him. This baptism is carried out by the Holy Spirit when he incorporates us, when he implants us, when he grafts us into the Lord Jesus Christ. You're now in union with Christ.

You see, that's why I love to use the word "in Christ" instead of using the word "Christian." People say, "Bruce, I hear you're a Christian." I say, "Well I could be. But I do know this—I'm in Christ." See, what a world of difference. Walk down the streets of Pittsburgh, or in this church, and ask somebody, "Are you in Christ?" They're either going to know exactly what you mean or they're going to think you're a zealot, because they have no idea what you're talking about. "Well I'm a Christian. I was born in Mt. Lebanon. I've been going to this church for 20-some years. I'm a Christian." "Really?" Do you understand what it means to be in Christ? That you've been grafted. You've been planted into a trunk. And what happened to him, happened to you, in God's eyes. That's your position now in Christ. That's because we're united to him that we receive all the blessings in him, and why our salvation is guaranteed.

Do you know why your salvation is guaranteed? Because you've been grafted into Christ. Nothing you've done. You don't earn that. You're not saved by grace, preserved by works. You see, the reason Paul is saying this, he's spending all this time on justification, not sanctification, he's saying the reason that you have a guaranteed salvation that ends up with your glorification is because you're grafted into the person and work of Christ. And what happened to him, I'm giving credit to you; it's happening to you. Same thing. That's what it means to be in Christ.

We've been resurrected with Christ. Look at verses 4 and 5. Because we've been joined to him, grafted into him, in union with him, we participate, from God's positional point of view, in what happened to him. What he did, we did, with him, from God's point of view. We were buried with him, and we were also resurrected with him.

What does burial signify? Burial signifies the final proof of death. When you bury somebody. It's the final proof. When Jesus died to the realm, reign and power of sin, it was signaled by his burial. That means he dealt with it. It was once and for all settled. The same thing happened to you, positionally, when God says, "That's exactly what happened to you. When you died to Adam, you were buried with Christ, because when he was buried, you were buried with him. You get the blessing of that activity because I'm giving you credit for his burial." That happened to you. It happened to you. The same thing happened to us.

Our Lord's death was the final proof that he'd been entirely finished with his work of salvation. You see, that's why he said, "It is finished." That means it's finished for you, and it's finished for me, because you are grafted into, you're united with Christ. "What happened to him," God says, "happened to you in my eyes. That's how I view you."

Our being buried with him from the reign and realm and rule of sin. That happened to him, that happened to us. We're not only joined to him in his death and in his burial, but also in his resurrection. His resurrection is the final proof that he finally and completely conquered sin and its reign, and he's entirely finished with it. That's how God views you and me. How do I have the audacity to say, "You mean I can just go ahead and sin so that grace will abound?" If I understand what I just said, how can I



say that? That's Paul's point, "By no means!" You can't say that. If you really understand what Paul is teaching us, you won't even deal with that question because you know it's just so ludicrous; it's illogical to ask that question. The grace you have, and you understand justification by faith alone, the grace that you have will be the grace that will motivate you toward obedience, and you won't even consider that question, because you know it's outside the question.

What is true in the resurrection of Christ is true to us. Paul, again, is saying this is not something that is going to happen to you, or to me, it is something that has already happened to us. Just as he did, we also finish with the realm, reign and dominion of sin, and we've entered now into the reign, realm and dominion of grace.

Again, I remind you, friends, this is not something that we're hoping for, but something that has happened. It's already happened. We are in that position. Now that's why Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 5:17, you know this verse. When a person becomes a Christian, they become a? Possible new person. No. He said when a person becomes a Christian, the old is gone away. What's gone away? Old Adam. What's new? New Christ. You've gone from being in Adam to being in Christ. The old is gone; the new has come. You've entered into newness of life. You see, friends, the bottom line is this, simply speaking. If you're looking for an experience, you don't have to live like you used to. You don't have to do that anymore. You don't have to make the decisions like you used to, because you've got a whole different realm of experience-oriented decision making processes in the Scripture, because you've been grafted to Christ, because you died to sin, you were buried in sin, you were resurrected into sin, and that's exactly what happened to him, and because you're grafted to him, it happened to you, that's how God views you.

