

Romans 6:1-2

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?

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“What shall we say then” to what? Romans 6:1 is of course a continuation of the line of reasoning that has been occurring up to this point. In response to all the things we have just learned in the past 5 chapters—namely that your justification from sin before God is by faith in the perfect work of Jesus Christ and *nothing else*—What shall we say to this?

The Holy Ghost of course has to address all the hypothetical objections that would naturally arise in men’s minds. And I say naturally because such is the reasoning of the natural man, as spiritual things are spiritually discerned. And one of the conclusions that the natural man sometimes comes to when confronted with the offer of salvation by grace through faith, *without a single work on their part of any kind*, is,

You’re saying I can just do whatever I want and still go to heaven???

Yes, that is the message of grace, you can do whatever you’d like and still remain free from the debt and penalty of your sin. Different religions that have assumed the name of Christ (Catholicism, Methodism, various forms of Pentecostalism, Mormonism, etc...) outright reject *the gospel of the grace of God*, the phrase specifically used for this message in **Acts 20:24**, and their natural response when they hear this message is just as I previously said; it is no different than the response of an unsaved Muslim or Jew.

They are offended, as if offended *for* God, because they remain ignorant of *His* standard of *absolute* righteousness.

This is why Paul calls the cross an offense in **Galatians 5:11**,

And I, brethren, if I yet preach circumcision, why do I yet suffer persecution? then is the offence of the cross ceased.

If Paul were to acquiesce and pervert the gospel by preaching the gospel of the circumcision, the very offense of the cross would cease, and Paul would not have endured the persecution he was facing. He says in Colossians 4:3 that it is specifically for the mystery of Christ that he is bound.

We must realize Paul is preaching that which He received from Christ *directly*, which the twelve before him had to be educated about, and which was starkly different from what the Jews had historically understood and held to for the some 2,000 years of their history as the people of God.

Other denominations of Christians who actually do believe the gospel sometimes try to make excuses for it, as if they are ashamed, as if God doesn't know what He's doing, as if their own image is somehow tarnished when they say there is nothing at all one can do to "lose their salvation."

The reality is that once you've been justified freely by God's grace you *can* do whatever you want, but this takes the gospel itself out of its full context and wrests from it a license to sin.

The above hypothetical rebuttal to grace is what Paul in 2 Timothy 2:23 calls an *unlearned* and *foolish question*, which, he concludes, leads to strife.

Let's think back to how Romans began:

Romans 1:16-18

16 For I am not ashamed of **the gospel of Christ**: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

17 **For therein is the righteousness of God revealed** from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.

18 **For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven** against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness...

For therein—that is, *within* the gospel of Christ—is the righteousness of God revealed... *for* the wrath of God is revealed...

“For” is an English word of logic that connects two ideas in a logical sequence, and so *the wrath of God* is a logical part of our understanding of the gospel of Christ.

The righteousness of God is manifestly demonstrated by His wrath against sin: this was publicly demonstrated in times past by the various judgments God pronounced on humanity, and it was again publicly demonstrated on the cross. The gospel of Christ *begins* with God’s wrath being revealed.

To fully understand, internalize, and appreciate your personal guilt before God *must* take place for the truth to function in you the way it was intended. The unsaved religions of the world, whether they take the name of Christ or not, almost unanimously hold that humans are somehow “basically” good, even if they understand no one is perfect, and think that good deeds somehow commend them to God.

Paul, in the context of the judgment seat of Christ, says the following in **2 Corinthians 5:14**,

For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead...

Paul esteemed the price of the ransom Jesus paid so highly that he counted not his own life to be his own. Paul was justified unto eternal life freely by faith, and yet he gave himself wholly to the ministry, insomuch that he became a partaker of the sufferings of Christ at the hands of Satan's devices, experiencing all the sufferings categorically laid out for us later in Romans 8:35, even unto death.

This is something the carnal man can't fully comprehend, why the love of Christ would compel someone to live for God even to the point of suffering when they themselves aren't under *any* threat of punishment whatsoever. This is the proper response to grace.

We have learned now from early in Romans 5 that we have peace with God, and thereby are able to glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience, hope. God is not going to punish us whether we obey or not, and neither is He standing in the way of the tribulations, as they are essential for the practical outworking of our edification.

To the point, the gospel of Christ, properly preached, understood, and believed, produces a desire to live for God. When we consider that we were worthy of death and yet received eternal life as a free gift, the most reasonable response is one of humble repentance toward God and to yield yourself to Him in service. This is exactly how Romans chapter twelve will begin.

And so, the tired objection to grace is answered by the gospel itself. The understanding of our damnable status before God at the inception of our belief should produce within us a conviction of sin, a repentant heart, and desire for deliverance. This may not always occur at a level to sufficiently satisfy *our* self righteousness, but such is the nature of grace, and we don't make the rules.

And so, shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? The resounding answer is *God forbid*.

