

A NEW WAY OF LIFE

Romans 6:1-4

Intro: Today we come to a new section in the book of Romans, the third, if we do not count Paul's introduction as a section. If we do, then this is the fourth. Let me review them for you.

In Paul's introduction in the first seventeen verses of chapter one, he made it perfectly clear that he was writing to the believers at Rome about the Gospel. He didn't finish verse 1 before he had mentioned the Gospel. And then he went on to define it not only in the first four verses, but he gave a second definition in the sixteenth and seventeenth verses, ending his introduction. It is clear, I say, from those opening verses that Paul's subject was the Gospel.

However, it is not until we get to verse eighteen of chapter 1 the Paul's message really began. Here he was intent on showing the need for salvation, not only for the Gentile, but also for the Jew. And he did this by speaking of SIN! He left no doubt as to what sin is, and that it should be called by its true name: SIN! He showed that man has turned away from God, and that human life on earth, from generation to generation, demonstrates what has happened as a result of man not wanting to have anything to do with God. Paul cited OT passages of Scripture to prove his point. When we finish that section which extends to chapter 3 and verse 20, we know that man is guilty of sin and that he stands under condemnation before God.

This is why we call that first part, CONDEMNATION.

In the second section which begins with Romans 3:21 and goes to chapter 5, verse 21, we learn about JUSTIFICATION. That is, we learn what God has done to deliver sinners from the judgment of God, and to clear them of all charges which have been placed against them. It is through the coming of God's Son into the world to die in the place of guilty sinners. God could not righteously overlook man's sin. He had to deal with it. And so He sent His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, who took the penalty of sin upon Himself, and went to the Cross as a Sacrifice for all who would ever be saved. And so guilty sinners can be cleared of the charges against them and accepted into the full favor of God through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. That is clearly stated in such verses as Rom. 3:24-26 and Rom. 5:1.

Chapter 5 tells us how Adam got the whole human race into trouble; it also tells us how the Lord Jesus Christ gets us out of trouble. It is the hardest thing in the world for

people to believe that there is not something that we need to do, but the teaching of Scripture is that Christ does the work of salvation all by Himself. It is through His death that we are justified in the sight of God.

This is what we have in the second main division of Romans.

Today we come to the third division and it begins in a way that is characteristic of the teaching of the Apostle Paul. It begins with:

I. AN IMPORTANT QUESTION (Rom. 6:1).

And this important question is followed with another question in which Paul suggests a possible answer to the first question.

The main question is: "What shall we say then?"

It is like he was saying, "Where do we go from here?" Or, we might paraphrase it as meaning, "Is all that there is to salvation?" We might also suggest the meaning, "Christ has taken our penalty, and delivered us from the consequences of our sins. Do this mean that we can go on sinning because we can expect Him to continue to deliver us from the penalty of our sins?"

In fact, when we link the end of chapter 5 with the beginning of chapter 6, it appears that Paul was saying, "If God's grace was greater than our sin, why shouldn't we believe that we can go on sinning to make His grace abound even more?"

To "continue in sin" means more than just to go on sinning. It means to continue to be drawn into sin, to be in bondage to that from which Christ died to free us. Sin had been man's master. Does the work of Christ on the Cross leave us in that bondage where we not only cannot deliver ourselves, but actually prefer to continue on in our sin? Is it possible that, although our condition before God has been changed, our condition in the world and before people in the world would remain unchanged?

II. PAUL'S ANSWER (Rom. 6:2, 3).

It is hard to think that a true Christian would ever make such a suggestion, but it evidently was coming from someone, or many "someones," or Paul would not have stated this as he did. Such a question reflected a lack of understanding of the true nature of even justification.

Paul's answer was, translating it more literally, "Let it not

be!" Bishop Moule translated it, "Away with the thought!" Charles Hodge said that such an idea was abhorrent to the Apostle Paul. It was disgusting to him. He loathed even the thought that such a thing could be. The Lord did not die to deliver us from sin's penalty only to let us go on sinning. Everything within Paul rebelled against such a concept of salvation.

But that is not the end of Paul's answer. He asked another question: "How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?"

Let me suggest another translation which is closer to what Paul said. It is this: How shall we who died to sin live any longer therein? Before we were saved we were dead in our sins, but now we are "dead to sin."

The meaning of this statement is, as Charles Hodge said, that we are free from sin. Sin has lost its power over the one who believes in the Lord Jesus Christ. Before we were saved, sin dominated our lives. It ruled as a tyrant over us. But that tyranny was broken when we were born again. Paul was teaching here that we are not only delivered from the penalty of our sins through Christ, but from the power of our sins.

We will learn later on in this chapter that there are certain practical things that we need to do to experience this deliverance, but, before that, we need to understand this basic truth which applies to every child of God. We died to sin. It does not mean that we cannot sin, but it does mean that we do not have to sin. Sin was our master; now Christ is our Master and our Lord.

Now, since that is true, since salvation has brought about such a change in our relationship with sin within us, how can we even entertain the idea that we could go on in life unchanged? It is impossible for one who believes in Christ to go on living the same sinful life as before.

But Paul's answer continued in verse 3. It is one thing to know that this is true; it is quite another thing to understand why it is true.

"Know ye not" is the equivalent of saying, Are you ignorant of this fact, or, Have you never been told? It might also indicate that they had forgotten something which had been told them, but they might not have known it at all as far as the good it had done for them was concerned. It was a gentle word of rebuke because the question implies that they did know it, but had not benefitted from it.

What had they been told? What did Paul have in mind when he referred to their being "baptized into Jesus Christ"?

Well, first of all, let us dismiss from our minds the idea that Paul was speaking of water baptism. If this were water baptism, then it most certainly would be required for salvation. But that would be a work which we would contribute to our salvation, and we know that salvation is by grace alone. And yet some have explained this as meaning water baptism. And so it would mean that water baptism is what causes us to be dead to sin. But that is not the case.

No, we need to take a closer look at the verb to baptize in order to arrive at a true understanding of what Paul was teaching here. And it will help us to see the parallel statement which Paul made in verse 4, likening baptism to a burial.

When a person is baptized in water, he or she is immersed in the water, and then taken out. But you will recognize that when we are baptized by the Spirit into the body of Christ, we are not put into the body of Christ, and then taken out. We are placed into the body of Christ and left there! And so baptism carries with it the idea of being united with something, or someone. And to be baptized into Christ's death means that we were united with Christ in His death, so that we benefit from His death as though it were our own. He died as our Representative, and therefore His death is accepted by God as our death. We can lay claim to the full meaning of the death of Christ.

There is no question but that we have no benefit from the death of Christ until we are saved, but our union with Christ in His death and burial actually took place when our Lord died and was buried. This is often called the doctrine of Identification. Christ died for us, but it is also true to say that we died in Him. When He died, we died. When He was buried, we were buried. When He arose, we arose. In the sight of God all that happened to Christ was for us. He died in our place, and so we died in Him.

This brings Paul to:

III. THE GLORIOUS CONSEQUENCE, or RESULT (Rom. 6:4).

Paul spoke here of two resurrections: the resurrection of Christ, and our resurrection as believers. Notice how the two are distinguished, but also how they are related.

A. The resurrection of Christ.

Christ was buried following His death. Although an attempt was made to conceal the fact that He rose from the dead, no one could deny that He really died. Nor is there any question but that He was raised from the dead. No event in history has any greater support than the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul in 1 Corinthians 15 explained very carefully how everything in our faith as Christians is based upon the resurrection of Christ. If Christ were not raised, then we have nothing.

But He was raised, and that is the climactic and foundational truth of the Christian faith. All of our hopes as Christians are traceable to the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead.

But Paul here also declares:

B. The resurrection of believers.

He was not speaking of our final resurrection when our bodies will be changed and made like the body of our Lord Jesus Christ. Paul was speaking of the meaning of Christ's resurrection for us now. And it is expressed in these words: "That like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, **even so we also should walk in newness of life.**"

There was a difference even in Christ when He was raised from the dead. As we are told in Rom. 6:9, "death" had "no more dominion over him." As He went to the Cross, He was made sin for us. The Father laid on him the iniquity of us all. He bore our sins in His own body on the tree. But on the Cross He put away our sins by the sacrifice of Himself. And so when He came forth from the grave, He had put away our sins and He came forth the Victor over death, the grave, and what is most important of all, over SIN. Paul spoke in Phil. 3:21 of "his glorious body," and that someday you and I will have bodies like His, glorified bodies, no longer subject to sin, or sickness, or death.

But let me repeat: All that He went through He did for us, dying, buried, raised again, and ascended to the Father's right hand. And it was God Who is spoken of here as having raised our Lord from the dead.

Now, just as He was different after His resurrection, the teaching of the Apostle Paul was, "even so we also should walk in newness of life."

Focus your attention upon those words, **"walk in newness of life."**

This would have been impossible except for our union with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection. We are considering today the doctrine of particular redemption. And we are clearly taught here that justification leads to sanctification. But, in the same way it teaches that sanctification is impossible without justification. Neither can exist without the other.

And so the consequence of our union with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection, is "newness of life," walking "in newness of life." Let us make sure that we understand what those words mean.

"Walk" -- We have had this word many times before in our studies. And so we all should know by this time that walking is living. And it is so expressed here as to speak of something that is going on continually. It is a permanent change of life style.

"Newness" -- This is an entirely new kind of life. It is not the old life made over, but an altogether new way of living. It is like a new garment, or a new wine skin, or the new heaven and the new earth. It means being "a new creature." A new-born Christian begins to be what he never was before. Not the old corrected and made over, but in the case of "newness of life," a way of life never lived before!

How can we describe this life?

- 1) It is a holy life, a life in which sin has no part.
- 2) It is a life in which our main purposes are to please God and to glorify Him always. It is a life of praise for, and worship of, God.
- 3) It is a life of obedience to the Word of God.
- 4) It is a life of prayer and faith, a life of trusting God.
- 5) It is a life of love.
- 6) It is a life of grace.
- 7) It is a life of hope.
- 8) It is a life of humility and self-denial.
- 9) It is a life of courage and strength.
- 10) It is a life of heavenly mindedness.

Everything about our lives as the people of God is different. We have to learn to live in a different way. And we continue to learn and to improve, by God's grace, as long as we are in this world.

Concl: Let me conclude by saying two things about this "newness of life."

In the first place, if you are a Christian, you will know immediately that your heart is drawn toward God, toward His

Word, toward His people, toward holiness of life and away from sin (those things which please God). If you do not have these feelings, you may not be truly saved. If you can enjoy the world's company as much or more than you do the people of God, you may not be saved. If you are saved, you don't gradually become a new creature; you are a new creature. The newness may not appear clearly on the outside to begin with, but you will know that there is a difference within.

The second thing is that this "newness of life" needs to be cultivated. This is done by reading the Word, and by putting yourself under the teaching of the Word. It is done by seeking to be obedient to the Word. Prayer has a great part in our becoming what God wants us to be because prayer really means being with God.

So there are these two things to remember. Not only our joy, but our victory in this new life, is to be found not only in knowing in our hearts that we are different, but living out what God has done in us so that others can see what God has done.

Peter fairly well summed up Paul's teaching in Romans 6 when he wrote, speaking of Christ,

Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness, by whose stripes ye were healed (1 Pet. 2:24).

May the Lord teach us more each day how to live in "newness of life."

DEAD, AND YET ALIVE

Romans 6:5-10

Intro: Have you ever wondered why the epistles of the NT are arranged as they are? I don't know that anyone has the complete answer, but we know that they are not arranged according to the order in which they were written. So there must have been another plan.

We can immediately see that the epistles of Paul come first. Hebrews was placed last because there has always been some question as to whether or not it was written by the Apostle Paul. After Hebrews comes the epistle of James, followed by the epistles of Peter, then the epistles of John, with Jude coming just before the book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ.

I am only going to deal with the epistles of Paul today and leave the others for another time. There is no question but that Paul wrote most of the NT epistles, and that his teaching was basic in the early Church, especially among the Gentiles. His epistles to churches are placed first, and then his epistles to individuals: Timothy, Titus, and Philemon.

But why would Romans be placed first?

An examination of this epistle shows that it contains the foundational truths of the Christian faith, and the practical application of those truths for daily living. It must have been placed first because the compilers felt that this was Bible 101 as far as the epistles are concerned. I do not mean by that, that the book of Romans is simple and easy to understand. I mean that it is basic! There is a sense in which an understanding of Romans is a prerequisite to an understanding of the other epistles. If you or I by-pass Romans, we will be handicapped in our understanding of the other NT epistles. But some knowledge of Romans prepares us for the others.

It is not without its meaning that the epistle to the Romans has been a factor in most of the major movements of the Spirit of God throughout the history of the Church. It is impossible for anyone to overemphasize the importance of this epistle in the study of the NT.

I think we have already seen enough to confirm that statement.

Paul began this epistle by showing man's need for salvation. He followed this up by showing how we are saved from the

penalty of our sins. That doctrine is called justification. Justification comes through believing that Jesus Christ died in our place. He was our Substitute. He took our sins upon Himself at Calvary.

Some of Paul's statements which show this are in Romans 5. "Christ died **for** the ungodly" (v. 6). "Christ died **for** us" (v. 8). We are "**justified by his blood**" (v. 9) and "we shall be saved from wrath **through him**" (also in v. 9). "We were reconciled to God **by the death of his Son**" (v. 10). "We shall be saved **by his life**" (also in v. 10). And in v. 11 Paul said that it is "**through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom** we have now received the reconciliation."

The believer in Christ can say, "Christ died **for me**, and it is **through His death in my place** that I am justified before God. I will not have to suffer the penalty which I justly deserved because the Lord Jesus Christ paid my debt."

I hope that we all understand this. The Lord had this in mind when He said, "I am the good shepherd: **the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep**" (John 10:11). And later He said, "No man cometh unto the Father **but by me**" (John 14:6). This is what salvation is. And this is the truth Paul presented from the middle of chapter 3 to the end of chapter 5. Christ died in the sinner's place. Therefore, those who believe in Him are justified in His sight, no longer under divine judgment. That is good news, isn't it?

However, this good news gets better the farther we go in the book of Romans.

As we come to chapter 6 we see a second phase of our salvation. It has to do with the child of God and sin. It is the doctrine of sanctification, or holiness. All through Romans 6, 7, and down to the seventeenth verse of chapter 8 Paul explained why a Christian is going to live a different kind of life. He showed why it is now possible for us to live so as to please God. In fact, it is more than a possibility; it is an absolute necessity. If a person professes to be a Christian, but his life is not changed, his profession means nothing. Paul was not saying that a Christian cannot fail God. He was not saying that a Christian cannot sin. BUT HE WAS SAYING THAT A CHRISTIAN CANNOT LIVE IN SIN LIKE HE DID BEFORE HE WAS SAVED. As we learned last week, he is going to "walk in newness of life."