Now how in the world, then, do I have the audacity to say, "Then I can just go on sinning and let grace abound?" You see I grieve over my sin all the time. He's not talking about living a sinlessly perfect and perfectly obedient life. He's not talking about that. We know that that is not something the Scripture teaches. We know that. He's talking about do you understand, first of all, before you start talking about how you're going to live, do you understand your position? Do you understand your status of how I look at you? How I view you? You see, if you don't realize that, you're never going to resist. We rose with him. We are now in a new realm. If this is true of us, how shall we continue to sin? That's the logical conclusion. We've entered into a newness of life.

Next we look at the next verses, 6-10. We need to understand some implications of what we've just learned. Everybody tracking with me so far? You doing okay? First of all, he says you're dead to your sin. That's verses 6 and 7. He's saying you don't need to be a slave to your sin anymore. We've been crucified with Christ. What Paul is saying is this. Instead of lolling around in self-pity in your sin, in order that grace may increase, we should bear in mind that such a course would defeat the very purpose of your life being a regenerated believer. That defeats the very purpose of your life. You just go on sinning so grace will abound—that defeats your whole purpose. Does Paul mean that in this present life a believer can reach the state of perfection? The degree of holiness that says I can be sinlessly perfect and perfectly obedient? He doesn't do that. Neither does any other portion of Scripture teach that fallacy. You can look at Matthew 6:12, Romans 7:14-25, James 3:2 and 1 John 1:8 to help you understand he's not talking about sinless perfection and perfect obedience. Do you have to be perfect to get to heaven?

***Audience Members:*** Yes.

Absolutely. Whose perfection is it?

***Audience Members:*** Christ's.

You get credit for his sinless perfection and his perfect obedience. Our life of obedience is an expression of gratitude, not an expression of merit. You don't get any merit for your activities of obedience. What you're doing is just saying, "Thanks." You're expressing your gratitude, but you don't get any merit for it because how can you improve upon perfection. You've already been given sinless perfection and perfect obedience. Do you have the audacity to think if I read my Bible and have a nice quiet time I'm going to get credit for that? That's going to increase perfection? That's ridiculous.

How many of you think, "Oh if I have a good quiet time, God owes me a good day"? {LAUGHTER} You see, that's the mentality we have, because we think this. I can still earn something. You see, antinomianism says this—the law doesn't make any difference. Legalism says what I do makes a difference. Grace says what he did for you makes the difference. There's the difference. We're not talking about sinless perfection and perfect obedience.

My first church in Kansas years ago... I had a woman come up to me one Sunday after the message and she said, "You know, Pastor Bruce, I just want you to know that I lived a perfectly obedient life this week for the past seven days, and it was such a glorious experience." I said, "I'll bet you're really proud of that, aren't you." She said, "Yes!" I said, "Hmm!" {LAUGHTER} Bingo! Right there negated everything she'd done, because she took pride in her own work thinking that I've gained merit in God's eyes. We're not talking about sinless perfection. We're talking about your status. We're talking about how does God view you.

There's a vast difference between this—committing a sin and constantly living and delighting in it. There's a difference between committing a sin—which we're all going to do. What do you do when you sin? You repent and ask God to forgive it, and he's faithful and just to forgive us of all of our sins and cleanse us of all unrighteousness. The word righteousness means right-wiseness. In other words, he's going to forgive this time and give you the grace not to make it the next time. That's what it means to cleanse you of all unrighteousness. Help you think right and make the right decisions. Most of the time, we're guilty because we choose to feel guilty. You do something for your child and they get mad at you. Boy, do I feel guilty. You see, we choose to feel guilty. You'll know if you're guilty or not. If you are, then you repent of that and ask God to forgive you. There's a difference between committing a sin and dealing with it and enjoying and continuing in that sin all the time because you really enjoy it; you delight in it. There's a difference. By the power and grace of the Holy Spirit, a person can indeed reach the point where you no longer enjoy.

