

Romans 6:3-4

- 1** *What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?*
2 *God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?*
3 *Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?*
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.*

In verse 2 we received the divine response to the question that the natural man sometimes has to the message of grace, namely, *shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?* (v1).

God forbid, verse 2 tells us in no uncertain terms. But rather than commence to give us commandments, or a list of rules, we are told of something that *God did* in us— we are told that we are *dead to sin*.

We must then ask ourselves, *what does being dead to sin mean?*

Can a believer still commit sin? Yes. Is there still present within the believer's physical body a law of sin? Yes.

So what is meant then when Paul tells us so plainly that we are *dead to sin*? His reasoning here is that, since we *are* in fact *dead to sin* (whatever that means), how can we continue to live therein? And so again the appeal here isn't to what we do, it's an appeal to *what we are*.

We must then properly understand the 3 components of our being. Man, being made in the image of God, as an individual, is comprised of three distinct parts: the spirit, the soul, and the body.

Consider **1 Thessalonians 5:23**:

And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Notice the order that Paul uses here: spirit, then soul, then body. This is the way in which God has chosen to operate in and through us—from the inner man *outward*.

The soul and the spirit comprise what Paul will refer to as “the inner man,” and he will refer to the physical body as the “outward man.” It is the inner man that was changed at the point of salvation.

The spirit, as the most fundamental aspect of man, rises through the being, giving life to the soul, and to the body. There is not an individualized spirit of each human, but each man is given the spirit of man; birds have the spirit of a bird, dogs the spirit of a dog. This is why what Adam reaped in his inner man was passed on to *all* men. This is why an animal after its kind has all the same inherent traits of its kind—it instinctively knows how to be a dog, or how to be a bird.

The soul then, what the Bible sometimes refers to as the heart, is the seat of understanding and individual personality. The mind itself has, in a sense, a spirit, as the spirit animates the soul. The spirit and soul together are what we refer to as the mind, or what the Bible calls the *inner man*.

When we believed and trusted the gospel, our spirit was joined to the Lord; in this way we are *fully identified with Him*, and share His identity.

Consider 1 Corinthians 6:15-17:

1 Corinthians 6:15-17

15 *Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid.*

16 *What? know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? for two, saith he, shall be one flesh.*

17 *But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit.*

The first man, Adam, was made a living soul (**Gen. 2:7**), the last Adam was made a *quicken*ing spirit (**1 Cor. 15:45**). To *quicken* is to bring life into. We will see in subsequent lessons that the very spirit of Christ Himself is *able* to quicken our *mortal bodies*.

Notice also here in 1 Corinthians 6, Paul, in addressing our common union with Christ by one spirit, uses the same phrase to rebuke incorrect thinking and practice—*God forbid*. This issue being dealt with in 1st Corinthians stems from them not fully internalizing and applying the doctrine we are now learning in Romans 6—it is the same issue.

And so, what does it mean for us to be *dead to sin*? It doesn't say, dead to *sins*, plural, and so we're speaking of the power of sin itself. We ourselves aren't dead in any outwardly apparent way—we are still living, breathing, moving beings, able to think and reason. And it does not say *sin* is dead—sin is *not* dead, it is still a law that is found in our physical members, hence why believers still have the capacity to sin.

That which our inner man inherited from Adam was quite literally *put to death* when we believed the gospel, and our spirit was joined to Christ's. It is that spirit that is now alive in us and gives us the ability to go to war against the power of sin itself within our members, that is, within our unregenerate physical bodies.

Paul is going to now expound exactly what being dead to sin means in the following verses.

Romans 6:3-4

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

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.*

When we believed, God performed something *within us* that we could not see or sense physically, but it is a reality all the same. He *baptized us into* Jesus Christ.

It is at this point that we must discuss the word *baptism* briefly.

Baptism is a purification, unto identification, for the purpose of sanctification.

Exodus 40:10-15

10 And thou shalt anoint the altar of the burnt offering, and all his vessels, and sanctify the altar: and it shall be an altar most holy.