My text for today is verses 5 through 10. In these verses Paul was continuing to explain why the believer is expected to "walk in newness of life" (v. 4), and why it cannot be otherwise.

Last week we saw that when Christ died, we died with Him and in Him, and that when Christ was raised, we were raised in Him. In our text for today, beginning with verse 5, we see that:

I. AS WITH CHRIST, SO WITH US, RESURRECTION FOLLOWS DEATH
(Rom. 6:5).

If we died with Christ, and were raised with Christ (and we were), then just as it meant a change for Him, a marvelous and eternal change, so it has with us. This is what verse 5 says.

The "if" at the beginning of this verse can be, and should be, translated since. It is the kind of a statement in the Greek language that a person would use when he assumes something to be true.

Therefore, our participation with Christ in His death means that we will also share in the effect of His resurrection--not just at some time in the future, but now! Paul was not speaking of the resurrection of the body, but of the spiritual resurrection that takes place when a person is born again.

"Likeness" here not only indicates that our resurrection resembles our Lord's resurrection, but that they are equal, or identical, to each other. Since we died with Him and in Him, and He then was raised from the dead, so there are truths about His resurrection which apply to us now. This will apply to us also in the future when we are changed to have glorified bodies, but there is a change right now which Paul was preparing to discuss. When we understand the change that it meant for the Lord, then we will begin to understand the meaning of the doctrine of sanctification, or why we can and must live a new kind of life as Christians.

Paul has already said that it is a new life, a kind of life which we have never lived before, and have not been capable of living, but now we are to find out the two main characteristics of this life.

We talk about a Christian being "a new creature," or a new creation. What do we mean by this title? We mean two things. Let me point them out for you.

Let me call this:

II. THE TWO CHARACTERISTICS OF OUR RESURRECTION LIFE (Rom. 6:6-10).

I will point them out, and then talk about them.

The first is found in verse 6: "That henceforth we should not serve sin." The second is in verse 10: That we, like our Lord, should live unto God. You will not that there is a negative emphasis in the first. Because we are raised with Christ, we will not go on in a life of sin. But then there is the positive side: we will live unto God.

Before we were saved, we were the servants of sin and could not live unto God. Now that we are saved, we are no longer slaves to sin, but now we live unto God.

Let us see what these mean.

- A. "That henceforth we should not serve sin" (Rom. 6:6, 7).

I like that word "henceforth." It means from now on. It means from this point on, and forever. Or to state it another way, it means not any longer. It marks an abrupt and permanent change. Something very wonderful happened when Christ died and rose again for us that meant that life forever after would be different. Before we were slaves to our sins; now, and from this time on, sin is no longer our master, and never will be again!

Why could Paul make such a strong statement as this? Look at the first part of verse 6.

We know this, and it is true: when Christ died "our old man was crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, ..." What did Paul mean by "our old man," and what did he mean by "the body of sin" being "destroyed"?

"Our old man" is all that we were before the Lord saved us. After we were saved we became a new creation in Christ. When Christ died on the Cross, and we died with Him, what we were died on that Cross so that through the saving grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, once we were saved, we could never again be what we were before.

Now this does not mean that we looked different after we were saved. Everybody could recognize us as being the same human being that we were before. But inwardly there was a change because Christ not only died for us, but we died in Him and with Him. And now we have become new creatures in Christ.

But Paul added a further word of explanation. He said "that old man was crucified with him, that (or, in order that) the body of sin might be destroyed."

What is "the body of sin"?

Well, Paul was not speaking about our physical bodies. Christ's physical body was nailed to the Cross, but not our physical bodies. Spiritually, and in the eyes of God, we were joined to Christ in His death. This was not only to save us from sin's penalty. That is justification. But it was to save us from sin's power. That is sanctification. And "the body of sin" is that which made "the old man" what he was--not only a sinner, but a slave to sin. "The body of sin" is our sin nature, the main part of our capacity and our inclination to sin. That was "destroyed" at the Cross.

But you are going to respond immediately by saying, "Pastor, I can still sin. I still feel attracted to sin. I not only can sin, but I have sinned. How could Paul say that that within me which makes me a sinner has been destroyed? Was he teaching sinless perfection?

No, he was not! The word he used here does not mean destroyed in the sense that it ceases to exist. It means to render it ineffective, to deprive it of its power and influence, to strip it of its authority. Sin is still in us as believers, BUT IT NO LONGER IS OUR MASTER. This is its meaning.

Now, because this is true, what effect does it have upon us? "That henceforth we should not serve sin." From that point on and forever sin will not dominate our lives.

This is why the Apostle John could write in 1 John 3:9 (and let me give you a more literal translation of the text),
 Whosoever is born of God doth not go on sinning;
 for his seed remaineth in him,
 and he cannot go on sinning, because he is born of God.

This is what Paul was teaching in Romans 6:6. Christ died not only to save us from eternal judgment, but He died to save us from continuing on in a life of sin. We may still struggle with certain sins, and occasionally fail, but there is no way that we can continue to be what we were.

And so Paul could say what he said in verse 7. (Read.) By death the Lord was freed forever from His enemies. By His death for us we are forever freed from the power of sin within us.

But I said earlier that the effect of the death of Christ not only keeps us from doing some things, sinning, but it enables us to do other things:

B. Living unto God (Rom. 6:8-10).

Again we need to read "if" as since. Paul was assuming that

this is true of us, i.e., that we really know the Lord. And just as life followed our Lord's death, so life follows our death in Him. And just as life most certainly followed the death of our Lord, so it is with us.

Do you remember that when Peter was preaching in Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost following the ascension of our Lord, he spoke of the resurrection of Christ in this way. You will find his words in Acts 2:24:

Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death:
because it was not possible that he should be holden by it.

We know that it was not possible that the Lord would remain dead because He was the Son of God. We also know, as Peter went on to explain, that it was not possible for the Lord to remain in the grave because the Scriptures predicted that He would be raised from the dead. But relate Peter's statement to what Paul taught here in Romans 6 as the death of Christ relates to you and to me. If it were not possible for the Lord to remain in the grave, then it was just as impossible that you and I would not share in the glory of His resurrection both NOW and ~~HEREAFTER~~.

Formerly we were in hopeless bondage to our sins. But Christ died for us, and we died with Him. However, He arose, and we were raised in Him. And so it was not possible that we would remain in bondage to our sins. Instead, we who had no place for God in our lives before now want to live unto Him! What does this mean?

Paul spoke of this with reference to Christ. He was not saying that Christ did not live unto God before His death on earth. But he was saying that in His humanity He demonstrated by His death that pleasing the Father was the one and only purpose that our Lord had. He showed it supremely by His death which was followed by His resurrection, and His acceptance back into heaven at the Father's right hand.

But this also applies to us as believers. By our union with Christ in His death and resurrection, we are now raised with Christ to "walk in newness of life." What is new about our new life in Christ? It is that we not longer are living to please ourselves, nor to do what others may want us to do, but our main goal in life is to please our heavenly Father. Living unto God is living to please God, living to glorify Him, living to do His will.

If we "live with him" (v. 8), then our life will reflect His life. He died for sin, lit., once-for-all. He not only will not die again, nor can He die again, but He does not need to die again. His work is finished. Our salvation is complete.

We are not only saved from God's eternal wrath, but we are saved to live unto Him. There really is no statement which can more perfectly describe the present effect of the death and resurrection of Christ upon us than this statement, living unto God!

Concl: Now let us put these two statements together which we have been considering: "That henceforth we should not serve sin," but that we should live unto God.

To state it another way: That from now on we should not live to sin, but to please God. We no longer are living to satisfy our sinful desires, but do the will of God. We do not want to live unrighteously, but righteously. We do not pursue sinful things, but the holiness of God.

You see, there is a negative side to the godly life. We no longer serve sin. But there is also a positive side: we serve God.

We will see some of the practical implications of this life as we go on in this chapter, but make sure you understand what Paul has written here about our new life. Test yourself to make sure that you have it. If not, call upon the Lord to save you, and do it now. If you see the evidence in your life that you know the Lord, then praise Him, and pray daily that the Lord will enable you more and more each day to do that which pleases Him--not sinning, but living unto God.

Cf. Rom. 14:7-9.

Verses to read after the closing hymn: 2 Cor. 5:14, 15.

LIVING UNTO GOD

Romans 6:11-14

Intro: I hope by this time that we have learned that Paul's subject in Romans 6 is the doctrine of sanctification. He continued with this same subject all through Romans 7, and as far as the seventeenth verse of chapter 8.

Sanctification means holiness. Holiness is one of the major attributes of God. It speaks of His absolute moral purity. Not only is God free from sin of any kind, but He is the essence of all goodness and righteousness.

When we get to the latter part of Romans 8 we are going to learn that we have been predestined by God to be conformed to the image of God's Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. This means that we will some day be perfected in holiness. In that day we will no longer be capable of sinning at all. The Lord Jesus Christ was perfect in holiness as God is even while He was here on earth in the flesh. He was without sin. He did no sin. In Him was no sin. He knew no sin. On the other hand, He always did the things which were pleasing to the Father.

Therefore, we learn from our Lord and from the teaching of Scripture that holiness has both its negative and positive aspects:

- 1) It means to be without sin.
- 2) It means to be positively righteous, conformity to all that is right in the sight of God.

When the Lord saves us, it is His purpose that we be holy. We are told this later on here in chapter 6. Look at verse 19b, and also at verse 22. (Read.) We are not holy like God is, nor as Christ is, but we are headed in that direction. There will always be a difference between us and the Members of the Godhead. That is, we will never be Deity. But it is the will of God that we should be, and will be, like our Lord Jesus Christ is.

This change began to take place in each of our lives when we first came to Christ and were born again. It is a process which will continue on in each of us until we die, or until the Lord comes. What Paul was teaching in Romans 6 is how this is possible, and what we need to do to cooperate with the Lord in this wonderful work of sanctification. Paul's teaching begins with doctrine, and then, in our text for today, he gave some practical exhortations which we are to follow as we pursue a life of holiness. Remember: This does not mean sinless perfection. It means spiritual growth as we seek by God's grace to become more like our Lord. The work

will finally be completed when our bodies are raised and glorified at the coming of the Lord.

But how can we who are sinners by nature ever become holy? How can we even make any progress in that direction as long as we are in these bodies in their present condition?

Paul has been explaining this to us in the first part of Romans 6. He has been telling us that Christ not only died for us, but that:

- 1) We died with Him when He died on the Cross.
- 2) We were raised with Him when He was raised from the dead.

Our justification rests upon the fact that He died for us; He became our Substitute at Calvary. But at Calvary something else was happening. He not only died for us, but we died with Him. Our sanctification rests upon the fact that we died in Him and with Him. We not be able to understand this fully, but we can certainly believe it. I will say more about believing it in just a moment.

However, what we need to understand now is, what is the result of our union with Christ in His death and in His resurrection?

This is stated in the first verse of our text for today:

- 1) We are "dead indeed unto sin."
- 2) We are "alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord."

"Dead indeed unto sin." What does this mean?

Obviously it does not mean that we died to the possibility of sinning. We all know that we can sin, and that we do sin! No, we are not dead to sinning, but we are dead to the bondage of sin. We are no longer the slaves of sin. Sin no longer holds us captive. We can sin, but we do not have to sin. We are free from sin.

Paul expressed it this way in the latter part of verse 6, "...that henceforth we should not serve sin." Look at what Paul wrote in verse 14. (Read.) And then let me read to you verses 17 and 18. (Read.) See his exhortation in verse 19. (Read.) And then finally read verse 22.

And so "dead...unto sin" does not mean that we can no longer sin; it means that sin no longer is our master. We are not the bondservants of sin any longer.

Now, on the other hand, what does it mean that we are "alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord"?

It means we have a new set of desires in our hearts. We have an awareness of the existence of God, and of the presence of God, that we never had before. And we find that through our relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ we have a strong desire in our hearts to please God. Before He was not in our thoughts; now He is! And pleasing Him has become the chief desire in our hearts. We have a new Master, a new Lord.

Now let me say this so that we will all understand. If your profession of faith in Christ as your Savior, and if my profession of Christ as my Savior, has not changed our attitude toward sin, nor put restraints on our sinning, there is a very strong possibility that we are not saved. A person cannot be saved and yet continue on sinning the same way he did before. That is why I reminded you recently of what the Apostle John said about the child of God and sin. He said this:

Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin;
for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin,
because he is born of God (1 John 3:9).

One sure evidence that a person has really been saved is that he does not go on sinning like he did before. Sin bothers him. He has a new desire to please God, and this means not sinning! And remember that we can sin two ways:

- 1) By doing that which displeases God.
- 2) By not doing that which pleases Him.

We call the first sins of commission; we call the second sins of omission.

Paul told the Corinthian believers to examine themselves to make sure they were in the faith, that is, that they were truly saved. Cf. 2 Cor. 13:5. One of the best ways to examine ourselves is to apply the sin test, and at the same time apply the holiness test. They go together.

But now let us turn in greater detail to our text.

I have pointed out to you that the first eleven chapters of Romans is the doctrinal section. And that the last five chapters are the practical section. But I have also mentioned that there are some practical things in the doctrinal section just as there are some doctrinal matters in the practical section. We have now come to some practical matters in this doctrinal section. Notice what Paul wrote in verse 11. We are to "reckon" on something.

I. "RECKON" (Rom. 6:11).

As you read through this verse I think you will see that Paul wants us to "reckon" on two things:

A. That what Paul has been teaching is true.

B. That it applies personally to you and to me.

In verses 9 and 10 Paul was speaking about our Lord; in verse 11 he was speaking about us. And Paul linked the two together with the word "likewise" at the beginning of verse 11.

The meaning is this: If we died and were raised with Christ, then what can be declared of Christ, can also be declared of us in a more relative way, a more limited way. Christ's death was once-for-all, and it will never be repeated. His resurrection also brought Him into a new relationship with God, His Father.

And so it is with us. Our death with Him meant a break with sin. And it also meant the establishment of a new life in which we would be "living unto God," living to please and to glorify Him.

The word "reckon" is an interesting word. It is a word which indicates that we need to do something thinking, thinking about what the Apostle Paul has been saying. And as we think, we need to see how he has arrived at his conclusion. And we need come to the conclusion that he has reached. We may not be able to understand how we could die with Christ, and then be raised with Him, but we need to think about what Paul has taught, believe it, and then be prepared to act in faith upon his teaching.

In other words, we need to make the faith of the Apostle our own!

