

KINGDOM.

LESSON 22

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| 1 | PRAYER |
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Group leader. Pray for God’s guidance through his Spirit, for awareness of his presence and for listening to his voice. Commit your group and this lesson about preaching God’s kingdom to the Lord.

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| 2 | SHARING (20 minutes) [QUIET TIMES] PSALMS 37, 38, 40 and 49 |
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Take turns and share (or read from your notes) in short what you have learned from one of your quiet times with God out of the assigned Bible passages (Psalm 37, 38, 40 and 49).

Listen to the person sharing, take him serious and accept him. Do not discuss what he shares. Take notes.

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| 3 | MEMORISATION (5 minutes) [KEY VERSES IN ROMANS] (9) ROMANS 6:13 |
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Review two by two.

(9) Romans 6:13. Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness.

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| 4 | BIBLE STUDY (85 minutes) [THE LETTER TO THE ROMANS] ROMANS 6:1-11 |
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Introduce. Romans 1:16 says that the gospel is “the power of God for the salvation” of everyone who believes. Romans chapter 3 to 5 teaches “the power of God to save or to justify” the believer in Christ. Romans chapter 6 teaches “the power of God to make the believer in Christ holy”.

While Romans 5 speaks of the Christian’s *legal status (or position)*, that is, he has been justified once-for-all, Romans 6 does not speak of the process of sanctification, but of the Christian’s *moral status (or condition)*, that is, he has been made holy once-for-all.

Romans 6:1-10 is a doctrinal exposition, “what to believe”, while Romans 6:11 is an exhortation “how to live.”

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| STEP 1. READ. | GOD’S WORD |
| <i>Read.</i> LET US READ Romans 6:1-11 together. Let us take turns to read one verse each until we have completed the reading. | |

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| STEP 2. DISCOVER. | OBSERVATIONS |
| <i>Consider.</i> WHICH TRUTH IN THIS PASSAGE IS IMPORTANT FOR YOU? Or WHICH TRUTH IN THIS PASSAGE TOUCHES YOUR MIND OR HEART? <i>Record.</i> Discover one or two truths that you understand. Think about them and write your thoughts in your notebook. <i>Share.</i> (After the group members have had about two minutes to think and write, take turns to share). Let us take turns to share with one another what each of us has discovered. (Remember: In every small group, the group members will share different things) | |

6:1-7

Discovery 1. Paul argues that it is impossible for a Christian to persevere living in sin.

In Rome, the one party, called the Legalists (pro law) falsely taught that a person is justified by doing the works of the law. The opposite party, called the Antinomians (anti law) falsely taught that a person, who is justified, does not have to live according to the law at all; he may continue to live in sin.

The apostle Paul rejected both false teachings. Against the Legalists, Paul taught that a person is justified, not by doing the works of the law, but by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. Against the Antinomians, he taught that a person who is justified by grace through faith must still live his life according to the (moral) law¹. He must live the new and holy life. Paul taught that the law is not *the means* of salvation, but it is *the standard* according to which justified (saved) people should live their lives.

¹ The moral law, for example, the Ten Commandments

(1) Romans 6:1-2 teaches that the doctrine of the Antinomians is a contradiction.

Paul says that it is a contradiction in terms to suppose that any person should come to Christ to be delivered from sin, in order that he might continue to live in sin.

(2) Romans 6:3-4 teaches that the Christian is united to the death of Christ and therefore has died to the power of sin.

In his argument, Paul appeals to Christian baptism. He says that people, who have been baptised (with the Holy Spirit)² in Christ Jesus, have been united to Christ in his death. Thus, while Christ “died (as a sacrifice of atonement) *for sin*”, Christians “died *to sin*”.

This once-for-all definitive break with sin is the identity of the Christian! For a Christian, redemption from sin is:

- a deliverance from the *penalty* of sin (the sinner is *justified*, is made righteous)
- a deliverance from the *power* of sin (the sinner is *sanctified*, is made holy). “Jesus Christ is our righteousness, holiness and redemption” (1 Corinthians 1:30)!

Every Christian united to Christ in his death, has died to the power of sin! He is no longer a slave to sin.

- Therefore, a person who has become a Christian, cannot continue to live in sin.
- And therefore a person, who continues to live in sin, cannot be a Christian (cf. 1 John 3:6-9)!

(3) Romans 6:5-7 teaches that the Christian is united to the resurrection of Christ and therefore *want to, can and will* live the new life.