11 And thou shalt anoint the laver and his foot, and sanctify it.

12 And thou shalt bring Aaron and his sons unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and wash them with water.

13 And thou shalt put upon Aaron the holy garments, and anoint him, and sanctify him; that he may minister unto me in the priest's office.

14 And thou shalt bring his sons, and clothe them with coats:

15 And thou shalt anoint them, as thou didst anoint their father, that they may minister unto me in the priest's office: for their anointing shall surely be an everlasting priesthood throughout their generations.

Numbers 8:5-7

5 And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying,

6 Take the Levites from among the children of Israel, and cleanse them.

7 And thus shalt thou do unto them, to cleanse them: Sprinkle water of purifying upon them, and let them shave all their flesh, and let them wash their clothes, and so make themselves clean.

Numbers 19:2, 7-9

2 This is the ordinance of the law which the Lord hath commanded, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, that they bring thee a red heifer without spot, wherein is no blemish, and upon which never came yoke...

7 Then the priest shall wash his clothes, and he shall bathe his flesh in water, and afterward he shall come into the camp, and the priest shall be unclean until the even.

8 And he that burneth her shall wash his clothes in water, and bathe his flesh in water, and shall be unclean until the even.

9 And a man that is clean shall gather up the ashes of the heifer, and lay them up without the camp in a clean place, and it shall be kept for the congregation of the children of Israel for a water of separation: it is a purification for sin.

Numbers 19:13

13 Whosoever toucheth the dead body of any man that is dead, and purifieth not himself, defileth the tabernacle of the Lord; and that soul shall be cut off from Israel: because the water of separation was not sprinkled upon him, he shall be unclean; his uncleanness is yet upon him.

John 3:22-25

22 After these things came Jesus and his disciples into the land of Judaea; and there he tarried with them, and baptized.

23 And John also was baptizing in Aenon near to Salim, because there was much water there: and they came, and were baptized.

24 For John was not yet cast into prison.

25 Then there arose a question between some of John's disciples and the Jews about purifying.

Hebrews 9:9-13

9 Which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience;

10 Which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation.

11 But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building;

12 Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.

13 For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh...

The word translated here as “divers washings” is the same Greek word, *baptismos*, that we get our English word *baptism* from.

The word *baptism* doesn't always imply water—the ideas central to baptism are identification and sanctification. Consider 1 Corinthians 10:1-2:

1 Corinthians 1:1-2

1 Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea;

2 And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea...

The Israelites were “baptized” unto Moses, that is, they were sanctified unto Moses and identified with a specific purpose.

Romans 6:3-4

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

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.

The Holy Ghost Himself baptized us *into* Christ. This means we were purified by His blood, that we might be *fully identified* with Him and set apart or *sanctified* for a special purpose.

And so, when we were baptized into Christ we were also baptized into His *death*. We have been permanently joined to Christ by the Spirit; and if we have been identified with Him in His death, then we shall also be identified with Him in His resurrection—that is, the same power that was in Christ when He rose from the death is actually present within us, as we are one spirit with Him.

We see in these verses of Romans 6 the very gospel of the death, burial, and resurrection itself, and yet Paul is not applying it to the issue of our forgiveness of sins and imputed righteousness, i.e. our justification; he is applying the gospel to our functional walk as believers (our sanctified life). *Shall we continue in sin? God forbid.* Why Paul? *Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?* Again, he doesn't appeal to fear of punishment, he doesn't give us a list of commands or rules, he effectively says that when you believed the gospel you *died*.

And quite literally, that which was in your inner man that you received by inheritance from Adam, was put to death when you trusted the gospel and you were given a brand new identity, that of Jesus Christ.