I commit more sins in my life than I would like you to know. But I tell you what. When I do it, I don't enjoy it when it's over. You see, the real issue is this. Are you struggling with it? That's one of the greatest affirmations of your salvation. If you're not struggling with your sin, it's an indication you're probably not regenerate. It's an indication you're probably not justified by faith. It may be you're still in Adam because you're just enjoying it all the time and that's what you're pursuing. One of the real tests of your salvation is, "Am I struggling with this?" I struggle with the same things all the time. Day after day I struggle with some of these things, and I've got to go back and say, "Lord, thank you for your mercy and your grace." That's an indication that something changed when I went from Adam to Christ; from this field to that field. If you're not struggling with your sin... one of the prayers that all of you, every day, ought to say is this, "Lord ever keep my sin before me. Always keep my sin before me." You see, it's when you don't do that, that Paul is saying that's when you relish and dwell in it and continue in it. For a synonym of what it means to be a slave to sin, look at 2 Peter 2:19 and the words of John 8:34.

The person who has, by God's sovereign grace, been regenerated and converted so that he no longer delights in your sin. The issue here is delighting in it versus committing it. We're all going to commit it, but the issue is do I delight in it. You see, the issue is do I fight it or do I resist it or do I not. That's the

person who can be assured of the fact that God is on the basis of the person and work of Christ, forgiving your sins and the result that you've been justified by faith alone, not by works.

**Audience Member:** *May I ask a question?*

You may. I may not have an answer, but you can ask.

**Audience Member:** *When does this happen? When I die in Adam and live in Christ?*

Okay, good question. I have no idea. {LAUGHTER} It's really tough to chronologicalize the activity of salvation. What happens first? This, this, this, put in order. It's really tough to do that. Let me just try to answer the question logically. Which comes first? Justification or regeneration? Justification or conversion? Most people would say, "When I'm converted, God justifies me." We saw last week that justification occurs before your regeneration. He has to change his view of you before he can regenerate you and take your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. If you're looking for something as to how it happens, just quickly, he changes his view and then he regenerates you. When does this occur? At your justification. That's Paul's whole point of Romans 5 and 6. This occurs when God changes his view of you, and the response to that, on our part, is you and I come to saving faith because of the person and work of Christ. If you're looking for how it happens, justification precedes regeneration or conversion. It happens at your justification. That's why Luther and the Reformers said that justification by faith alone is the sole foundation of the church. If you don't understand that, everything else goes out the window; it becomes a free-for-all. At justification, when God changes his view of you, then immediately he regenerates us and converts us through the work of the Holy Spirit. That's when it occurs.

**Audience Member:** *Don't I need to say something or do something to know that this happened.*

I think you say thank you. That's what you say. You say thank you.

**Ted:** [UNCLEAR]...

I don't deal with that. We're not talking about that tonight. We're talking about Romans 6. They were two good guys. They're both in heaven. Look, we all have errors in our theology. I've got errors in my theology. I just don't know where they are. When I find them, I'll change. I've been changing all my life. One of the great stories...you ought to read the relationship between John Wesley and George Whitfield. We think that John Wesley started Methodism. It was George Whitfield. There was a disagreement on the doctrine of grace versus the doctrine of works righteousness. Out of maturity, George Whitfield said, "I'm going to step aside and let you go ahead." You ought to read the letters between Wesley and Whitfield. Wonderful expressions of Whitfield just saying, "How much I respect you, how much I love you as a brother in Christ. I disagree with you on this point. It's a critical disagreement in why we can't work together, but I..." Somebody asked him one day, "Mr. Whitfield, will you see John Wesley in heaven?" He said, "Absolutely not. He'll be much closer to the throne of grace, I won't even see him." That was his attitude. They disagreed on works righteousness versus grace. You see, you don't have to have your theology right to be a believer. It's the work of the Holy Spirit. It's not something I do; it's something he has done in us. That's the issue. As you mature in Christ, you come to a realization of that.