In his argument, Paul appeals to the resurrection of Christ. He says that people who have been united to Christ in his death, will certainly also be united to Christ in his resurrection. There is a causal relationship between the death and resurrection of Christ. Just as certain as his death will be followed by his resurrection, likewise the death of the Christian to the guilt and power of sin will be followed by a new and holy life.

The death and resurrection of Jesus Christ renders *the legal state of righteousness* and *the moral state of holiness* of the believer certain. A Christian shares in the death of Christ in order that he may also share in his resurrection and life. Christians cannot enjoy the benefits of Christ’s death without enjoying the benefits of his resurrection. In order to be holy (pure), God must first justify them. People cannot become holy (pure) without first being justified (forgiven)! In the Bible, the legal state of righteousness (being justified, forgiven) and the moral state of holiness (being purified of sins) are inseparable! (The future tenses in verses 5 and 8 do not express future, but certainty!)

6:8-11

Discovery 2. Paul argues that the Christian is definitely changed.

In this paragraph, Paul draws the conclusion of his argument. Jesus Christ died once-for-all in history and his death will never be repeated. In his resurrected human nature he now lives a life devoted to God.

Likewise, the Christian died once-for-all in history to the power of sin and is now able to live a life devoted to God. The separation of the Christian from the power of sin is final and his ability to live the new and holy life is certain. This once-for-all decisive event in history of “having died with Christ” shows that his “being dead to the power of sin” is an abiding state or condition. Likewise, this once-for-all decisive event in history of “having been resurrected with Christ” shows that his “being alive to God” is also an abiding state or condition. The life as a Christian is no longer conditioned or controlled by the power of sin to condemn, to pollute or to enslave us. Christians are no longer conditioned or controlled by either their old sinful nature or by the sinful deeds they did in their physical body.

This state of “being dead to the power of sin” and the ability to “live the new life in obedience to Christ” is called “holiness”. This abiding state of holiness is not destroyed by sins which the Christian commits in the future. Just as the death and resurrection of Christ was *once-for-all* for him, likewise acquiring the state of righteousness and holiness is *once-for-all* for people who believe in Jesus Christ! In Romans 6:11, Paul commands, “Count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus”.

Note Christians are not commanded to become dead to sin or to become alive to God, because it is presupposed that Christians *are already dead* to sin and *already alive* to God! Note that it is not by counting (believing) these things to be facts that they become facts, because it is proclaimed that they *are already facts!* It is already a fact that people who believe in Jesus Christ are spiritually united to Jesus Christ in his death and resurrection (2000 years ago)! Therefore it is also a fact that people who believe in Jesus Christ are already justified (forgiven) and have been made holy. They have already died to the power of sin to condemn (doom), to contaminate and to enslave and they are already able to live the new and holy life to God. What Paul commands Christians to do, is to believe that their state of righteousness and state of holiness are already facts and to appreciate these facts!

² This cannot refer to baptism with water, because people are not born again by something man does (baptising with water) - only by something God does (baptising with the Holy Spirit) (cf. John 1:13).

STEP 3. QUESTION.**EXPLANATIONS**

Consider. WHICH QUESTION ABOUT ANYTHING IN THIS PASSAGE WOULD YOU LIKE TO ASK TO THIS GROUP?

Let us try to understand all the truths in Romans 6:1-11 and ask questions about the things we still do not understand.

Record. Formulate your question as clearly as possible. Then write your question in your notebook.

Share. (After the group members have had about two minutes to think and write, let each person first share his question.)

Discuss. (Then, choose a few of these questions and try to answer them by discussing them together in your group.)

(The following are examples of questions the students might ask and some notes about the discussion of the questions.)

6:1**Question 1. Who were the people that believed that Christians may go on sinning?**

Notes. Romans 5 closed with the statement that “the law was added so that the trespass might increase. But where sin increased, grace increased all the more” (Romans 5:20). A particular group of people developed a false doctrine out of this. They falsely taught, “God gave the law with the purpose that people should sin more; and the more people sinned, the more God would be glorified by showing his grace to these sinners.” Therefore, they concluded: “People must be encouraged to continue to sin.” They said, “Let us go on sinning, so that God’s grace may increase!” This teaching is obviously a false teaching. The people who distorted the biblical doctrine of grace are called Antinomians (the people who are against the law).