If he were only speaking as a man, there might be some reason for doubt and even for rejecting what he had been saying. But he was speaking as an Apostle. He was speaking with the direction and authority of God. And so Paul called upon us to do some calculating to see that there is no other conclusion that can be reached. Our Lord died to put away our sin, and therefore we are freed from sin's bondage. He raised to live unto God, and the same has to be true for us. BELIEVING THIS IS THE ONLY FOUNDATION UPON WHICH UPON ANY CHILD OF GOD CAN LIVE A LIFE OF HOLINESS.

Now make sure that you do this. Don't leave here today and forget about Romans 6:11. Make your own calculation. If you believe what the Apostle Paul was teaching, there is no other conclusion that you can possibly reach than the one he has reached. We no longer have to sin; we can live a life that is pleasing to God "through Jesus Christ our Lord." Don't forget Him! It is impossible to become a holy person without

the Lord Jesus Christ!

But Paul gives us a second thing to do. Let me state it in this way:

II. BE RESOLVED ABOUT SIN (Rom. 6:12).

We need to be uncompromising in our attitude toward sin. It is one thing to know that I do not have to sin. But it is quite another thing to say, "By the grace of God I will not sin!"

We still have a sin nature. We still will find that our hearts are attracted by certain sins. Sin will always be trying to regain control of our lives. But we must stand our ground. We must be resolved that by God's grace we will never compromise with sin. We will not give sin any ground. Knowing how weak we are in ourselves, we will pray not only that the Lord will keep us from sinning, but that He will deliver us from temptations to sin.

Let me give you a couple of illustrations of that which it seems to me was on the heart of the Apostle Paul when he wrote this twelfth verse of Romans 6 -- two from the OT, but there are many I could give you from Scripture, both OT and NT.

Do you remember the story of the battle between the kings in Genesis 14 when Lot was taken captive and how Abraham went into action, defeated the hostile kings, and delivered not only Lot but the King of Sodom, the people of Sodom, and even recovered their goods. Melchizedek intervened with Abraham, and that was providential. But the King of Sodom said to Abraham,

Give me the persons,

and take the goods to thyself (Gen. 14:21).

This sounded reasonable. Abraham deserved the spoil. But he recognized this as a trap, and so he responded to the King of Sodom with these words:

I have lift up mine hand unto the Lord,

the most high God,

the possessor of heaven and earth,

That I will not take from a thread

even to a shoelatchet,

and that I will not take anything that is thine,

lest thou shouldest say,

I have made Abram rich (Gen. 14:22, 23).

Have you ever lifted your hand to the Lord saying that by His grace you will not go back to those things which were a temptation to you before you were saved? Abraham was a man

who was determined not to do anything that would grieve God, or rob God of the glory which rightfully belonged to Him.

Take an illustration from the NT.

The other illustration is also taken from Genesis, from the life of Joseph. Do you remember that when Joseph was sold by his brothers in Egypt, he became the servant of Potiphar, one of Pharaoh's officers, the captain of the guard. Potiphar's wife took a liking to Joseph, and continually tried to seduce him. Finally one day they were in the house alone, and she tried to force Joseph to commit adultery with her. Do you remember what he had said previously to her? He said this: **"How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?"** (Gen. 39:9).

There were many things that Joseph would not do, and this was one of them. He was a man committed to do the will of God, and so he never wavered in his determination not to sin.

Paul told Timothy to "flee youthful lusts," and then he added,

...but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace,
with them that call on the Lord
out of a pure heart (2 Tim. 2:22).

If we are not going to let sin reign, we must have other things which safeguard us and take the place of sin.

Finally, Paul gave a third command which he came back to in the remainder of the chapter. It is linked with the second, and yet is more specific. It had to do with what can be described as:

III. THE USE OF OUR MEMBERS (Rom. 6:13, 14).

What are your members? They are the things that belong to you as a person -- your eyes, your tongue, your ears, your hands, your feet, your mind, your heart, your will. Every member of your body is capable to becoming an instrument of sin. Or, they are capable of becoming instruments of righteousness. And whether we sin against God, or please God, is determined by how we use our bodies.

If you really mean business with the Lord, and if I mean business with the Lord, we are going to be careful about how we use our members. "ΥΙΕΙΔ" = "PRESENT" IN ROM. 12:1.

What do you read? What pictures do you look at? What do you watch on television? What kind of language comes out of your heart and out of your mouth? What about your hands, your

feet? What do you think about? Solomon said, "Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life" (Prov. 4:23). And then he added these words:

Put away from thee a froward mouth,
and perverse lips put far from thee.
Let thine eyes look right on,
and let thine eyelids look straight before thee.
Ponder the path of thy feet,
and let all thy ways be established.
Turn not to the right hand nor to the left:
remove thy foot from evil (Prov. 4:24-27).

Solomon was talking about his son's members.

Paul would have us know that if we are really committed to the Lord, we are going to pay careful attention to the way we use the members of our bodies. Failure to be diligent in little things, always leads to sin.

Then Paul added in verse 14... (Read.)

Remember that the grace of God is the only power sufficient to keep us from sin, and to make us holy. The Law does not sanctify. It never has, and never will. It exposes our sin. But sin can only be avoided as we depend upon the sovereign grace of God.

Concl: Cf. Psa. 119:11; 19:14; 139:23, 24.

Make sure that you are reading the Word daily, and meditating on what you read. And then pray that the Lord will not only keep you from using your members wrongfully, but that He will enable you to use your members to please Him in all that you are, in all that you think, in all that you say, and in all that you do. We must seek nothing less than total holiness of life, and God has made provision for such a life in the relationship we have with our Lord Jesus Christ.

SHALL WE SIN BECAUSE WE ARE NOT UNDER THE LAW?

Romans 6:15-18

Intro: There never has been a time when the ministry of the Word has gone unchallenged. We can see that in Scripture as early as Genesis 3 when Satan, in tempting Eve, challenged the word that God had given to Adam. We have many recorded instances in which the Israelites challenged Moses. The prophets were continually challenged, and many of them died because of the messages they preached. Even our Lord Jesus Christ was challenged time and time again by the scribes and Pharisees, sometimes even by his disciples. And we must not think that the apostles escaped such challenges. In the book of Romans, by the questions which Paul raised, we can see reflected in them the opposition which some people had raised to his teaching. He was continually being challenged by those who were not receptive of his teaching. Perhaps sometimes challenges came from those who were really seeking to know the truth, but the point I am making is that the teaching of God's Word will always be challenged. It is not always that people will verbalize it; they will simply go away and not come back.

One doctrine which always seems to be challenged is the truth of the grace of God. Even many who believe in grace will challenge the teacher who does not bring along the Law of God given to Moses. The words of Paul at the end of Romans 6:14 have been the cause of many lively discussions among believers, and sometimes, unfortunately, have result in broken fellowship between those believers. I am referring to Paul's statement, "For ye are not under the law, but under grace."

In Galatians, where Paul was forced to defend the doctrine of the grace of God, he wrote these words in Gal. 3:24, 25:

Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster
to bring us to Christ,
that we might be justified by faith.
But after that faith is come,
we are no longer under a schoolmaster.

In spite of this teaching by the Apostle Paul there are those who want to make obedience to the Law a condition of salvation. And there are others who want to make the Law the major means of our sanctification.

Now let me remind you again that we are in the section of Romans in which Paul was teaching the doctrine of sanctification. And it is here in this section that he wrote, "For ye are not under the law, but under grace."

This had led to the charge against Paul that he was teaching

what today is called antinomianism. This is an English word which is formed from two Greek words, the word _____ which means against, and the word _____ which means law. So antinomianism means against the Law.

I was not satisfied with the definition given in my dictionary which said that antinomianism is "a Christian sect which says that faith alone is necessary to salvation." It is right as far as it goes, but it doesn't go far enough. An antinomian is a term used by people against those who do not think that the Law is a part of our sanctification. They would charge us with teaching that since we are saved by grace, we do not need to pay attention to the moral restrictions of the Law, such as, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me," or, "Thou shalt not bear witness," or, "Thou shalt not covet." To call us antinomian is simply not a true accusation. The people who make this charge against us would have us observe the Sabbath day. They would have us believe that the OT Sabbath is now Sunday, the Lord's day. And yet there is not one word of evidence in the NT that this was the teaching of the apostles. Somehow (and I have never seen even an attempt to explain how this is done) they try to make sprinkling, or pouring, the present-day equivalent of circumcision in the OT. They would have us focus our attention on the covenant that God made with Moses, not with the covenant He made with Abraham. The Law was given to Israel, and, as Paul clearly taught, it was to be in effect until Christ came. But after He came, not even the Israelites are under the Law. Those Jews who still observe the Law do not believe that the Lord Jesus is the Messiah. They are still looking for the Messiah to come. But He has come. He fulfilled the Law, and now we are under the grace of God.

Does this mean that the moral standards of God which were expressed in the Ten Commandments have been set aside? Of course not. It is still wrong to lie, to commit adultery, to steal, to covet, and so on. Paul made it clear that he was not teaching antinomianism in our text today, and he made it clear when he wrote to the Galatian churches, Gentile churches which certain Jewish teachers were trying to bring under the Law. Listen to what he wrote in Gal. 5:13:

For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty;
only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh,
 but by love serve one another.

Paul never taught that if you are saved by grace, then you do not need to be careful about sin. He taught just exactly the opposite--and we have seen this already. A person who is truly saved is free from sin, dead to sin, free from sin's bondage. He no longer is a bondsman to sin. He has been set free, **not free to sin, but free from sin, and free to**

obey God! A true Christian will not use grace as an excuse to go on sinning; he will hate sin and love righteousness because he wants to please God, he wants to glorify God. We don't need to hold the Mosaic Law over people's heads to make them behave themselves. Christ died to deliver us from sin's bondage, and we have the Holy Spirit in our hearts to restrain us on the one hand, and to empower us for righteousness on the other hand. We are not under the Law, but under grace.

Romans 6 is really written to answer two questions. The first is verse 1; the second is in verse 15.

In Rom. 4:20 Paul stated with reference to the grace of God in salvation, that "where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." And so he was challenged by those who were saying then we ought to go on sinning, and sin even more, so that God's grace would abound and God would get greater glory because of our sinning. That is the idea behind his question in verse 1 of this chapter. Such an idea was incredible to Paul. He probably counted it close to blasphemy, possibly even blasphemy. That is not what he was teaching, and the following verse (v. 1) made that clear.

Now at verse 15, after Paul had just stated in verse 14 that we are "not under the law, but under grace," we have:

I. A SECOND QUESTION AND ITS ANSWER (Rom. 6:15).

There are three words that are prominent in this second main question: the words sin, law, and grace. Paul dealt with sin and grace in the remainder of this chapter, and waited until chapter 7 to deal with the law.

The question is this:

What then? shall we sin,
because we are not under the law,
but under grace?

The answer is: "God forbid." Or, let it not be!

The question was so far from representing what Paul was teaching that he was amazed that anyone would ask it, or even think of such a thing! Grace does not give us permission to sin; grace frees us from sin. God does this by His grace and He does not need the Law to complete the job. The Law tells us what sin is. And the Law condemns us because we are all guilty. But the Law neither saves nor sanctifies! If we could have saved and sanctified ourselves through obeying the Law, then the coming and death of Christ was a tragic mistake.

Listen to what Paul wrote in Gal. 3:21, 22:

...for if there had been a law given
which could have given life,
verily righteousness should have been by the law.
But the scripture hath concluded all under sin,
that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ
might be given to them that believe.

So you can forget about the Law as a way of salvation, or as a way of sanctification. And therefore it certainly has no place in our glorification--the three stages of our salvation!

But Paul did not leave them there. He went on to ask another question which is related to the first. It had to do with:

II. A PRACTICAL TRUTH WHICH THEY SHOULD HAVE KNOWN (Rom. 6:16).

Paul was saying here that the way we live reveals who we are and where we are spiritually.

He had exhorted them back in verses 12 and 13 to "yield," or to present the members of their bodies unto God "as those that are alive from the dead." The life precedes the presentation. You cannot give yourself to God, and will not give yourself to God, until you have life, eternal life. Or, to state it another way, until you are saved.

Now everybody is presenting their members either to sin, or to God. There are only these two categories. The world is full of people who are either saved, or they are not saved. There is no middle ground. This does not mean that the people who are not saved are all trying to be as bad as they can. It simply means that they are not trusting in Christ and so they are not concerned about pleasing the Lord. A true Christian wants to please God. He may not do it perfectly, but that is his purpose in life.

So, if you want to know whether or not a person is a child of God, look at the way they live in the light of the Word of God. If they are living for themselves without any regard for whether or not they are pleasing God, they are not saved. If they do want to please God, and are reading the Word to find out how they can please God, they are saved. I am not talking about what a person may do now and then, but the general course of his life. Notice that Paul used the word "obedience" for those who were seeking to please God, seeking to be righteous. It is not doing what we think a Christian ought to do; it is doing what the Word of God tells us to do, or not to do.

If a person gives himself to sin, he is a servant of sin and, therefore, not a servant of God. If he yields himself and his members to obey the Word, seeking to be righteous in his life, he is a servant of God.

I think that when Paul said, as he did in verse 19, "I speak after the manner of men," he was referring to this simple test which all of us need to apply to ourselves.

Now if you search your heart and examine your life and find that you do love the Lord, and His Word, and you are seeking to please Him, then what should you do? Verses 17 and 18 answer that question for us.

III. THANKSGIVING TO GOD (Rom. 6:17, 18).

If we find that we want to please God, and that we want to know His Word so that we can please Him in our daily lives, don't take the credit to yourself! Remember that our new life is ours only because of the grace of God!

"Ye were the servants of sin." That used to be true of all of us just as it is still true of every person who does not know the Lord Jesus Christ as his (or her) Savior.

I read a passage from Spurgeon last Wednesday night to those who were at our prayer meeting in which he expressed why we should hate sin as the Bible tells us to do in many places. It has poisoned our hearts. It has turned us away from God and from Christ. It is responsible for all of the miseries that we experience in this world. It will ultimately lead us to death. It has kept us from seeing what our real need is. It blinds us to the truth. Sin never did anyone any good; it always produces bad things. We may have certain enjoyment in sin, but it is not true joy. It is not a lasting joy. It is a joy which turns to bitterness and regret and often to suffering. Never forget those words, "Ye were the servants of sin." And when you think of them, let them remind you of your need to praise God every day that you live from now on that those words no longer describe you.

John Newton, who lived back in the 1700's, has written many of our hymns. Perhaps you have heard how he was raised in a Christian home in England, left home and went to Africa after getting involved in the slave trade. As time went on he fell deeper and deeper into sin, and he himself became the slave of a negro woman. She used to feed him by throwing pieces of bread under her table, and making him get them like a dog.

