

[Romans 6:1 – 14]

~ Our previous report from our Spiritual Safari expedition through the entire Word of God concerned sanctification of the believer. The last several verses in chapter five comprise what is likely the most difficult passage in the entire Word of God for believers to understand, accept, process and implement in our lives as we strive to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Savior and Lord Jesus Christ. Paul dealt with the imputation of sin to man. Now we look to the head of another human family, the family of God. Christ brings life and righteousness. He removes the guilt of our sin, and He moves in and through the lives of those who have trusted Him; thereby regenerating them as righteous.

In our previous report, we considered *Potential* and *Positional* Sanctification; our identification with Christ is the basis for our sanctification. We also examined Scriptural justification by faith. We are in Christ. These are two separate and altogether different subjects, but they are not mutually exclusive. I recognize this report waxes more theological than our safari usually cares to, because this is a highly doctrinal section of the Word of God – and it is profoundly difficult; so, let's bear through.

It is important to fully comprehend the differences and distinctions between justification and sanctification. Justification is an act. Sanctification is a work. Justification takes place the moment we declare we believe in Christ, and His righteousness comes over us. Guilt is removed. That's when God begins to move and work in and through us; and this isn't just a momentary work, nor is it an occasional work. We have instantaneous salvation and a moment to moment working of the Holy Spirit through us throughout our entire lives. You could say justification is the *means* and sanctification is the *ends*; although that is a sophomoric articulation.

Likewise, there is a difference between salvation and being made a saint; a "saint" being defined as separated unto God, called to salvation. Justification is for us; sanctification is within us. Justification declares the

sinner righteous; sanctification makes the sinner righteous. Justification removes the guilt and penalty of sins; sanctification removes the growth and the power of sin to kill. God is an exterior decorator in the sanctification sense. We are only enabled to stand before Him because He has paid the penalty and removed the guilt of our sin.

Well, God is an interior decorator, too. The power of the Holy Spirit moves into our hearts and lives and out into other people's hearts and lives; re-shaping us into the types of Christian's other people should seek; esteeming others better than ourselves and considering the welfare of others above our own. How's that working out in your life, friends? God does not leave any of us in sin when He saves us, either. Even so, sanctification is not a duty that is derived from justification. *BOTH* sanctification and justification flow as the result of being in Christ; both crucified and risen! The sinner appropriates Christ by faith alone; for both salvation and sanctification.

1 Corinthians 1:29 *That no flesh should glory in his presence. 30 But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: 31 That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord ~*

Thus far in our safari through Romans, Paul has made no mention of the proper life a saint should live. Beginning here, and for the rest of Romans, Paul does not discuss the salvation of a sinner, but he does address the life of the saint! So, the subject of chapter six is the *ability* of God. God has the *ability* to make sinners, whom He hath declared righteous, to actually live a righteous life. That means to become holy in all manner of their lives. The justified sinner cannot continue to live in sin because we have died and risen again in Christ. To continue in sin also leads to slavery; which is an additional reason for not continuing in said sin. Our lives must reveal we have a new nature with the power to enforce our professed ethic; our outward display should be one of *obedience* to God. Union in Christ through His death and resurrection means He is now our Lord and Master! We have freedom and free-will; but that freedom is not license to do whatever we please....

1 What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?

~ This question is argumentative and idiomatic – and interesting – to be sure. Paul asks it several more times in ways that conclude with only one answer. Paul asks, “... *what shall we say then?*” – I ask, “*what CAN you say to it?*” All I can say is, “*halleluiah, praise the lord!*” – But that sounds so trite! So many people chant that today it has become meaningless, really; just a Christian cliché. Even so, I don’t know what else we can say to God’s wonderful salvation. So, can you continue to live in sin after you are saved? I couldn’t. I tried. It didn’t work out ~

2 God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?

~ Paul obviously understood justification by faith to mean a declaration of righteousness by God. This doesn’t mean to *make* good, but to *declare* one good because the penalty of sin has been satisfied; but the *power* of sin in this life has *not* been removed, my beloved. You’ll have to carry your cross down here and crucify your old nature daily. That’s where many Christian’s go horribly wrong. If God has declared you to be righteous, and has removed the guilt of sin, then you will *NOT* be able to choose to continue living in willful rebellion; because that would be impossible.

Verse two is woefully misunderstood, because we are never dead to sin as long as we are in this life residing in the flesh. The more literal translation is: “...*how shall we, who died to sin, live...*” We died in the substitute of the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ two thousand years ago. We carry our cross and crucify the flesh daily; we’re never dead to sin. Paul said, “...*I die daily.*” Any honest person knows they never reach the place of sinless perfection. You have a sinful nature, and I have a sinful nature, and we have to deal with that daily. We’ll have our sinful nature as long as we are in this fleshy body. What we reach is the place where we want to work for God. Even so, it is very important that man recognizes he still has the old nature in this life.