(1) Antinomians stressed the work of God, but ignored the responsibility of man.

They stressed the completed work of Christ to the extreme extent of rejecting the need of people to repent, be regenerated and sanctified. Although it is true that Christ acquired the completed work of salvation for Christians, it is not true that Christians need not do anything to be saved.

(2) Antinomians stressed the grace of God to the extent that they rejected the law of God.

They falsely believed that Christians are only “under grace” and therefore they have nothing to do with the law. They falsely taught that the good works, which the law commands, were not required of Christians. They also falsely taught that the evil works of Christians, which the law forbids, would be graciously ignored. The Antinomians falsely believed that all evil deeds of Christians belonged to their “old nature”, which would not inherit salvation. Therefore it did not matter what Christians did in their bodies.

The argument of the apostle Paul against the false teaching of the Antinomians (their distortion of the doctrine of grace) is that the acquisition of salvation by Jesus Christ does not exclude the application of salvation by Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ merited salvation by his sacrificial death on the cross. However, he applies this acquired salvation to people by their regeneration and renewal through the Holy Spirit (Titus 3:5), by their repentance and faith in the gospel (Mark 1:15) and by their obedience to the moral law (John 14:21,23). Paul argues that righteousness may never be separated from holiness and justification may not be separated from sanctification! The legal state of justification and the moral state of holiness belong inseparably together. The person who shares in the benefits of Christ’s death, also shares in the benefits of Christ’s resurrection. Justification or salvation may never and can never be separated from living the new and holy life!

6:3-4**Question 2. What is the meaning of Christian baptism?**

Notes. Romans 6:1-7 does not speak about baptism with water, but about baptism with the Spirit! It does not teach the method of baptism with water, but teaches the meaning of baptism with the Spirit!

In Romans 6:3, “to be baptised into Christ” signifies *union with Christ, fellowship with Christ and participation in all the privileges in Christ*. This union with Christ is brought about by the baptism with the Spirit by Christ (Mark 1:8b) and not by the baptism with water by a man (e.g. a pastor) (Mark 1:8a). Baptism with water is only the sign of the baptism with the Spirit (Acts 10:47-48).

In Romans 6 baptism (with the Spirit) particularly signifies union with Christ in his death and partaker of all the benefits of his death. It signifies union with Christ in all that he is and in all the phases of his work of salvation as Mediator. Union with Jesus Christ himself cannot be separated from union with his accomplished work of salvation. And union with his death cannot be separated from union with his resurrection.

(1) The union with his death.

Romans 6:3-4 and Colossians 2:12 teach that Christians that were “baptised (through the Spirit) into Christ Jesus” were “baptised into his death”. Their “being buried” with Christ is the proof that they really died (it was not just the appearance of death). While baptism with the Spirit (that is, regeneration by the Holy Spirit) spiritually unites the believer with the death of Jesus Christ 2000 years ago, the baptism with water symbolises (signifies) this spiritual union

of the believer with the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The tenses of the verbs in Romans 6:3-4 (Greek: aorist tense) show that Christians have *once-for-all* died spiritually and were buried in their past history (the old man must not be dug up again)! Christians are as effectively shut out of the realm of sin, the sinful world and the kingdom of Satan as a dead person in a grave is shut out from human life on earth. Christians are once-for-all justified (forgiven). The perfect tense of the verb in Romans 6:5 (Greek: gegonamen) shows that this justification (forgiveness) is a permanent or ongoing present reality!

(2) The union with his resurrection.

Romans 6:5 teach that Christians are also definitely united to Jesus Christ in his resurrection. The resurrection refers first to the resurrected life here and now on earth and second to the resurrection of the body at the second coming of Christ. The argument of Romans 6:5 is that the spiritual union with the death and burial of Jesus Christ cannot be separated from the spiritual union with the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Regeneration by the Holy Spirit (and faith in Jesus Christ) has united the Christian spiritually to the death and burial of Jesus Christ 2000 years ago and resulted in making the believer righteous. Likewise, the regeneration by the Holy Spirit (and faith in Jesus Christ) has united the Christian spiritually to the resurrection of Jesus Christ 2000 years ago and resulted in making the believer holy!

Every Christian is “a saint” on the ground of the accomplished (acquired, completed) work of salvation of Christ 2000 years ago and on the ground of its application by the Holy Spirit in his life here and now. The death of Christ as a sacrifice of atonement for sins is necessary and certain for the state of righteousness (justification). Likewise, the resurrected life of Christ is necessary and certain for the state of holiness (and the following sanctification).