In that condition God began to deal with him, and he was gloriously saved. His life was completely changed, and he

went back to England a new creature in Christ. He is the one who wrote,

Amazing grace—how sweet the sound—
that saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found—
Was blind, but now I see.

As a servant of sin, he was, by his own words, a wretch, lost, and blind, spiritually blind. But God sought him by His grace, found him, gave him sight, saved him, and gave him, as he said in this hymn, "a life of joy and peace." He became a mighty preacher of the Word.

The sequel to that story is that over his desk where he spent many hours studying the Word of God, he had this verse written where he saw it every day:

And thou shalt remember
that thou wast a bondman in the land of Egypt,
and the Lord thy God redeemed thee (Deut. 15:15).

He didn't redeem himself. He didn't deserve to be redeemed. He owed his deliverance from sin and shame to the God of all grace.

Our experience has not been like John Newton's, but we were just as hopelessly lost and blind as he was. But God sent His Son to die for us, and then He sought us, and found us, and brought us out of our sin and into Christ. Do you remember the bumper sticker that many Christians used to have on their cars which read, "I found it." That was not true. Salvation is not an "it." Salvation is a Person. Those bumper stickers would have been right if they had said, "He found me."

But how did Paul describe salvation here in our text? It almost seems like he was teaching salvation by works. Note what he said in verse 17, especially the latter part. (Read.) "Ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you."

The NKJV renders this in a slightly different way which most commentators would agree as the true reading. It renders it this way, and notice the difference:

Yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine
to which you were delivered.

Are we saved by obeying something from the heart? Yes, but you need to understand what Paul had in mind by this expression.

In chapter 1, verse 5, Paul spoke of his commission from God in these words,

By whom we have received grace and apostleship,

for obedience to the faith among all nations,
for his name.

Our faith, which comes from God, is really the first evidence given to us that we are really saved. What did Paul mean by the words, "that form of doctrine"?

The word "form" is the familiar Greek word for type, but here it is used of that body of truth which the Apostle's received and taught, the Gospel of our salvation. And the idea here has been well explained by Bishop Moule, a minister of the Church of England in the late nineteenth century and into the twentieth century. Listen to what he wrote.

And here, in a phrase most unlikely of all, whose personification strikes life into the most abstract aspects of the message of the grace of God, the believer is one who has been transferred to the possession of "a mould of Teaching." The apostolic Doctrine, the mighty Message, the living Creed of life, the Teaching of the acceptance of the guilty for the sake of Him who was their Sacrifice, and is now their Peace and Life--this truth has, as it were grasped as its vassals [slaves], to form them, to mould them, for its issues. It is indeed their "tenet" [doctrine]. It holds them; a thought far different from what is too often meant when we say of a doctrine that "we hold it." Justification by their Lord's merit, union with their Lord's life; this was a doctrine, reasoned, ordered, verified. But it was a doctrine warm and tenacious with the love of the Father and of the Son. And it had laid hold of them with a mastery which swayed thought, affection, and will; ruling their whole view of self and of God (The Epistle to the Romans, pp. 173, 174).

God has given us over to His Word. It has mastered us by His grace, making us new creatures. And it continues to hold sway over us, ruling us, transforming us, making us obedient to God's will, and thus leading us into a greater experience of the righteousness of God.

And so what has been the result? Verse 18 tells us.
Being made free from sin,
ye became the servants of righteousness.

Concl: What a marvelous picture of our salvation! God in His grace has given us over to His Word, which tells us of Christ and His redeeming grace and love expressed in His sacrifice for our sins. And it is through His Word, and the message of His Word, that we are made the servants of righteous, being conformed to the likeness of Christ. This is why we can never again be lost. May "God be thanked"!

WHOSE SERVANT ARE YOU?

Romans 6:19-23

Intro: All through this sixth chapter of Romans Paul went back and forth from what we all were by nature, and what we now are by grace. And for both of these he used the Greek word which we could correctly translate, bondservants, or slaves. It is found twice in verse 16, once in verse 17, twice in verse 19, and once in verse 20.

It ought to be of special interest to all of us that this same word is used for the non-Christian as well as the Christian. We were the bondservants, the slaves, of sin; now by the grace of God we have become the bondservants of God and of righteousness.

A bondservant is not a free person. Roman life at the time of Christ and the early church was divided into those who were free men and slaves. People were either one or the other. Philemon was an example of a free man; Onesimus was a slave.

A slave was one who was obligated to do the will of his master. He had no choice in the matter. What his master told him to do, he did, or he faced dire consequences. The master, on the other hand, was free. And so it was his right, protected by Roman law, to have complete authority over his slaves.

And so it is not surprising that Paul, in verse 19, speaks of using this as:

I. AN ILLUSTRATION OF A VERY IMPORTANT SPIRITUAL TRUTH (Rom. 6:19, 20).

Paul was recognizing here how slow we are to take in spiritual truth. We can read things in our Bibles, and hear them taught in church, and yet not really get it. If people understood this truth, they would not talk about "free will." Spurgeon said on one occasion,

Free will I have often heard of, but I have never seen it. I had met with will, and plenty of it, but it has either been captive by sin or held in the blessed bonds of grace (Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit, Vol. 25, p. 374).

Yesterday I guess there was another "Gay Rights Parade" here in Portland. Those people were doing a very ridiculous thing. They were celebrating their bondage. They don't know it, but they are held captive by their sins, and they want the people of our State to give them legal recognition that they are the slaves of sin.

Paul was not talking just about homosexuality; he was talking about all kinds of sin. Some people go in one direction; others go in another direction. But the fact remains that everybody born into this world is not only a sinner, but a slave to sin. We think that we are free, but we are only free to sin. The Devil is our Master, and the chief characteristic of his dominion is sin—that which is abominable in the sight of God.

There are many kinds of sin. Pride is sin. Slothfulness is sin. Foolishness is sin. Religion without Christ is sin. There are respectable sins, and there are disgraceful sins. But all sin God will judge. By Paul's own words it is hard, very hard, to get people to understand all of this, but it is true.

Verse 19 teaches us that one sin can, and does, lead to other sins. And the person who does not know the Lord goes from sin to sin, from lesser sins to greater sins. To be sure he is free to make his own choices, but only in the realm of sin. The reason we have trouble in understanding all of this is because we do not know what it means that God is righteous, and what righteousness is in His sight. When we speak of sin we are speaking of that which is wrong in God's sight. Just because something is legal, doesn't change God's attitude toward it. And to think so is to make a tragic and, possibly, an eternal mistake.

Sin makes us more unclean, more unacceptable, in God's sight. "Iniquity unto iniquity" means more and more lawlessness. And Paul was not talking about the violation of Roman law, but the violation of the laws of God. When you think of sin, think of slavery. Our Lord Jesus Himself said, "Whosoever committeth sin is the servant [the bondservant, the slave] of sin" (John 8:34b).

I hope we all understand that sin is a master and that people by nature are its slaves.

But the opposite is true also. When a person saved by God from his sins, he is liberated from the slavery of sin, but he becomes a bondservant to God! Now I am afraid that not many Christians really understand this truth which Paul was teaching. Paul indicates here that the change that the Lord has made in our lives means that we must give ourselves, give our members, to God now that we are saved, just as we formerly gave ourselves to sin. But again Paul used that same word servants, and said that we are now "servants to righteousness unto holiness" (v. 19b).

A person who is not a Christian can want to be free from his

sin, but he can't. Only the Lord can set him free. But the person who has been saved can still sin, but the fact that he is a bondservant of righteousness means that the Lord won't let him go on in his sin.

A good test for all of us to make is to answer the question, "Does it bother me when I sin?" If it does, that is a hopeful sign as far as your relationship to God is concerned. But the person who can go on sinning, even though he professes to be a Christian, probably is not a Christian. You see, if you are really saved, God is not going to let you go on sinning. You may try, but you won't get away with it. The longer we know that the Lord, the more sensitive we will get to sin, and this is a work of God in our hearts! Therefore, we are to present ("yield") our members as servants (bondservants, slaves) to righteousness unto holiness."

Paul's message to the Corinthian church is the Holy Spirit's message to us today who know the Lord:

What, know ye not that your body is
the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you,
which ye have of God, **and ye are not your own?**
For ye are bought with a price
therefore glorify God in your body
and in your spirit, which are God's.

You will find these words in 1 Cor. 6:19, 20.

We have weakened this vital truth by appealing to believers to make the Lord Jesus the Lord of their lives. If they are saved, he is their Lord! We are His servants! And the more we realize this, and live accordingly, the happier we will be.

At this point, in Rom. 6:21, Paul asked:

II. A VERY HEART-SEARCHING QUESTION, AND HIS ANSWER (Rom. 6:21-23).

This question amounts to a comparison between the life of one who is not a Christian with the life of one who is a Christian. Or to state it another way for those of us who are saved, how does our life now compare with the life which we lived then--before we were saved?

Specifically Paul said, "What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed?" See verse 21a.

"Fruit" means profit or advantage. And so Paul's question means, what sin that you have committed has made you a better person? What sin that you have committed has improved your character? What sin that you have committed would you recom-

mend to others for their improvement? What sin that you have committed has given you lasting pleasure? What sin that you have committed has improved your relationship with God, or with people (whoever they might be)? And if those sins were so good, why are you ashamed of them now? Remember: Paul was addressing believers.

In the book of Proverbs Solomon spoke of those who would not listen to the Lord, who would not seek His counsel nor walk in the fear of the Lord, and this is what he said:

Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way,
and be filled with their own devices.

For the turning away of the simple shall slay them,
and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them
(Prov. 1:31, 32).

Isaiah said this in Isa. 3:10, 11:

Say ye to the righteous, that it shall be well with him:
for they shall eat of the fruit of their doings.
Woe unto the wicked! it shall be ill with him:
for the reward of his hands shall be given him.

Paul wrote in Gal. 6:7, 8,

Be not deceived; God is not mocked:
for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.
For he that soweth to his flesh
shall of the flesh reap corruption;
but he that soweth to the Spirit
shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.

Can you think of a single sin you are glad that you committed, and would do it again if you had the opportunity?

A week ago, I believe it was, I read 1 Chron. 4:10 to the men at our Saturday morning prayer meeting. In it is recorded the prayer of a man by the name of Jabez. This is what he prayed, speaking to the Lord:

Oh, that thou wouldest bless me indeed,
and enlarge my coast,
and that thine hand might be with me,
**and that thou wouldest keep me from evil,
that it might not grieve me!**

And God granted him that which he requested.

Jabez knew that one mark of God's blessing would be that God would keep him from evil. And he also knew that if he wanted to be kept from grief and regret, that God must keep him from evil of any kind.

There is no question but that certain sins produce a temporary pleasure, but it is so short that it is not worth it. When you are tempted to sin, remember Moses. He chose "rath-

er to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season" (Heb. 11:25).

If you are a child of God, you know that you have never committed a sin that you are proud of. Instead, you wish with all of your heart that you had never done anything that would grieve the Lord, and other people, and even yourself. Truly, "the end of those things is death." And it would have resulted in eternal death for all of us if God had not graciously intervened by bringing us to Himself.

Verse 22 describes how different it is in the life of a Christian who recognizes that he is no longer a servant of sin, but is a servant of GOD! (Read.)

How different is the "fruit of holiness"! The happiest people in the world are the holiest people. The more we become like the Lord, the greater will be our joy and our peace.

Be sure that you have in mind the progression of thought which the Apostle Paul has expressed in this chapter:

- 1) By grace we are no longer in bondage to our old master, sin, but we have become the bondservants of God.
- 2) As bondservants we belong to the Lord, and are under His sovereign authority to do His will, which means following after righteousness.
- 3) In order to be righteous, we present our members to God to do His will.
- 4) The result of this is we increase in a life of holiness.
- 5) The end of it all is the full experience of everlasting life when we are finally with the Lord.

But from a practical standpoint, what does this mean for us? How do we learn what the Lord wants us to be, and what He wants us to do?

The answer to that question is easy, isn't it? We have all of that truth in the Word of God, in our Bibles. God has told us in His Word what He wants us to be, and what He does not want us to be. He has told us in His Word what He wants us to do, and what He does not want us to do. More than that, He has given us the Holy Spirit to teach us the Word, and to make it possible for us to obey the Word. The Holy Spirit also teaches us to pray for the Lord's blessing. And so through the help and blessing and power of the Holy Spirit we grow and we make progress throughout our lives toward the holiness which is so pleasing to the Lord. But this pursuit of holiness is a life-long pursuit. Only when we see the Lord will we be what He wants us to be.

So it all starts with our Bibles. We need to be reading them every day. We need to think about what we read, praying that the Holy Spirit would help us to understand. And we need then to do, or not to do, as the case may be, the things that we are learning from the Word of God. It is perfectly clear from Romans 6 that there can be no holiness except through obedience to the Word of God. If we neglect our Bibles, we are only asking for trouble. But what we learn from our Bibles needs to be manifested in our lives.

Do you ever read a passage of Scripture in which the Christian life is being described, and then ask yourself, "Does this describe me?" You and I are not perfect examples of what we read in our Bibles, but we ought to be able to see ourselves in the Word, at least what we are seeking to be.

Cf. what James said in Jas. 1:21-25.

The last verse of Romans 6 really gives us a summary of the whole sixth chapter of Romans.

Remember: There are only two possibilities as far as every person is concerned. We are on the road to eternal death, or on the road to eternal life. "The wages of sin is death." If a person continues ignoring God, and goes on in a life of sin, they can expect the wages of such a life will be theirs: "death." But if you have received the gift of God through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, then you have life now, and when you are with the Lord you will really understand then what "eternal life" really means. What must the Lord's people experience when suddenly they find themselves with the Lord!

Concl: WHOSE SERVANT ARE YOU? Are you still a servant of sin? If the Lord is not your Savior, that's what you are, a servant of sin. But if you have come to Christ, acknowledging your sin and trusting in Christ, then you no longer are a helpless bondsman of sin, but you are a servant of God and of righteousness. Come to Christ today. Seek from Him the forgiveness of your sins. And then make sure that daily you are presenting your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. This is the way of holiness. This is the way to heaven and to eternal life.

FREE FROM THE LAW, MARRIED TO CHRIST
Romans 7:1-4

Intro: Romans chapter 7 has to be one of the most difficult chapters in the Bible--certainly the most difficult in the book of Romans. It is a chapter which deals not only with the law of Moses, but with law as a principle. In verse 1 the parenthesis that we have in the Authorized Version actually reads in the original, "(for I speak to them that know law)," not "the law." He meant that he was talking about law as a principle whether it be Roman law, or Jewish law, or any other kind of law. Everybody knows or should know the nature of law.