**Dale:** *I don't have to know what time the sun came up to know that it's shining.*

It's a fact. Exactly. Right. You see, we're not looking for experience here. Paul is dealing with facts. Let's take a look at a couple of other things. We're alive in the Savior (verses 8-10). We are now to live

in the resurrection power of the One who rose from the dead and is forever true and forever alive. You see, it's not merely enough for us to know our position in Christ; we must by faith do what the Bible says, "Reckon or believe it to be true in our own individual lives." Reckoning or believing is simply the first step of faith, and that says what God says about me in the Bible is now true in my life. I am crucified with Christ.

You have to reckon. The word "reckon" here means to believe. Reckoning is faith in action. You see, we think that faith is something you just believe. The word "faith" is a very, very aggressive word. It's the Greek word "pisteo." It means to depend upon, adhere to, rely upon and trust in. It's a very, very active verb. You don't sit back and just contemplate facts. If you're taking an aggressive response, that's what belief is. That's what Paul is saying here. Believing or reckoning is faith in action. You're resting on God's Word. In spite of your circumstances, you're resting on the facts that you know are in the Scripture, in spite of your feelings. You're resting on the facts in the Scripture in spite of your experience. You see, God does not tell us to crucify ourselves, but rather to believe that you have been crucified, and that the old man, the old Adam, has been put to death.

Notice this. Crucifixion is one death that you can't perform on yourself. You can't do that. You must be crucified by another. Believing that step of faith believes in God's Word and you act upon it. That's what he's saying when you reckon or believe that you're now alive in Christ. You're dead to the realm, rule and power of sin. You're now alive in Christ. Without that assurance that Christ's death was a once for all act, we would lack the comfort that we need for this and for our future life. Doesn't this give us comfort in that wonderful old hymn, We Serve a Living Savior. We serve a living Savior. You see, that's the fact that you're now alive in Christ.

What does Paul mean...let's take a look quickly as we wrap this up...in verses 12-14. We need to manage our members. We need to realize that we are both dead and alive, we're dead to sin, to the realm, rule and power of sin. That it's not an experience; it's a fact. We're alive in the Savior. That's not an experience; it's a fact. It's based upon your recognizing and believing that to determine how you act.

Now we need to manage our members. He goes into verses 12-14. He tells us not yield the members of our bodies as tools of wickedness. What does Paul mean when he says parts of the body? Well it's made very clear what he means in other passages, like Romans 12:4-5, where these parts are clearly bodily parts. He's talking about physical bodily parts. You can read about that in 1 Corinthians 12:12-24. It makes specific mention of bodily parts, and here are the ones that are mentioned—foot, hand, ear, eye, nose (actually sense of smell), head, your un-presentable parts (meaning your sexual parts), and your presentable parts of a person's body. He's talking about the physical body that you have, and he's saying parts of your body therefore refers to bodily limbs, members and organs.

He says you've got to manage that. Don't give your bodily parts to be slaves of unrighteousness. Give your bodily parts to be slaves of righteousness. What does that mean? It means you've got to take responsibility for what you look at. All of the temptations of Satan in the field yelling at you come through our senses—what you see, what you hear, what you taste, what you say, what you feel, what you experience. You see, those are all the senses that Paul is saying. He says, "Look, you've got to realize who you are. You're no longer in that realm anymore. Don't listen to his voice. He can't touch you. One of the ways that you can act responsibly is take the parts of your body give them to be slaves of righteousness, not slaves of unrighteousness." We have to be like Job, who says, "I make a covenant with my eyes." I'm not going to look at that stuff anymore because I'm going to make my eyes be slaves of righteousness, so I'm not going to look at that TV ad. I'm going to turn off the TV when it gets too lurid. I'm not going to read that magazine. I'm not going to do that because I don't want my eyes to take in things that are going to be Satan's way of yelling at me across the field, across the road.