Christians are already regarded by God as “perfectly righteous and holy”.

Their righteousness and holiness (accomplished by Christ in their place) is *their position or state* in Christ.

Christians *shall* more and more be conformed to Jesus Christ in a holy life here and now on earth.

Their continued sanctification is *their process or (life)style* in Christ.

At the second coming of Christ Christians will in body and spirit be completely conformed to Christ.

Their final glorification is *their final destiny* in Christ.

The whole discussion in Romans 6 revolves around the necessary connection between the state of (legal) justification and the state of (moral) holiness.

6:6

Question 3. What is the difference between “the old man” and “the new man”?

Notes. Christians should distinguish between the terms: “the old man”, “the sinful nature” and “the outward man”.

(1) The old man has definitely died and the new man is now a reality.

“The old man” represents “the unregenerate nature” (Romans 6:6). It is “the natural man” who has voluntarily chosen to be a slave of his sinful nature (Romans 6:16) and thereafter is completely dominated by his sinful nature (Romans 8:6-8). “The new man” represents “the regenerated nature” of the Christian.

By faith in Jesus Christ, the unregenerate nature is once-for-all crucified (Galatians 2:20). Then the unregenerate nature is once-for-all put off (Ephesians 4:22) and the regenerate nature is once for all put on (Ephesians 4:24)! The old man is put off when the new man is put on (Colossians 3:9-10). They cannot exist together at the same time!

(2) However, the new man still has a sinful nature.

While non-Christians are not free from the absolute dominating and enslaving power of their sinful nature, Christians are once-for-all set free from the absolute dominating and enslaving power of their sinful nature. Nevertheless, “their sinful nature” remains a present and forceful power in their life (Romans 6:7, 7:18; 8:2) and is in continual conflict with the Holy Spirit dwelling in the new man (Romans 6:13,19; Galatians 5:16-23).

Genuine Christians again and again choose to be controlled by the Holy Spirit and not by their sinful nature (Romans 8:9,13). Again and again he resists conformity to the sinful world and chooses to be transformed into the likeness of Christ. In this way the new man keeps on growing spiritually (Romans 12:1-2). The goal and standard of this continual renewal is Jesus Christ and Christ likeness (Ephesians 4:13-14), The new man is being renewed continuously into the image of God (Colossians 3:10).

(3) The new man can be distinguished as the outward man and the inward man.

The outward appearance of man is called “the outward man” and his inner being is called “the inward man”. “Though outwardly (the outward man) we are wasting away (we grow older and weaker), yet inwardly (the inward man) we are being renewed day by day” (2 Corinthians 4:16).

“The outward man” is “the jar of clay” (2 Corinthians 4:7), “the mortal body” (2 Corinthians 4:10-11) and not the old unregenerate man. It is the whole human constitution with all its faculties and energies, both mental and physical, both perceptive and practical, which is undergoing decay and is moving towards the grave. The present continuous tense indicates that this decay is a steady and irreversible process. “The outward man” is “the new man” as he is outwardly manifested and visible to other people.

“The inward man” is the Christian heart in which God’s light shines, giving him real and experiential knowledge of God’s glory through Christ” (2 Corinthians 4:6). The inward man is the Christian heart in which the Holy Spirit dwells as the deposit or first down-payment that guarantees the future fulfilment of everything God had promised” (2 Corinthians 1:22; 5:5). In the inner man the Holy Spirit implanted the principle of the new life; there he exerts his controlling influence and there he imparts power to grow in all the Christian virtues (Ephesians 3:16-17). The inner man is hidden from the gaze of the people of the world and inaccessible to their analysis.

After regeneration, the Christian is still an indivisible personality (that is, a living being/soul with an invisible human spirit and a visible human body) whom man can see from without and God can see from within. Paul is speaking of the great Christian truth that the visible advance in outward decay is day after day accompanied by the experience of inward renewal!

STEP 4. APPLY.

APPLICATIONS

Consider. WHICH TRUTHS IN THIS PASSAGE ARE POSSIBLE APPLICATIONS FOR CHRISTIANS TODAY?

Share and record. Let us brainstorm with one another and record a list of possible applications from Romans 6:1-11.

Consider. WHICH POSSIBLE APPLICATION DOES GOD WANT YOU TO TURN INTO A PERSONAL APPLICATION?