The dictionary says that law is made up of the customs or practices of a community which are enforced by a controlling authority. It is binding upon the people in that community, and violators are punished. And so Paul begins with:

I. A UNIVERSALLY ACCEPTED FACT (Rom. 7:1).

And yet Paul asks this question as though they did not know it. They knew it, but in the controversy over the Mosaic Law, they had forgotten this basic fact: A man, woman, or child, in any community, is bound by the law of that community as long as he or she lives. Life would be impossible in any community without law. We all know this to be true.

However, the one thing that frees any person from the laws of his community is death! When a person dies, he no longer has to pay taxes (because taxes are required by law). He no longer has to have a driver's license, or be concerned about the speed limit. Death has removed him from being under the authority which demands of him that he obey the laws of the land. This was true in ancient Rome; it is true of modern Rome. People do not always obey the laws, but they face the possibility of appropriate punishment if they do not keep the law. And usually the violation of particular laws carries with it certain prescribed punishment. We hear it said all of the time something like this, "If so and so is guilty, he is liable to have to pay a \$5,000 fine and spend a year in jail. The most primitive societies have laws that the people are expected to obey. And disobedience carries with it punishment.

What is the purpose of the laws of our city, or of any other city in any other country? It is to make people behave themselves. It is to make them do what is right. And God has established governments for this purpose.

When we get to Romans 13 we will see what Paul wrote about

human governments. After saying that the powers that are in authority are ordained of God, he told the believers of that day that if they resist the power, they will pay for it. Paul said that the government does not bear "the sword in vain" (Rom. 13:4). The mention of "the sword" indicates, as we will see, that governments have the right to take a person's life if his violation is such that the government feels that death is justified. And I might add, that God even holds governmental leaders responsible if they do not punish wrongdoers as they should be punished. Our own government faces the judgment of God on many counts, and one of them is a failure to punish things which are wrong in God's sight. Governments are dealing with people who are sinners by nature, and the best that government can do is to punish violators so that they will not do what they have done again, and that others will be warned when they see punishment carried out. I heard just this past week that years ago when Chicago was threatened with the kind of a riot which destroyed a large part of Los Angeles a short time ago, that Mayor Daley told his police officers in Chicago to shoot to kill if they saw anyone looting, destroying property, or injuring people. And there was no riot! One reason that we have so much crime today is because people know that they can get away with what they are doing.

We have people who say that punishment is no deterrent to crime. But the Word of God disagrees. More than once you find something like this stated in Scripture concerning the punishment of wrongdoers:

So shalt thou put the evil away from among you.
And those that remain shall hear, and fear,
and shall henceforth commit no more
any such evil among you" (Deut. 19:19b, 20).

How long do you and I have to be obedient to the laws of our city and county and state and country? As long as we live. Only death puts us beyond our obligation to keep the law.

Now, even though human government is ordained by God with the God-given authority to punish evil doers, yet we know that there never has been a perfect society. It is going to be better than it otherwise would be if the laws are enforced, but the law never has changed a person's heart. It sets up roadblocks to keep people from doing what they otherwise would do, but it does not change their hearts.

Not even did the law of Moses create a perfect society. The writer of Hebrews tells us very clearly, "For the law made nothing perfect" (Heb. 7:19a). Even if a person cooperated fully with the Law, it could not make them perfect. Something more than that was required.

It is important for a family to have rules and regulations, guidelines for everyone if the family to follow. But making our children obey with the threat of punishment if they do not obey, may make them obey, but it does not change their hearts. The rules are good, and we need them. But more than this is needed. I hope we all understand this.

But now let us go on in our text and look at:

II. PAUL'S ILLUSTRATION (Rom. 7:2, 3).

We need to ask ourselves the question, Why would Paul use the illustration which he did when speaking about the law, or, in speaking about law generally?

One very obvious reason is that the marriage relationship pictures the believer's relationship to Christ, or better still, the relationship which the Church today has to Christ. We will learn more about that when we get to verse 4.

But perhaps there is another reason. From what we are experiencing in our country today, there probably is not more obvious place to illustrate the breakdown of society than in the breakdown of marriages and the breakdown of the home.

What I am going to say now is a little beside the point of this passage, but on Thursday of this week (June 24) I read a very disturbing short article about families in America which appeared in the Oregonian. It said that in 1940 nine out of every ten households were headed by married couples. In 1992 just slightly over half of all American households, actually 55%, "were married-couple families"! This means that almost half of the homes in America are headed by couples who are not married, or by a single parent who has been married and is now divorced, or by single parents who have never been married but have had children. And we know that a growing number of homes are being headed by lesbian women or homosexual men who have adopted children.

This is a national disgrace of the greatest proportions.

And yet let us remember that what Paul was saying here was that law recognizes everywhere that it is right and good in the sight of God for a man to marry a woman, but also that it is the only right thing for them to do to stay married until death removes one of them. In that case, the one who is left is free to marry, but "only," as Paul told the Corinthians, "in the Lord" (1 Cor. 7:39b).

Do you think that Paul was tell the Romans here that nowhere is the inadequacy of law in human life more evident than in

the breakdown of marriage and the home. And that, as the home goes, so goes the city, and so goes the state, and so goes the nation.

Paul wasn't taking up specific problems which can come up in a marriage in this passage. He was using marriage to show that there is common agreement among nations that it was never intended that marriages should break up. But they have. I know very well that sometimes that cannot be avoided. But that is not the point that Paul was making here is that marriage was intended to be a once-for-all relationship, and that the break-up of marriages was never God's purpose in creating Adam and Eve, and then bringing them together as husband and wife. It was God's intention that only death would break the marriage bond.

From this Paul went on to make:

III. THE APPLICATION (Rom. 7:4).

I have said before, and I believe this is the teaching of Scripture, that only the Jews were put under the Mosaic Law. Moses gave the Law to Israel, not to the Gentile nations who lived around them. Back in Rom. 3:19 we read these important words:

Now we know that what things soever the law saith,
it saith to them who are under the law:
that every mouth may be stopped,
and all the world become guilty before God.

God gave every man a conscience--whether Jew or Gentile. And written into our consciences we have an understanding of right and wrong, of things good and things bad. But God spelled it all out for the Gentile in greater detail. He bound them to that Law, and yet that Law did not save them. It did not change them. It only served to condemn them more and more as sinners because they were not able to live up to it.

Let me state it this way: God married them to the Law, the Law of Moses. They were bound to that Law. They were obligated to live up to it. But God never intended that they would be saved by keeping it, and He certainly did not expect that they could be sanctified, made holy, by it. The Law was, as Paul told the Galatians, "a schoolmaster," a disciplinarian, until the promises Redeemer would come. The Law was given to make sure they did what they were supposed to do, but it also pointed them to the need for a Savior Who could not only save them from the judgment of God, but who could make them pure and holy in God's sight.

However, they were married to the Law; how could they be set free from that relationship so that it would be right to enter into another, a better, relationship?

They had to die? Only death can break the marriage bond.

At this point Paul again turned the attention of his readers to CHRIST! In chapter 6 we learned that when Christ died, we died. He not only die for us as our Substitute, taking our place, but we died with Him. We were in the sight of God joined with our Lord in His death. When He died, we died. When He arose, we arose. When He ascended, we ascended. When He was seated at the Father's right hand, so were we--in Him! And so we died to sin. God did not overlook our sin. He placed our sin upon the Lord. And He delivered us, as you have heard it said many times--He delivered us from sin's penalty, He delivered us from sin's power, and some day He is going to deliver us from sin's presence! So sin is no longer our Master; the Lord Jesus Christ is now our Master and our Lord.

But what about the Law?

Paul tells us here in Rom. 7:4 that we "are become death to the law by the body of Christ." When Christ died on the Cross He satisfied every demand of the Law. Every charge against us was cleared away by the death of our Savior. The Law condemned us and demanded our death. Christ died in our place, and now the Law has no claim upon us. By the death of Christ in which we had a part, the marriage relationship with the Law was forever broken, and we are now married to Christ.

Our marriage to Christ is the true, ideal marriage. Our marriages here on earth are to be patterned after the marriage between Christ and His Church. And we are that Church, if we know the Lord. That is why I tell young men who are getting married, "You must love your bride as Christ loved the Church, and gave Himself for it." And the bride is to be submissive to her husband as she is to Christ as one who is a part of His bride.

So by our union with Christ we are not only dead to sin, but we are dead to the Law. Neither one of these statements means that we can go out and live any way we choose to live. We are dead to sin, free from sin, but not free to sin. We are dead to the Law, but only, as Paul said here in verse 4, "that we should be married to another," Christ, and "that we should bring forth fruit unto God."

What is that fruit?

Let me ask another question? What is the fruit of our marriages here in this life? Is it children? If so, what about the couples who can't have children for some reason? Does that mean that if a couple gets married, and then find out that they can't have children, they should get a divorce and marry someone so they can have children? The question itself is ridiculous, isn't it?

Let me say it for all of us to understand. The human family increases and continues through the offspring of married couples. That is God's plan. But the Lord does not give us to each other just because He wants us to have children. He gives us to each other because we need each other, and, as Genesis 1 and 2 make it very clear, a man and a woman are brought together for the way they can help each other in their relationship with God.

What is the fruit of our marriage to Christ? Is it that we bring others to Christ? That certainly can be a part of it. Some of you have heard me quote a servant of the Lord who used to say that "the fruit of a Christian is another Christian." And there is some truth to that. But let us stick with the context of what Paul was saying here.

Remember that there were no chapter divisions in Paul's original copy of his epistle to the Romans. And so we are on good ground when we say that Romans 6 belongs to Romans 7. And in Romans 6 we have this statement at the end of verse 22, "Ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life."

You see, we are married to Christ, joined eternally to Him in the most intimate relationship, and it is His intention, His eternal purpose, that the fruit of our marriage to Him is holiness of character and holiness of life.

The Law shows us what God requires, but it doesn't help us to become holy in character, nor holy in our lives. Only Christ can do that, and it is the result of our fellowship with Him and our walk with Him where He continually is working in us to make us the Bride that He wants us to be.

To prove what I have just said, let me read Paul's instructions to husbands in Ephesians 5, verses 25 through 27, and note how he related it the Lord's work in us, His Church:

Husbands, love your wives,
even as Christ also loved the church,
and gave himself for it;
That he might sanctify and cleanse it
with the washing of water by the word,
That he might present it to himself a glorious church,

**not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing;
BUT THAT IT SHOULD BE HOLY AND WITHOUT BLEMISH.**

Concl: The Lord, of course, is delighted when He uses us to bring some sinner to Himself, but that which pleases Him the most is when we are becoming more like He is, holy in character and holy in life.

How wonderful it would be if we could all speak from the heart the words of Thomas Chisholm's hymn which says,

Oh, to be like Thee! blessed Redeemer,
This is my constant longing and prayer.
Gladly I'll forfeit all of earth's treasures,
Jesus, Thy perfect likeness to wear.

Oh, to be like Thee! Oh, to be like Thee!
Blessed Redeemer, pure as Thou art!
Come in Thy sweetness, come in Thy fulness;
Stamp Thine own image deep on my heart.

THE NEW LIFE IN CHRIST

Romans 7:4-6

Intro: Perhaps some of you saw in the Oregonian a statement which was made by Charles Colson last weekend when he spoke here in Portland. Not all newspaper reports are accurate, but I am sure that this one was accurate. He said, "The job of the church is not to make people happy. It is to make people holy." I agree wholeheartedly with that statement: "The job of the church is...to make people holy."

I don't know what else Mr. Colson may have had to say on the subject, but there are two other things that I would say enlarging upon what he said:

- 1) Holy people are happy people, and the more people are truly holy, the more they will be truly happy.

That is the first thing that we need to emphasize, and it is certainly borne out in Scripture as well as in the lives of people who are seeking true, Biblical holiness.

The other thing that I would point out is that:

- 2) For the most part the twentieth century church is primarily seeking to make people happy.

Her leaders give lip-service to holiness, but their methods are so patterned after worldly entertainers that true, Biblical holiness is not to be seen. The desire to be happy is a selfish desire; the desire to be holy is a godly desire because in being holy we are not seeking primarily to please ourselves, but to please God--and that is what He wants!

From the beginning of Scripture to the end of Scripture it is clear that God wants His people to be holy. He told the Israelites through Moses in Lev. 11:44,

For I am the Lord your God:
ye shall therefore sanctify yourselves,
and ye shall be holy; for I am holy...

And the Holy Spirit led the Apostle Peter to quote those very words in his first epistle, chapter 1, verse 16. And this holiness was to extend to every part of their lives, and our lives, because in the verse before Peter said that this holiness was to extend to every part of our lives. What Peter actually said was,

But as he which hath called you is holy,
so be ye holy **in all manner of conversation.**

The purpose of the church is teach the Lord's people how to be holy. I say, "the Lord's people," because nobody can be holy until they have been saved from their sins. That is the reason that Paul taught justification first here in the book of Romans, and then sanctification, or holiness. You will never find a truly holy person who is not truly saved.

Unfortunately not all people who are truly saved are truly holy. (I keep using the word "truly" because there are many people today who claim to be Christians who have never experienced the saving grace of God. They are not "truly" saved; they only profess to be. On the other hand there are Christians who claim to be holy, but it is not Biblical holiness.) If we are to know what true, Biblical holiness is, we must learn what the Bible has to say on this all-important subject. And I hope that is what we are doing as we consider Romans 6, 7, and half of chapter 8.

Perhaps this is a good place to point out that this is why we have the type of service that we have here at Trinity Bible Church. Our primary purpose is not to make you happy. We are not trying to make you unhappy either, unless it means making you unhappy because of your sins. We would be glad to do that. But we are not here to entertain you. We are here to instruct you in the Word of God. If you are not a Christian, we hope you will be saved. If you are a Christian, we want to see you growing the Lord, becoming a holy Christian, more like the Lord Himself. We sing the old hymns because they are the ones which turn our thoughts to the Members of the Godhead, hymns which reflect the teaching of Scripture. We want our services to be Bible-centered and God-centered, not man-centered. We do not try to attract people with a lot of Hollywood techniques. We want people to know that if they come here they are going to hear the Word of God, and nothing else! If you attract people with a show, the only way you are going to hold them is by continuing to give them a show. We are definitely not interested in that. We want you to know God, and the only way you can know God is through the Lord Jesus Christ, and the only way you can know Christ is through the Word of God. So we teach the Word, trusting God Himself to make the message clear to everyone who comes.

Now let us go back to the subject of sanctification. To be sanctified is to be made holy. To be made holy is to become godly. No person will reach perfect holiness of character and life here on earth as it is now, but every true Christian is to be making progress in that direction. To grow spiritually means to become more holy, more like God wants us to be, more like God Himself. This is really God's purpose in salvation--to make us like Himself.