Some super-duper pious saints re-work verse two and declare they have reached an altogether higher ground than most other believers. They talk

about how they do not commit sin because they have reached the pinnacle of perfection. There is a group known as the “*Victorious Life*” group. Of course, there are different brands of them; but some are particularly more obnoxious than others. Those who claim to live a victorious life and have their best life now are always suspiciously anemic looking people. In fact, they usually look like fugitives from a blood bank. Well, you can’t crucify yourself, friends; you can kill yourself many ways, but you can’t crucify yourself....

3 Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?

~ Verse three is another wildly misunderstood verse in Scripture. To correlate this with water baptism is to miss the point completely. Now, I believe in water baptism — and by immersion, specifically; but this speaks of our identification with Christ in one Spirit by which are we all baptized into one spiritual body of believers. That includes all saved people of the past, present and future. We are all identified and placed into one Body — the body of Believers — and that is Christ made manifest in the world today.

Alright, three ingredients are essential for sanctification to be complete. Two of them are *positional*; one is *practical*. Even the smallest gadgets we consume today come with instructions. We take the thing out of a box and try to follow a set of printed instructions as we assemble or use it. Well, if you want to live a Christian Life, certain elements are going to need to be incorporated. One of those is that we were identified with Christ when He died two thousand years ago. We are the ones who are guilty — not Him. The reason Christ was on a Roman cross is because of my sin — and yours. We should understand how we are identified with the Lord Jesus Christ. It’s the number one thing we are to know, too, by the way....

4 Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: 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.

~ We are joined to a living Christ; and our sins have *already* been judged! We are *already* raised from the deadness of sin. We are seated with Christ

right now in the Heavens. There are only two places for your sin today: they were either on Christ when He died for us two thousand years ago, or they are on you today. If your sins remain on you, then you are yet to come up for judgment — because you aren't saved, my beloved!

Colossians 3:1 *If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God ~*

The things of Christ are what will be important in this life to any genuine child of God born again of water and of spirit. We were buried with Him by identification into His death; which is signified by the immersion portion of baptism. My personal estimation is that immersion completely sets forth the type in the best way out of all possible different methods man has for spiritually and symbolically memorializing this in the church. Baptism is our personal testimony that we are joined to a Living and Risen Christ!

1 Peter 3:21 *The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us ~*

In this passage from Peter's first epistle, he has been referring to the eight souls that were saved in the Ark. That was Noah, Ham, Shem, Japheth and their wives. They went through the judgment of waters; but the people who perished were those in the water! The people in the Ark didn't even get wet. Still, we are told Noah and his family were saved by baptism. They willingly allowed God to shut them inside the Ark — because they believed God; and they were identified with God by being inside the Ark! We are raised to Christ, and joined to Christ, my friends....

5 For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection:

~ This is another blessed assurance; one that looks forward to a time when you and I shall be made in the newness of life with Christ! There are some things we need to know, too; the "old man" in verse six means our "old nature." That's the fleshly body of sin that will be destroyed and return to dust. If you are reading this report, that has not yet happened to you. We need to cancel out and nullify all things in this life that cause us to serve sin.

Paul said, "... *Make no provision for the flesh.*" Today we have a new nature, and we are to live in the power of the Spirit of God....

6 Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.

7 For he who died is freed from sin.

8 Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him:

~ Verse seven of this chapter in Romans is our present position in Christ; and verse eight is our glorious eschatological hope of being raised from the dead. We share His resurrection life today, and after our flesh dies, we shall be raised in a glorified body from the dead to be with Him forever. Those who have suffered with Christ *IN THIS LIFE* shall rule and reign with Him throughout eternity. These are profound truths, but there's so much more we need to know. In Revelation chapter one, Jesus says, "*I am He that liveth; I was dead and, Lo, I am alive forevermore; and I have the keys of hell and of death!*" We can thank God that nothing can separate us from His love. His resurrection opens up eternity in a whole new light to those who trust Him. Christ lives forever to make intercession for those who are His own! That's how He is able to save us to the uttermost. These are glorious truths in this section of Scripture....

9 Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him.

10 For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.

11 Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

12 Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.

13 Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.

14 For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.

~ Law was given to regulate human nature. We are not to live under the influence of our old sinful nature. We are commanded to crucify it daily. We have a new nature, and we are to yield ourselves accordingly. Grieve not the Spirit of God. This leg of our Spiritual Safari ends with glorious rest; and rest is something we can count on! Candidly, it's something I need as I type this report. We also end with *practical sanctification*. These are doctrinal subjects that we are to know, comprehend correctly, and perpetuate in the world. Once we begin to grow in this grace and knowledge, we are then told to present ourselves! Have you really ever presented yourself unto Christ? Have you ever asked Him to pick you up after you fell down in sin? Christ is able to see us through, but you have to commit yourself to Him. It's an act of free-will. You're going to have to deal with that which is wrong in your life before you can begin acting right, friends. The only reason a person ever says they cannot believe in Christ is because there is sin in their lives that they refuse to give up. No other reason ~