Record. Write this personal application down in your notebook. Feel free to share your personal application.

(Remember that people in every group will apply different truths or even make different applications of the same truth. The following is a list of possible applications.)

1. Examples of possible applications from Romans 6:1-11.

- 6:1. Think about your sinful habits. Decide to break with these sinful habits and not to go on sinning.
- 6:3-4. Realise that when you put your faith in Jesus Christ, you are no longer under the enslaving power of sin. You can overcome former sinful thoughts, words, actions, habits and character traits if you want to.
- 6:3-4. Understand clearly the meaning of your Christian baptism. Christian baptism is above all “an invisible baptism with the Spirit” (Mark 1:8; Acts 11:14-18; 1 Corinthians 12:13; Titus 3:4-8) which is symbolised by “a visible baptism with water” (Matthew 28:19; Acts 2:38; Acts 10:47-48; Acts 22:16). Christian baptism (with the Spirit) means spiritual union with Christ, fellowship with Christ and participation in his completed work of salvation in the past, the present and the future. It particularly signifies a participation in the benefit of his death in your place, namely, that your sins have been washed away (cf. Acts 22:16). This means, that you have been forgiven (cf. Acts 2:38) or justified (Romans 6:7).
- Remember that these things are not accomplished by baptism with water by a man (through a ceremonial rite performed by a pastor), but only by baptism with the Spirit by Christ (genuine regeneration)! Romans 6:3-7 is *not* speaking about baptism with water and also *not* about the method of baptism with water (for example, by immersion). It is speaking about baptism with the Spirit which in the Bible is always portrayed as the Spirit poured out from above on and over the believers (Acts 2:3; 2:17,33; 2:38; 10:44; 11:16). And baptism with water is portrayed as “water (poured from above on and over)(2 Kings 3:11) them, washing their sins away” (Acts 22:16).
- 6:5-6. Realise that the legal state of justification cannot be separated from the moral state of holiness. When a Christian participates in the death of Christ, he also participates in his resurrection. Therefore, a Christian ought to live the new life of Christ.
- 6:10-11. Live your new life to please God.

2. Examples of personal applications from Romans 6:1-11.

I want to count myself dead to the power of sin and alive to God. I delight myself in the fact that the absolute power of my sinful nature has been broken and that I am set free from continual slavery to sin. I want to remember the fact that I am now alive to God and that I not only *should*, but *can* and *will* live the new and holy life.

I want to remember that Christians not only share in all the benefits of Christ’s death, but also share in all the benefits of his resurrection! My spiritual dying with Christ results in the breaking of the absolute power of my sinful nature. According to Romans 6:7, my sinful nature has already been sentenced to death and throughout my life that judgement is being executed. Through the work of the Holy Spirit in me, the power of my sinful nature is again and again broken and again and again I am given the ability to live the new and holy life.

STEP 5. PRAY.

RESPONSE

LET US TAKE TURNS TO PRAY ABOUT ONE TRUTH THAT GOD HAS TAUGHT US in Romans 6:1-11. (Respond in your prayer to what you have learned during this Bible study. Practise to pray only in one or two sentences. Remember that people in every group will pray about different issues.)

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| 5 | PRAYER (8 minutes) | [INTERCESSION] PRAY FOR OTHERS |
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Continue to pray in groups of two's or three's. Pray for one another and for the people in the world (Romans 15:30; Colossians 4:12).

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| 6 | PREPARATION (2 minutes) | [ASSIGNMENT] FOR NEXT LESSON |
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(Group leader. Give the group members this preparation for at home in writing or let them copy it down).

1. Commitment. Be committed to make disciples, build the church and preach the kingdom.
2. Preach, teach or study Romans 6:1-11 with another person or group of people.
3. Personal time with God. Have a quiet time from half a chapter of **Psalm 50, 51, 58 and 62** each day.
Make use of the favourite truth method. Make notes.
4. Memorisation. (10) **Romans 6:23.** Daily review the last 5 memorised Bible verses.
5. Teaching. Prepare the parable of “**the unmerciful servant**” in Matthew 18:23-35. Make use of the six guidelines for interpreting parables.
6. Prayer. Pray for someone or something specific this week and see what God is doing (Psalm 5:3).
7. Update your notebook on preaching God's kingdom. Include your notes on quiet time, your memorisation notes, your Bible study notes and this preparation.