What have we learned about sanctification so far?

We have learned that there can be no sanctification without Christ, just as there can be no justification without Christ. The foundational truth of both justification and sanctification is our participation with Christ in His death, burial, resurrection, and ascension. I repeat: In the sight of God,

when Christ died, we died. When Christ was buried, we were buried. When Christ arose, we arose. When He ascended, we ascended. When He was seated at the Father's right hand, so were we. He was not only our Substitute, taking our place, but God actually united us to Christ through all that He did, and that is what we mean when we speak of Christians as being "in Christ."

I think that many of you will see that the doctrine that Paul was discussing in those verses is the doctrine of particular redemption. Nobody is going to be saved who did not die with Christ, was buried with Christ, rose with Christ, ascended with Christ, and is now seated with Christ in heaven. On the other hand, everyone who died with Him, was buried with Him, rose with Him, ascended with Him, and is seated with Him, is going to be saved. The Bible does not teach that all men died with Christ. God, from the beginning of time, has been saving those whom He has chosen for salvation, and they are those who have been united with Christ in a union which will never be broken.

Now, because of our union with Christ, we have been freed from the bondage of sin by His death. Sin is no longer our lord, our master. We can still sin, but we do not have to sin. We have a new Lord and a new Master. He is the One Who died for us, the Lord Jesus Christ. He has delivered us from the penalty of our sin, but He has also delivered us from the power and dominion of our sin. We need to know this, and we will not know it unless we learn it from the Bible. That is why we teach the Bible, so both the teacher and the learner will find out about the extent of the death and resurrection of Christ.

When we learn this, we are to believe that this is true, and then we have to start living a new kind of life. We count on this being true, and so we refuse to let sin reign in our bodies, dictating to us to do sinful things which God hates, and we start to present the members of our bodies to God to be used to please Him. This means that we are careful about what we look at. We are careful about what we listen to. We are careful about what we think about. We are careful about the words we use and what we say. We are careful about how we use our hands, and where our feet take us. We see to be and to do what pleases God. And we seek no longer to be or to do that which displeases God.

But then we have been learning something else.

In Old Testament times God put His people, the Israelites, under the Law, the Law of God given to them through Moses. And it seems that it has been the tendency of both Jews and

Gentiles to feel that we are going to be sanctified by the Law. Some people even feel that we earn our salvation by trying to keep the Law. But that is not possible, and that is why Christ came and died.

And so Paul teaches us here in Romans 7 that we are not only dead to sin (as he taught in Romans 6), but that we "are become dead to the law by the body of Christ." We are no longer under the dominion of sin, nor are we under the authority of the Law. What has happened to us?

I. WE ARE MARRIED TO CHRIST (Rom. 7:4).

When God performed the first marriage, He said of Adam and Eve, "And they shall be one flesh" (Gen. 2:24). Paul said the same thing in Eph. 5:31 when he wrote of a married man and woman, "And they two shall be one flesh."

Now we know that when Adam and Eve were married by the Lord they continued to be two people. Adam was Adam, and Eve was Eve. When those of us who are married were married, we did not become one person. We were still two people, and yet, according to Scripture, "one flesh." There is no closer relationship among people on earth than the relationship of a husband and wife. A father and son relationship cannot compare with it. A mother and daughter relationship cannot compare with it. A brother and sister relationship cannot compare with it. A grandparent and a grandchild relationship cannot compare with it. A wholesome relationship like David and Jonathan had cannot compare with it. The husband and wife relationship is the closest relationship there can be among people! They are "one flesh." The one is the counterpart of the other. When there is trouble between a husband and wife, both are miserable. And if one violates that relationship, don't be surprised to see that everything else begins to go wrong.

Our lives as husbands and wives are patterned after the ideal marriage which is that between Christ and His Church. You and I and Christ continue to be separate individuals, but spiritually we are united to Christ in the closest possible relationship. We are married to Christ. We are one with Him, and our oneness with each other is based upon our mutual relationship with Christ. And this is a relationship which will never be broken. There is no truth in Scripture that is more important for us to know, and to act upon, than this truth: WE ARE MARRIED TO CHRIST!

Now let us inquire about:

II. THE PURPOSE OF THAT RELATIONSHIP (Rom. 7:4).

But there is another very important truth that we learned in Romans 6. It is that there is a very practical side to our sanctification, or to our being made holy.

Paul stated that very clearly so there would be no mistake about it: "That we should bring forth fruit unto God."

What is to be the result of our marriage to Christ? We are to "bring forth fruit unto God." What is that "fruit"?

I spoke about this briefly last Sunday. The answer is to be found in Rom. 6:22,

And now being made free from sin,
and become servants to God,
ye have your fruit unto holiness,
and the end everlasting life.

Let me say this as kindly, and yet as strongly as I can, the inevitable result of a marriage relationship with Christ is a holy life. And I am not just speaking of holy actions, but of holy character. Show me a person who is not interested in holiness, who is not interested in becoming like the Lord Jesus Christ, and I will show you a person who is not truly saved. He might be a regular church attender, but he is yet to know the saving grace of Christ. If you are saved, if you by the grace of God have been joined to Christ, you are going to want to be holy. You won't attain it perfectly in this life. You will still fail the Lord from time to time. But you will definitely be headed toward becoming as much like the Lord as you possibly can be.

This part of the chapter concludes in verses 5 and 6 with:

III. A LOOK AT THE PAST AND THE PRESENT (Rom. 7:5, 6).

Notice that verse 5 begins with, "For when we were in the flesh." And then verse 6 begins with, "But we are delivered from the law..." It is like saying, "Then, and now." Verse 5 describes a Jew under the Law of Moses (but remember that the truth applies to Gentiles as well). Verse 6 describes every person, whether Jew or Gentile, who is in Christ, married to Christ.

What can we say about these two, the past and the present?

A. The past (v. 5).

"In the flesh" is a Biblical expression describing a person who is not saved. It speaks of being dominated by the old nature, the flesh. It speaks of that time when we all were in bondage to our sinful nature, when we were the bondser-

vants of sin.

"The motions of sins" is an expression which points to the sinful passions of sins "which were by the law," meaning that they were aroused by the Law, made worse by the Law. The Law, instead of conquering sin, causes a sinner to be more sinful.

Look ahead to Paul's own experience which he described in verses 7 and 8.

The effect of sin in our hearts makes us want to go 65 or 70, or even faster, when the signs along the highway tell us that legally we can only go 55. Tell a child that he has to sit on a chair for 30 minutes because he has done something wrong, and then look to see how often, and in how many different ways he will try to get off of the chair. The Law tells us what is right and what is wrong, but not only does it not help us to do what is right, it provokes us to do what is wrong. If a perfect Law would make people perfectly holy, then Israel would have been a perfect nation. Instead, God told them that they were worse than all of the heathen nations around them. It speaks of the power of sin within us.

However, the worst thing about the passions of sin is that they, according to Rom. 4:5, "bring forth fruit unto death." That is how Paul ended chapter 6, "For the wages of sin is death," eternal death. People can choose to sin all they want to, but they need to know, which most of them don't know, that the road of sin leads to death.

But now let us look at:

B. The present (v. 6).

"We are delivered from the law." Christ by His death satisfied the demands of the Law which called for our death. We died to the Law, and the Law died to us, i.e., the Law no longer had authority over us.

And so where do we stand now? "That we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter."

It is important for us to understand what Paul meant by these words.

If we are "delivered from the law, i.e., the Law of Moses, "that we should serve...not in the oldness," or the old way, "of the letter," meaning the Law again--if this is the case, then are we free to do whatever we want to do? Was Paul teaching antinomianism? Was Paul saying that we can do as we

please?

Definitely not! Nobody is under the Mosaic Law today. The veil in the Temple was torn from top to bottom. The Melchizedek priesthood of Christ has replaced the old priesthood of Aaron. The sacrifices under the Law and the Annual Feast Days are no longer observed. We do not circumcise, nor are we legally bound to keep the Sabbath. The coming, death, and resurrection of Christ put an end to all of that. Now we have a new way. Paul called it here "newness of spirit" in contrast with "the oldness of the letter."

The translators of the KJV decided not to capitalize the word "spirit," but the NKJV, the NIV, and NASB all capitalize it, meaning that those who worked on those versions believed that this was a reference to the Holy Spirit--and I agree with them.

Cf. Rom. 8:3, 4.

I go back to my question: If we are not under the Law, does this mean that we can do whatever we want to do? And my answer is the same: Definitely not! We are the bondservants of Christ. God's purpose for His people in the OT was holiness of life, and that is still His purpose for His people in the NT. But the great difference is that today we are living in what we could call the dispensation of the Spirit. And that holiness of life which could never be attained under the Law is now attainable by the Holy Spirit. The Law did not save; it did not help God's people toward holiness. It condemned. It exposed and aggravated their sin. It showed the people their need of a Savior, but the Law was not their Savior.

Now we have, not the Law made over, but we are under grace! And God's purpose is holiness of character and holiness of life. And by the Holy Spirit this holiness which was not attainable under the Law is now attainable under and by the power of the Spirit of God.

Concl: May God enable us to see our need to obey the Word of God, and so to be growing in holiness, trusting in the Holy Spirit to enable us to do what we could never do in our own strength, becoming more and more like our dear Savior who died not only to save us, but to make us holy.

WHAT THE LAW DID TO PAUL

Romans 7:7-12

Intro: If you are careful in your Bible reading, you will notice that in Romans 7 there is a rather abrupt change in the manner of Paul's writing. Up through verse 6 he had used the words "ye," or you, and "we"; however, starting with verse 7 and continuing on to the end of the chapter Paul spoke of himself personally. And so from that point on we have "I" and "me." Therefore, we can call this section of Romans autobiographical.

Those who have taught and tried to explain this passage have differed as to whether or not it refers to Paul in his condition before he became a child of God, or after. I am inclined to think that it refers to both--first, his reaction to the Law of Moses before he was saved, and then the continuing struggle that he had with sin as a Christian. That is consistent with the fact that we are in that part of Romans in which Paul was dealing with sanctification.

In the passage which we are considering today Paul was dealing with his relationship to the Law before he became a Christian. In the verses which follow we will see next Sunday, the Lord willing, Paul's move from his non-Christian life to his Christian life where we shall see that he still had to deal with the problem of sin.

This section begins with:

I. ANOTHER QUESTION (Rom. 7:7a).

The question and answer method is what Paul has used throughout this epistle, but that has been especially true from the beginning of chapter 6 on. Cf. 6:1, 15; 7:7. And in these three verses we have his strong denial of the question that he has asked: "God forbid." Cf. 6:2, 15; 7:7. He used this expression also in 3:4, 6, 31, and we will see it again in 7:13. The last three times we see "God forbid" in Romans are in 9:14; 11:1, 11. So, in all, it is used a total of ten times.

But what is the question here in verse 7?

"What shall we say then? **Is the law sin?**"

The question arises out of what Paul had said in verse 5, his teaching that the Law, instead of restricting sin, actually increased the committing of sin; it aggravated and increased sin. And so Paul was raising a question which doubtless had been raised with him many times. If people sin more because

of the Law, then the Law must be bad; it must be a sinful document.

II. PAUL'S ANSWER (Rom. 7:7b-11).

He did not let any time go by before stating his answer: "God forbid." Remember this speaks of Paul's amazement and abhorrence at such a thought. It was like he was saying, "Don't even think such a thing!" If the Law of Moses came from God, and it did, it couldn't possibly be bad. But how did Paul answer the question? This is where he became autobiographical.

He said that it was the Law which made him realize what sin was.

Paul was a Jew and, therefore, he was raised on the Law. However, he was also a human being and so, in addition to having the Law, he had a God-given conscience like all human beings have, whether they are Jewish or Gentile. So Paul was not saying that it was through the Law he learned the difference between right and wrong, but that through the Law he learned about sin. What is the difference?

Everybody who is has any honesty at all is willing to recognize that some things are right, and some things are wrong. We all recognize that there are certain things that we ought not to do. We have courts and a legal system to determine what people can do and what they cannot do. But they do not talk about sin! The minute you talk about sin, you are bringing God into the picture--and this is what people object to.

Just before and after Lucille and I were married we were involved in a Christian organization which sought to evangelize high school young people. And the staff constantly had meetings in which we were trained as to how to conduct clubs, how to speak at clubs, etc. And one thing we were told was that we were not to use the word sin. I don't know that they talked about turning people off in those days, but that was the idea. You'll drive young people away, they won't continue to come to the club if you talk about sin. That was my first exposure to that idea.

But people are like that today. You can tell them that they make mistakes, and they will agree with you. You can tell them that they don't always do the right thing, and they will agree with you. But they don't want you to tell them that they are sinners! That is one of the big reasons for the conflict that we have over abortion, and over homosexuality. Christians believe that it is not only wrong, but they be-

lieve that it is sin. I don't always agree with the way some Christians try to get other people to quit such practices and lifestyles, but our problem is that we as the Lord's people are not operating just on the basis of what is good or bad for society, but upon what is right and wrong in God's sight! That which is wrong in God's sight is SIN! You can't call it by any other name.

Now how is it that we begin to call wrong things sin?

It is when we come to the Word of God, and learn what God has taught us there. This is what Paul meant when he said, "I had not known sin but by the law." He knew in his heart that it was wrong to be greedy, and to take advantage of other people to get what he wanted for himself. His heart would have told him that. But when he saw it in the Law of Moses, the law given to Moses by God, then he realized that it was not just wrong; IT WAS SIN! He really saw his desire for things as SIN when he saw that it was prohibited by the Word of God.

But there is something else that we have to recognize from Paul's words here in our text.

I have mentioned that Paul was a Jew, was raised as a Jew. He had a man for his teacher who was probably one of the best, if not the best, teacher of the Law in his day. His teacher's name was Gamaliel. When Paul was defending himself in Jerusalem, he began his defense by saying this. You will find his words in Acts 22:3:

I am verily a man which am a Jew,
born in Tarsus, a city in Cilicia,
yet brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel,
and taught according to the perfect manner
of the law of our fathers,
and was zealous toward God, as ye all are this day.

Paul had been taught the Law just as many Gentiles have been raised in SS, have memorized verses, had heard Bible stories, and have been taught doctrine. But that Word does not do anyone any good unless the Spirit of God is showing us what the truth means. Paul must have memorized large portions of Scripture, but the Lord had not opened his heart to the truth. Many of us have been in church all of our lives, but the truth did not begin to mean anything to us until the Holy Spirit began to deal with us, to show us the truth, to guide us into the truth. When He did that for us, then we began to see that this book is the Word of God. It is not just a collection of religious ideas and moral precepts which have developed over the centuries, but that it is the infallible and unchanging Word of the eternal God.