How about what you smell? What do you put in your mouth? You see, that's a bodily part that he says you've got to manage what you put into your mouth. Years ago, my own personal commitment was that I pledged when I was 12 years old, when I came to saving faith and I realized what it meant, I pledged to myself that one of the ways in which I would always remind myself of my regeneration and my justification is that I would no drink alcohol. I'm a teetotaler. I've gotten blasted all my life.

Now I'm not saying you have to do that. I'm not saying that. Please understand what I'm not saying. All I'm saying is my personal conviction is I've never drunk. I don't want to do that. When I was in the Navy, I got lambasted, harassed, ridiculed and everything else. When I would go to the Oak Club, I was the designated driver, before you had that. I always drove the Jeep because I didn't drink. I ran the golf course instead of going to the bars. My call sign as a flyer was Afterburner. They called me Sky Pilot or Spirit6. Those are terms of derision, not compliments. They were just ridiculing the fact that I wouldn't do what they did. I had the freedom to do that, but I chose not to. You've got to take responsibility for what you put in your mouth. I'm not saying that you should do that. Please understand what I'm not saying. Got that? If you want to have a glass of wine, that's your business. It's between you and the Lord. It's not between me and you. It's up to you.

What comes out of your mouth? What comes out of your mouth? How about Luke 6:45, "Out of the overflow of the heart, the mouth speaks. You see, one of the greatest barometers of your faith in Christ is what do you talk about. How do I respond to that person who just irritated me? Made me have this experience. Made me have this feeling. What do I say to them? That's an indication of your heart, folks. That says more about you and me than it does the person who made you irritable. You see, Paul is saying this. You've got a body that is not redeemed yet. It'll come at your glorification. When we get into Romans 7, he's going to say, "Why do I do the things I don't want to do, and I do things that I don't want to do." We'll get into that. He's saying, "In the meantime, prepare yourself by making sure that you take your bodily parts and have them become slaves of righteousness.

A friend of mine was in seminary years ago. He was flunking out. He called me on the phone and said, "Bruce, this is a disaster. I love what I'm doing, but I'm flunking. I don't know what to do." I said, "Tell me what you do after class." "Well I go play hoops, play basketball." "How long do you do that?" "Oh four or five hours a day." {LAUGHTER} I said, "You know, Pat, your problem is with your feet." He said, "What do you mean?" I said, "You go where your feet go. Offer your feet as slaves to righteousness and say, 'Lord, keep my feet behind the desk,' and I'll bet your grades go up." So he kept his feet under the desk and he started making straight A's. He's a wonderful pastor now. His problem was his feet. It wasn't his time management. He was not taking his feet to the right place. He didn't manage his feet.

That's what Paul is saying. It's that particular. It's that illustrative. He's saying take responsibility and manage the members of your body. Where do go? What do you eat? What do you say? What goes in? What goes out? What do you look at? He says those are the things you do. Remember you're no longer in Adam anymore; you're now in Christ. Take responsibility for that.

What Paul is saying is this. Don't continue to put your bodily parts at the disposal of sin as weapons of wickedness. Stop it. Instead, right now, completely and decisively say, "I'm going to give my bodily parts to glorify God." The reason you can do that is because, dearly beloved, when you were justified by faith, God took your life out of Adam, transferred you from this field to that field, and he grafted you into the life of Christ. What happened to him, in God's eyes, happened to you. Any blessing, any activity that we have that's a joyful experience in our life is the result of our union with Christ. All the blessings come because you've been united with Christ. That's what Paul is telling us in those first ten verses. That's why he says you've got to understand what it means to be no longer in Adam. You're now in Christ.

Let's pray. Father, we thank you for the clarity of this passage. Again, we just pray that if we've said something that is inconsistent with you or your nature or your glory, that you would remove it from us. Father, just help us to realize that our life is based upon facts, not upon our experience. Our experience becomes the result of thinking correctly about our facts. Our feelings come about thinking correctly about our facts. Don't let us base our life upon the experience or based upon the feeling. Let it be based upon the fact that you say this—you died to sin, you were buried with Christ, you were resurrected with Christ into newness of life, and may it be so for Jesus' sake. Amen!