This process begins with first *knowing* some things. It won't end with simply knowing, however, but the truths must make their way from the mind to the soul, and as we will see, from knowing to reckoning. The importance of knowing these truths clearly first cannot be overstated; you cannot get these truths deeply rooted into your heart unless you first *know* them. Some try and reckon things to be so without fully understanding them, and then are dismayed to find they are still bound by the same character flaws and sin patterns. Others try to “know,” but never allow that intellectual knowledge to impact their heart—they have made “knowing” the end goal, and also find themselves bound by the same things they were bound with before they knew anything. Knowing and reckoning are two concepts we are faced with in this chapter, and they are absolutely essential for your Christian maturity.

We have *know ye not* in verse 3, *knowing this* in verse 6, and *knowing that* in verse 9. *Knowing* what God did for you and in you by the gospel is absolutely essential for the process of edification.

As I said, God is now communicating a truth to us on the pages of Scripture that we cannot physically sense or discern, that we cannot objectively verify up front, and God is expecting us to believe the Words in spite of everything.

Now, when it says we were *buried*, this has doctrinal significance as well. Notice the burial and resurrection were not mentioned in the section dealing with our justification. The blood and the death of Christ were what was central. This is because the forgiveness of our sins depended on

the substitutionary work of Christ's blood and death in place of our own. Now, moving forward, we see that the burial and the resurrection are introduced. Why? Because the death, burial, and resurrection all made a provision in some way for our sanctification.

What happened to Jesus Christ's flesh when He was buried?

According to Psalm 16, it "rested in hope."

Psalm 16:8-11

8 *I have set the Lord always before me: because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.*

9 *Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also shall rest in hope.*

10 *For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.*

11 *Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.*

Why did Jesus' flesh rest in hope? It is because He never committed a single sin. What is the penalty of sin? It is death. Jesus, therefore, had He not been murdered, would have never experienced death. This means, the law of sin and death that is in our members was not in Jesus' members.

Psalm 16, verse 10, says that the Father would not suffer Jesus to see corruption. Jesus, on the cross, was met by adversaries of a satanic nature (the bulls of bashan; see **Amos 4:1-3**), who, much as Satan did in the wilderness, tried to provoke Him to sin (**Ps. 22:12-13, 21**), who also used the unbelieving Jews and gentiles to conspire against Him, provoke Him, and crucify Him (**Ps. 22:7-8, 16-18; Ps. 2:1-3**).

If Jesus even committed a single sin, then his flesh would *not* have been able to rest in hope, and His flesh *would* have seen corruption. He therefore put His trust in the Father (**Ps. 16:1**), who had given Him counsel (**Ps. 16:7**), and did not transgress *in any way*.

Jesus' physical body did not see corruption. When it says *corruption*, what it means is *physical decay*. As people who have been raised in secular culture, there is often a disconnect between the reality of sin and death, between sin and decay. Death and decay are inextricably linked to sin. The death and decay of the human body are the *direct result* of sin.

That Jesus' physical body was buried and did not see corruption is a testimony of His sinless life.

But how does His burial relate to us?

Romans 6:3-4

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

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.*

Just as Christ's "mortal" body remained sinless and *rested in hope*, not to experience the *power of sin*, so too our new identity, having been fully identified with Christ's perfect righteousness, makes provision for our mortal bodies to be free from the power of sin. We are buried *with Him* by baptism, that is, *identification*, into His 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*.

Notice verse 4 says that "like as" Christ was raised up from the dead. "Like" and "as" are English words used in the literary device of a *simile*. A *simile* is an expression using *like* or *as* to compare two *different* things.

The fact that a simile is used here in verse 4 proves that what we are talking about is not our future physical resurrection, which the gospel obviously provides for; that will be the same as Christ's resurrection—a physical one that is unto eternal life.

What Paul is speaking of here is not a literal physical resurrection unto eternal life, but the functional power of Christ's resurrection working in us in our daily lives. It is "like" His resurrection, but it is not a literal physical resurrection. It is "as" His resurrection, in that we, being dead to sin, and buried with Him and identified as sinless in that burial, are able to share in the same power of His resurrection, allowing us to walk in *newness of life* here and now.