We don't know when the Lord began to do that for Saul of Tarsus (who became Paul, the Apostle), but we know that God was certainly at work in his heart when he was struck down as he approached the city of Damascus, and he was never the same again. The Hebrew Scriptures suddenly came to life for him, and we should not be surprised to read the words which we find in Acts 9:20:

And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues,
that he is the Son of God.

What am I saying?

I am saying that we not only need the Bible, but we need the work of the Holy Spirit to show us that the Bible is the Word of God. When we see that, we will come to Christ, and from then on will not be content just to speak about right and wrong, but we will be talking about sin and righteousness. Paul knew that he was not supposed to covet, but when the Spirit of God opened his eyes to see that coveting was wrong because it was sinful in God's sight, he entered into a new life.

Don't believe the people who tell us that we should not mention sin to those who do not know Lord. Nobody will really come to Christ for salvation until he, or she, realizes that he is a sinner, one who is an offender against God, and, therefore, under divine judgment.

But this was not all that Paul had to learn. He had to learn that the Law was not his Savior. Instead, the Law aroused in him more sin, and he saw things in his life as sin which he had never thought of in that light before. Look again at verse 8. (Read.)

Now that he looked upon coveting as sin, sin in God's sight, he found that his newly gained knowledge, instead of lessening his desire for forbidden things, increased his desire. And it worked in him "all manner of concupiscence," all manner of lust. It was like his whole being was set on fire with lust, with coveting.

When we think of lust, we usually think of sexual immorality, but let me read the commandment to you from 20:17:

Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house,
thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife,
nor his manservant, nor his maidservant,
nor his ox, nor his ass,
nor any thing that is thy neighbour's.

We have an expression for this. It is called keeping up with the Joneses. A twentieth century version of this would be that we are not to covet our neighbor's house, nor his wife,

nor his bank account, nor his automobiles, nor his boat, nor his vacation time, nor his TV's, nor anything else that he has. The opposite of coveting is contentment, and we are to be thankful for what the Lord has given us, but not to be dissatisfied because we do not have what our neighbor has.

When all of this lust was stirred up in Paul's heart, what was he learning. He was learning that he was not only a sinner, but that he was a big sinner. But more than that he was learning that he was not only a sinner in action now and then, but that he was a sinner by nature. His difficulty in the sight of God was far greater than he at first thought that it was.

"For without the law sin was dead." By this he meant that he did not really know about sin until he really came to understand the Law of God. He did not think in terms of sin as long as he really did not know the law.

But then he added in verse 9

For I was alive without the law once:
but when the commandment came, sin revived,
and I died.

Charles Hodge (Romans, p. 224) said that if, when Paul said that sin was dead, he meant that he was not aware of sin, he had no fear of a future judgment, but was happy and felt secure, then by speaking of sin being "revived" he must have meant that he was suddenly made aware of his sin and that he was a sinner, and he entered "a state of misery arising from a sense of danger and the consciousness of guilt." The Word of God takes away from us our feeling of self-esteem and self-love, and we see ourselves as guilty before God and not only in danger of divine judgment, but completely worthy of it.

And all of this completely changed his idea about the Law, as he said in verse 10. (Read.)

In Luke 10 we have the story of the lawyer who came to Jesus asking Him what he could do to inherit eternal life. The Lord asked him what the Law said. And so he replied, and his words are found in Luke 10:27:

Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart,
and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength,
and with all thy mind;
and thy neighbour as thyself.

The Lord answered in verse 28,
Thou hast answered right:

this do, and thou shalt live.

And then Luke tells us that he was trying to justify himself

and so he asked who his neighbor was. That lawyer had not come to the place where Paul was when he was able to say as he did in verse 10 of our text,

And the commandment, which was ordained to life,
I found to be unto death.

If a person is to save himself, he must keep the Law perfectly. But nobody can do that. No one has ever kept the Law perfectly except our Lord. So instead of being able to earn life, Paul knew that he stood condemned before the Law of God as a guilty sinner deserving of eternal judgment.

What had happened? Sin had deceived him into thinking that he could earn his own salvation. Instead, in the light of the Law of God he stood utterly condemned, completely unable to attain salvation. He finally had come to see himself as he really was. For the first time in his life Paul came to see that what he needed was a Savior.

What a powerful testimony we have here! And how wise the Spirit was to lead Paul to tell his own story of how he came to see his need of Christ! You see, we are not talking about a man who lived in sin and sought to satisfy his lusts to the greatest degree. We have here the testimony of a deeply religious man. Listen to the testimony which he gave to the Philippian church:

If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof
he might trust in the flesh, I more:

Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel,
of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews:
as touching the law, a Pharisee;
Concerning zeal, persecuting the church;
touching the righteousness which is in the law,
blameless.

But what things were gain to me... (Phil. 3:4b-8).

If anyone could possibly have gotten to heaven by his good works, Paul would have been a serious candidate. But his heart deceived him into thinking that he could make himself acceptable to God. However, when the Lord began to show him what the true meaning of the Law was, that you not only need to be clean outwardly, but inwardly as well, he knew that he had been going in the wrong direction, and trusting in the wrong things. It was then that he was drawn to Christ.

Before I close let me speak briefly about verse 12. Here we have:

III. PAUL'S CONCLUSION ABOUT THE LAW (Rom. 7:12).

Read these words, and marvel at them. The question he had raised was, "Is the law sin?" Was the Law sinful in God's

sight because it exposed Paul to be a sinner, under divine judgment, and deserving of eternal punishment.

Paul's conclusion was, "No! It is not sinful. It is "holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good." Why would he come to such a conclusion? Because it was through the Law that he saw himself to be sinner, and through the Law that he first realized that he could not save himself with any amount of good works, but that what he needed was Christ, the Savior. Whatever exposes to my own heart my sin has to be "holy, and just, and good."

Concl: Yesterday at the close of our Saturday morning men's prayer meeting Dr. Lockwood led us in singing a hymn as he always does. The hymn that he chose is #584 in our Trinity Hymnal. I was greatly blessed by the words, and I want to read to you the second and third stanzas as I close. They go like this:

By grace alone shall I inherit
That blissful home beyond the skies,
Works count for naught, the Lord incarnate
Hath won for me the heav'nly prize.
Salvation by his death he wrought,
His grace alone my pardon bought.

By grace! These precious words remember
When sorely by thy sins oppressed,
when Satan comes to vex thy spirit,
When troubled conscience sighs for rest;
What reason cannot comprehend,
God doth to thee by grace extend.

The Law excludes and condemns the best of us; the grace of God opens the door to salvation for the worst of us. But whatever our condition might be, only by the grace of God can we be saved.

How do I know? Because the Word of God says so. Cf. Eph. 2:8, 9.

Do you know the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior? If not, perhaps as I have been speaking you have realized that He is drawing you, calling you, to Himself. Come today. Believe in Him. He died not to help the self-righteous; He died for sinners. Only He can save you, and He will not turn you away if you will come to Him.

INOWELLING SIN

Romans 7:13-18

Intro: This past week, perhaps like many of you, I read Psalm 19. It was one the Psalms included in our schedule of reading through the Bible in a year. Psalm 19 is a Psalm which speaks of two ways in which God has revealed Himself. Both of these ways are included in Paul's letter to the church at Rome which we are presently considering in our Sunday morning services. God has revealed Himself in nature.

The heavens declare the glory of God;
and the firmament showeth his handiwork.

This is how the Psalm begins.

After continuing along that line in the first six verses, David, who wrote Psalm 19, begins to use various OT terms which describe the Word of God: "law," "testimony," "statutes," "commandment," "fear of the Lord," and "judgments." And then speaking of how valuable the Word of God is, and how delightful it is, David said this:

Moreover by them is thy servant warned:
and in keeping of them there is great reward.

If you will think about that verse for a moment, and about warnings in the Scriptures, as well as promised rewards, you will realize that the Scriptures warn us against things that are displeasing to God, and they encourage us to do that which is pleasing to God.

This is just another way of saying that the Scriptures warn us again sin, and they promise blessing for that which is good and righteous in God's sight.

David, of course, was speaking as a child of God. He was not saying that anybody can take the Word of God and do the good and avoid what is wrong in God's sight. More is involved than that. There is no possibility that we can do the good or avoid the evil until our hearts are changed by God through the Gospel, but, as our text will show us today, even when a person knows the Lord there are still problems that we have in doing God's will, and avoiding those things which displease God. One major reason that people in the world do not understand the attitude of the people of God toward certain things is because they are ignorant of God's Word, and so are not acquainted with the warnings, nor with the promised rewards. It is God who determines what is right, and what is wrong. And until a person learns that he is going to be making the wrong choices all of the time. No man is free to do whatever he wants to do. As God's creatures we are responsible to Him, and we all will suffer the consequences of doing that which is wrong in God's sight.

And let me say again that our responsibility to God has both positive and negative aspects. It means that we are not to do what displeases God, but it is just as important to understand that we are to do what does please Him. Therefore, it is extremely important that we understand that there is such a thing as sin, and what it is!

This is what Paul wrote about in Romans 7.

Last week, in verses 7 through 12, we saw that this was God's purpose in giving the Law to Moses. It spelled out in specific terms what some of the major and basic sins are. In these verses Paul was describing his own experience, and how he came to realize that he was not only imperfect, and that he himself failed now and then, but how he was a sinner in God's sight. And being a sinner he was condemned to death. He was under divine judgment! And this is what caused him to realize that he needed a Savior.

As I have mentioned to you before, I am re-reading the first volume of the life of Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones. I know that many of you have read it, but, if you haven't, you certainly ought to read it.

In it you will find a chapter on Revival, and there his biographer brings out how Dr. Lloyd-Jones, early in his ministry as well as throughout his ministry pointed out the failure of preachers to preach in such a way so that people would be convicted of sin! He was accused of being negative in his ministry, but that did not bother him. He knew that people would not seek the Savior until they were convinced that they were sinners under the judgment of God. Dr. Lloyd-Jones did not seek to console people into believing that everything was all right when he knew that they were not all right; he sought to lay the truth of God before them so that they would see their need.

Those of us who know anything at all about the Word of God cannot find fault with the way Dr. Lloyd-Jones preached. We can see from the book of Romans in the Bible that Dr. Lloyd-Jones learned how to preach from the Apostle Paul.

Today we are going to see that in the verses we will consider in Romans 7 that the problem of sin is far greater than we at first might think. And let me again use as my first point a heading which I have used repeatedly throughout this chapter. We have in verses 13, 14:

I. ANOTHER QUESTION AND ITS ANSWER (Rom. 7:13,14).

We can see that Paul was a very careful and clear thinker by

the questions he anticipated from his readers, but, as I have pointed out before, he probably was also raising and answering questions which people had asked him before.

In some ways this question was similar to the question recorded in verse 7. The difference is that in verse 7 he was asking if the Law were sin because it convicted him of sin; in verse 13, after showing that the Law was "holy, and just, and good," he here raised the question, Was the good Law of God responsible for the sentence of death which was upon him?

His answer again is, "God forbid," perish the thought, let no one think such a thought!

The culprit is not the Law, but sin! The Law was what God used to make the Jewish people see that sin was not just sin, but that it was very bad sin, or as it is translated in verse 13, "exceeding sinful." The Law showed that sin had gotten out of control. The Law does not show that man is just morally sick, but that he is spiritually dead!

And Paul added to his explanation in verse 14.

Robert Haldane, in his commentary on Romans, pointed out that when Paul said, as he did at the beginning of verse 14, "For we know," he was using an expression in which he meant to convey that what he was about to say needed no proof.

"The law is spiritual" -- That is, it has come from God. It has been revealed by the Holy Spirit, and it is enforced and applied to the hearts of men by the Holy Spirit. It was another way of saying that "the law" is the Word of God--no question about it!

On the other hand Paul said, "I am carnal, sold under sin." Although he was a creature made by God, yet in his present state he, like all men, was "carnal," subject to the defiling influence of an evil nature, and held in bondage to his sin. And it was through the Law that Paul had come to understand this. He was acknowledging what he was by nature before God! And it seems that Paul was also implying in this verse that there was in him, in his very nature, not only an aversion to the Law, but a feeling of antagonism toward God Who would place such restraints upon him.

However, here it seems that he was speaking as a believer, and this statement of truth was at the same time a complaint about his condition, but, nevertheless, an admission that it was true. The Law was one thing; he was something entirely different and incapable of bringing himself into agreement with the Law because of his sin.

Last week I pointed out to you that Paul was speaking in the first person singular, making this passage from verse 7 on autobiographical. Let me point out something else to you. Have you noticed that Paul spoke of sin (singular) in this passage, and not sins (plural)? What does this mean?

It means that Paul was not just speaking about sinful acts (sins), but about his nature (sin) which produced sinful acts (sins). And this is where Paul is leading us a step further in our understanding of sanctification.

You see, we are sinners in practice because we have a sinful nature. And if we are to make progress in holiness, in sanctification, something must be done about our sin nature. It is not taken away when we are saved, and that is why it is still possible for a Christian to sin. As Christians we continue to have trouble with sins because we still have a sin nature.

"Sold under sin" -- It may be that there is a relationship between this expression used by Paul and that which is stated about Ahab, the wicked king of Israel in 1 Kings 21:20. The prophet Elijah told him,

I have found thee:
because thou hast sold thyself
to work evil in the sight of the Lord.

And then in verse 25 of 1 Kings 21 we read this:

But there was none like unto Ahab,
which did sell himself to work wickedness
in the sight of the Lord,
whom Jezebel his wife stirred up.

When Paul said that he was "sold under sin," as we are, too, that he was saying that our sinful natures give us an inclination toward and a preference of sin. People will often complain about the consequences of their sin, but not want to quit sinning. We as Christians still feel the tug on our hearts toward sin, and it is very strong, too strong for any of us to handle in our own strength. But you will never hear a non-Christian speaking like Paul does in verses 15 and 16 of Romans 7.

What do we have in these two verses?

II. PAUL'S SPIRITUAL CONFLICT (Rom. 7:15, 16).

The word translated "allow" is the common Greek verb which is usually translated know. But probably here it carries with it the idea of understanding, or in this instance, not understanding. So we could translate this verse as it is translated in the NIV:

I do not understand what I do.
For what I want to do I do not do,
but what I hate I do.

How many times have you and I said something like this about ourselves? We can't figure ourselves out. We know that we should not do something, and we don't want to do it. Actually we hate it! But then we go on and do it anyway.

Then look at what Paul said in verse 16.

If he does that which he did not want to do, and did not intend to do, and even does it over and over, his very restraint is a testimony to the fact that he agrees with the Law which prohibits such an act.

Paul obviously was speaking here as a believer. We all have had the kind of an experience which he was talking about here. We do things when we know at the time we should not be doing, and really do not want to do, but somehow we find that we are not really in control. But the conviction we feel after doing these things shows that we believe that the Law is right--which is what Paul has been saying. So the fault is not with the Law; the fault is within us.

And so in verses 17, 18, while we do not as yet have the solution to Paul's struggle with sin, we do have:

III. THE SOLUTION TO HIS DILEMMA (Rom. 7:17, 18).

What Paul wrote in verse 17 he repeated in verse 20. (Read.)

Now you do not learn in secular psychology and secular psychiatry what Paul teaches here, because the behavioral specialists do not talk about sin. But God does! We have an evil nature which not only causes us to do the wrong things which we do, but which overpowers and controls our behavior beyond anything that we can do. Paul's problem was INDWELLING SIN. And that is our problem, too. We are new creatures in Christ which makes us desire to please God, but we have an overwhelming and overpowering sin nature which opposes every attempt we make to please God. And if we are left to our own resources, we will continue to fail.

When Paul speaks of "the flesh," he is speaking of all that we are apart from Christ. We as believers have a new nature which seeks to please God, but in our "flesh," our old nature, there is nothing which is "good" in the sight of God, not one thing! Therefore, reformation is not the answer for sanctification anymore than it is for justification. The answer to our need for deliverance from indwelling sin is to

be found in God, and particularly in the ministry of the Holy Spirit. And that is what we will learn in Romans, chapter 8.

Concl: You see, Paul did not intend for us just to take a few verses, and then let a week go by before we get back to the text of Scripture again. He intended for us to keep right on reading until we got through the whole epistle. But if we did that we would be here a very long time and we would hurry over verses which we need to give some time to in order to understand the message of the Apostle.

However, let me give you the answer so that I have sent you away by pointing out the problem without giving you the solution.

Please look with me at verses 24 and the first part of verse 25 as we close today. (Read.)

Who will deliver us? God does it; we don't do it for ourselves. He does it through our Lord Jesus Christ. And we will see as we get into chapter 8 that this is all through the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

The work of sanctification is a work that, from a practical standpoint, is never finished in this life. It will never be finally completed until we are in our glorified bodies where there will be not even the slightest trace of sin. But as long as we are here on earth we will need to grow, we will need to continue to trust the Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, to continue to deliver us daily from the world, the Devil, and the flesh! But how thankful we can be that They have made provision for our victory here and now. There will still be times when we will fail the Lord, but the closer we walk with Him and the more we trust Him, the greater will be our victories and the more we will be able to live to the praise of God's glory.

May God enable us to understand what we have seen today, and to walk in such fellowship with the Lord that our times of failure may, by His grace, become fewer in number.

VICTORY THROUGH CHRIST

Romans 7:19-25

Intro: Ever since we began considering chapter 6 we have been in that part of the book of Romans in which Paul discussed the great doctrine of sanctification. This doctrine describes how God works in our hearts from the time we are first saved to make us like Christ, which is the purpose of our salvation. To be like Christ is to be made holy, and not just holy in our behavior, but holy in our character.

However, we learn in these chapters that the change from what we were to what God wants us to be, is not easy. Every Christian soon learns that he is engaged in a life-long struggle, or warfare.

Taking Scripture as a whole, we learn that we have three enemies which oppose us in our desire to be holy. They are:

- 1) The Devil.
- 2) The world.
- 3) The flesh.

Paul mentioned all three of these in Romans. For the world, see Rom. 12:1, 2. For Satan, or the Devil, see Rom. 16:20. But there is no doubt but that his emphasis in this section on sanctification is on the flesh.

Sometimes when the word flesh is used in Scripture it refers to our bodies. But the meaning that we are concerned about in seeking to understand the doctrine of sanctification is the old, corrupt, sinful nature which is in everyone of us. This is what Paul had in mind when he spoke of sin dwelling in him, or as we read in our text for today, verse 18, where he wrote, "For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing." And so it would seem that Paul would have us to understand that while the Devil opposes everything that we do to become holy, and the world gives us absolutely no encouragement, but many hindrances, yet the big obstacle to our becoming a holy people is the sin nature which we all have. We were all born in sin. We are sinners by choice because we are sinners by nature. Salvation does not change this old sinful nature. It is not eradicated. We will have it until we die. But the wonderful fact of Scripture is that God has provided for our victory over our sinful nature. In the verses of the latter part of Romans 7 Paul tells us, beginning with verse 7, how he came to understand God's provision for his victory over sin. And his answer continues on into the first seventeen verses of chapter 8. Today we will be concerned mainly with verses 19 through 25. Let me read those verses, only I will begin with verse 13 to pick up the thought of the Apostle Paul.

(Read Rom. 7:13-25.)

In verse 18 Paul related the fact that he had learned some very important things about himself as a Christian.

The first was, as I have already mentioned, that his old sinful nature had nothing good in it.

The second was that by the miracle of the new birth which he had experienced by the grace of God, he could say that he had a real desire to do the will of God. Notice his words, "For to will is present with me." You will never hear a non-Christian saying anything like that.

The third thing that he learned was that when it came to doing the will of God, he did not have the answer. And here I am referring to his words, "But how to perform that which is good I find not." He wanted to do God's will, but he found that he had trouble in doing what he wanted to do. In fact, he found it impossible! He found that he was always doing what he did not want to do, but not doing what he wanted to do, and what he knew that God wanted him to do.

And so, as we begin in verse 19, we find Paul continuing:

I. THE EXPLANATION OF HIS DILEMMA (Rom. 7:19-23).

This is really a continuation of what he had already said in verse 15. (Read.)

Paul found, according to verse 19, that the good that he tried to do failed, and, instead, he found himself continually doing the evil which he did not want to do. Notice he was not talking simply in terms of what was right and wrong, but what was good and evil. Earlier in the chapter he had told us how he came to look upon the wrong as sin, and so, consistent with that, he called it "evil" here in this verse.

Another way of saying what we have in verse 19 would be that as much as he sought to do what was pleasing to God, he found himself continually doing the opposite: displeasing Him.

Verse 20 is practically a repetition of verses 16 and 17. (Read and compare.)

Paul's experience made him realize, as God gave him the wisdom to understand it, that if he continually was doing what he did not want to do, and what he earnestly sought to keep from doing, then there must be a force, a mighty power within him, which kept getting the best of him, and over which he had no control!

This is true of everyone, whether Christian or not. But nobody but a Christian is really capable of understanding what is going on within him. A non-Christian, as well as a Christian, may have some success in dealing with certain sins, but it is like the dikes along the Mississippi River; they may hold in some places, but break through in others. But the natural tendency that we all have is to try to correct the problem by ourselves.

That is true of salvation, isn't it? When a person realizes that he needs to get right with God, the first thing he does is to try to make himself right. But that cannot be done. And so everyone who has ever been saved has had to come to the place where they see that only God can save them, and then they are ready to listen to the Gospel.

And we as Christians go through the same process where sanctification is concerned. We struggle with sin. We do all that we can to keep ourselves from sinning. But all we do is to fail. When we finally see our hopelessness, we are in a position to listen to the Word of God to learn what the problem is, and what God's answer is.

So what did Paul learn? Read verse 21.

He discovered "a law."

He was not speaking here about the Mosaic law. He was speaking of a mighty force within him which was impelling him to do the wicked things that he was doing. This had always been true of him, but he did not understand this until he became a Christian. Perhaps he had felt, like most people do, that all that is required to do good in God's sight was to want to do good. But he had to learn as a Christian that this was not enough. And this is what he went on to say in verses 22 and 23.

Verses 21, 22, and 23 give us some very important truths. If you will look carefully at these three verses you will see that Paul refers to three laws. Let me point them out to you, and they give you a definition of each one.

First, the law that Paul mentioned in verse 21 he names in verse 23 as "the law of sin which is in my members."

Second, "the law of God" in verse 22 had to do primarily with the Law given to Moses, but even in the OT you will find that the term law was later applied to the prophets and the Psalms. It became a term which actually referred to all of the written Word of God.

Third, Paul spoke of "the law of my mind." Paul's mind, like our minds, was the place where he understood the truth of God, where he expressed love for the Word of God, and where he willed to do the will of God.

Now he speaks of these as laws because they each exercise a powerful influence, or force, upon us, which impels us, or compels us, to a certain course of action.

Our flesh, our sinful natures, commit us to a sinful course of action. The Word of God has a powerful influence upon our lives impelling us to the opposite course of action, a righteous course, one which is pleasing to God. In an unbeliever, the mind is sympathetic with the flesh, the old nature. But when a person is saved, his sympathies and desires are toward pleasing God and toward obeying His Word. So the law of the mind, the direction that a person's mind wants to take him, is determined by whether or not that person is not a Christian, or is a Christian. To state it another way, it is determined by whether or not a person is a child of God.

What did Paul say about himself?

Read verse 22.

Now nobody but a child of God could say this! Before Paul was saved he was extremely zealous for the traditions of his fathers, but afterwards he delight turned to the Word of God, and that is what he immediately began to preach in Damascus. There had been an inner transformation in his life. He was "a new creature." He was saved, and he desired to live a new kind of life, that which he called in Romans 6:4, "newness of life." Therefore, as a child of God he delighted in the law of God, in the Word of God.

What does it mean to delight ourselves in anything?

The Psalmist said in Psa. 119:174, "Thy law is my delight." And in verse 24 of the same Psalm he said, "Thy testimonies also are my delight and my counsellors." To delight ourselves in anything means that we take great pleasure in it; we find great satisfaction in it, and, in the case of the Word of God, we want it to be the directing force in our lives. To Paul it meant that more than anything else he wanted to be what God wanted him to be, and to do what God wanted him to do. His mind was focused upon being obedient to God's Word. He loved the Word of God. This is all the language of one who has really experienced the transforming power of God in his life.

So in his mind he wanted to live under the controlling

influence and power of the Word of God. Why, then, didn't he live that way?

He saw that there was another "law," another mighty power at work in his heart. And this other "law" was continually "bringing" him "into captivity." It was "the law of sin which" was "in" his "members."

And so that "law" which controlled and dominated his life before he came to know the Lord Jesus Christ as his Savior, continued to exercise an overpowering influence in his life. And it seemed that it was greater than either the law of God or the law of his mind. Or, to say it another way, it was greater than the power of God and certainly greater than all of the self will and determination that Paul could muster up.

II. THE EFFECT UPON PAUL (Rom. 7:24).

If you remember when you first became a Christian, do you also remember how your hopes were at an all-time high that from that time on things were going to be altogether different for you, that the skies would always be bluer and the grass always greener? But then what happened?

You felt like Paul expressed himself here. You experienced a wretchedness which you had never known before. You were miserable! Things had looked so good, but afterwards you were completely disillusioned. Things that had been a temptation and problem to you before, were still a problem. You found yourself failing where you had failed before. You were really in despair, and you could not see how you could ever be delivered from the awful, awesome power of your sins. Perhaps you had come to the Lord only after you had tried everything else which had failed you, and now it looked for the time as though the Gospel was no better than anything else.

There is probably no wretchedness on earth that is greater than that which Paul had felt at this time in his life, wanting to please God, and yet never able to be continually successful in doing it.

I doubt if there has ever been a Christian who has not experienced this. In fact, if you have not experienced this, you ought to examine your heart very carefully to make sure that you are really saved.

But now let us ask, Why is it that the Lord let us experience such a letdown, such discouragement in our relationship with Him?

I think there is one main answer, and it is implied in what Paul wrote in verse 25 where we have:

III. THE ANSWER TO HIS DILEMMA (Rom. 7:25a).

You see, as I have said, when we see our need of salvation, the first thing that we try to do is to save ourselves, or to make ourselves worthy of salvation. And the same is true of sanctification. When we come to the Lord we begin to see all of the things in our lives which are not right with Him, and so we try to sanctify ourselves. We know nothing of trusting the Lord in our daily lives, and so the Lord let us fail until we see that He is the only One Who can sanctify us!

Do you see what Paul wrote in verse 25? (Read the first part of the verse.)

God's Word is true, and it is powerful (as Heb. 4:12 says that it is). But we need to learn that it is God Who uses His Word in our lives, and He never does anything for us, either justifying us, or sanctifying us, but what He does it "through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Haven't we learned that when He died, we died in Him? When He was buried, we were buried with Him? And when He was raised, we were raised, and now by faith we live in Him? Christ is our Savior, but He is also our Lord and our Life. And when we stand in His presence, all of the glory for our justification and our sanctification will be given to God and to Christ, with none of it coming to us!

Some who have taught this passage think that Paul was speaking here of what will take place when the Lord comes again and we are forever delivered from the power of sin. I am sure that he had that in mind, but I am equally sure that the Lord would not point us to the future and leave us for the present in our wretchedness. If we had not prospect for victory now through Christ, how miserable we would be! But we do have hope. We can believe that the Lord can give us victory over our sins now. But it is only through a continuing faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

But then you might say, what did Paul mean by the latter part of verse 25. (Read.)

I believe that with these final words of chapter 7 Paul was giving each of us:

IV. INSTRUCTION FOR OUR REMAINING DAYS ON EARTH (Rom. 7:25b).

It seems to me that Paul was saying that, as long as we live, we are going to face the same warfare with sin. Our sin nature is not going to be taken away. The battle will continue. Our flesh will always be responsive to sin, but by God's grace we can effectively and continuously serve "the law of God," which means doing the will of God and living so as to please God.

Concl: You see, the Christian life is not like a computer program, where you punch the right buttons and you get the response that you want. The Christian life is a relationship with a Person, our Lord Jesus Christ. We have nothing apart from Him, and we cannot do anything without Him. Trusting Him day by day, and in everything we do, is the great lesson that we all have to learn. And whenever life gets wretched let us be careful to look to see the place that the Lord Jesus Christ has in our lives. It is probably the case that we have been seeking to go ahead on our own, and have not continued to trust Him.

Remember the words of that old hymn,

'Tis so sweet to trust in Jesus,
Just to take Him at His Word,
Just to rest upon His promise;
Just to know, "Thus saith the Lord."

Yes, 'tis sweet to trust in Jesus,
Just from sin and self to cease;
Just from Jesus simply taking
Life and rest, and joy and peace.

Then make sure that you can really sing from the heart the words of the chorus:

Jesus, Jesus, how I trust Him!
How I've proved Him o'er and o'er!
Jesus, Jesus, precious Jesus!
O for grace to trust Him more!

The Lord is our Deliverer. Our victory can be certain and continual if we are really trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ for the victory we need.