Romans 6:2

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

This is the fourth of the 14 *God forbid* statements Paul makes over the course of Romans, 1st and 2nd Corinthians, and Galatians. As Romans is foundational doctrine, 1st Corinthians is an epistle of reproof, and 2nd Corinthians and Galatians are epistles of correction, we would expect to find such phrases as Paul uses to correct and establish our thinking—the “*be ye not ignorant’s*,” the “*know ye not’s*,” the “*God forbids*,” all which disappear once you leave these epistles, with one exception in 1 Thessalonians 4:13, in which Paul would not have them ignorant of the hope of our catching up to be with the Lord.

A quick review of these God forbid statements up to this point:

- **Romans 3:3-4**; man's unbelief cannot change the faithfulness of God—"Let God be true."
- **Romans 3:5-6**; God is not unrighteous in taking vengeance against sinful humanity.
- **Romans 3:31**; Faith does not void the Law, but actually establishes it as a perfect standard; since we ourselves cannot perfectly keep it, faith is the only recourse for righteousness, thereby upholding the Law as that perfect standard.

The Scripture then tells us in no uncertain terms that we are "dead to sin." Notice that it does not say "sins," plural, but sin, singular, again a reference to the operational principle that was in us from Adam, what Paul will call "the Law of sin" in Romans 7:23 and "the Law of sin and death" in Romans 8:2.

This is not speaking to our justification from the sins we've committed in our lives, though it is a reality that we are positionally dead to sins as well, but this is speaking to our new identity that we've been gifted, and by extension, our sanctified life.

There are three primary components to what we term "salvation" when we think of being saved from sin:

- Justification; being saved from the debt and penalty of our sins
- Sanctification; being saved from the power of sin
- Glorification; being saved from the presence of sin

We must keep in mind as we study the Bible that the term “salvation” is not always used in the same sense. We see here how it can be used in reference to three different aspects of the work the gospel performs and accomplishes for us. There are other times the term “salvation” is used in reference to being saved from Satan’s devices against us, and others where it specifically refers to being saved from deception. There are times where salvation refers to *physical* deliverance.

We must be as specific in our language and thinking as God is in His Word if we are to be correctly edified. Words have meaning and carry specific ideas, and sometimes carry with them varying shades of meaning, and we must contextualize them in order to properly understand them.

God has chosen to vest the “excellency” of His power in His Word to perform a work in our inner man. God, who made all of creation and who holds all power, has *chosen* to operate in us by His Word. Let us not take that word lightly, but be careful to define it with the specificity He intended.

Not only are we positionally dead to our sins, but we’re functionally dead to sin itself. The question then becomes, *why do believers still “struggle” with sin*. That’s an issue that will be better understood as we work through this doctrine.

How shall we, who are dead to sin, live any longer therein, is the question posed, and what the Scripture then begins to explain for us is the *spiritual reality* of what occurred *in us* when we trusted Christ. It does not appeal to conjecture or emotion or sentimentality, all of which have their place when considering what Christ did for us to be sure, but instead begins to explain what God Himself did in us when we believed.

When we were told that Christ died for our sins, did we have anything we could physically, tangibly see to verify that fact? The only thing we have is the testimony of His written Word. Just as justification relies solely upon faith in God’s word, sanctification too is going to rely upon faith alone.

“Sanctification” is not you *doing* anything. In fact, as we will see, it is what *God* did. Our sanctified life is going to depend solely on our knowing the truth, and as Paul will say, then *reckoning* those things to be so. It is going to require us to believe what God has said.

Sanctification is more than just “not sinning.” There are plenty of people in the world who don’t struggle with particular sins but who are in no way “sanctified.” To be sanctified means to be set apart, so as for a specific purpose. The Body of Christ has a specific purpose, vocation, and destiny, *and* path of edification to get there. Of course, understanding your new identity in Christ and overcoming old sin patterns is a necessary part of our sanctification, but it’s much more than that, it’s presenting our bodies as a living sacrifice, and being transformed by the renewing of the mind, that we may *prove* the will of God (Rom. 12:1-2). Many Christians have the idea that overcoming sin is the end goal; in fact, that is just the beginning. Christ Himself as a son came *without sin* and *still* had to be perfected through suffering (Heb. 2:10); there is a work on the other side of our sin struggles that God wants to take us through, so that Christ Himself would be, as Romans 8:29 will say, *the Firstborn among many brethren*.

Examples of sanctification in the Bible:

Exodus 28:40-41

40 *And for Aaron's sons thou shalt make coats, and thou shalt make for them girdles, and bonnets shalt thou make for them, for glory and for beauty.*

41 *And thou shalt put them upon Aaron thy brother, and his sons with him; and shalt anoint them, and consecrate them, and sanctify them, that they may minister unto me in the priest's office.*

Aaron's sons were *sanctified*, or set apart, for the work of the ministry as priests in the Old Testament.

Exodus 29:32-34

32 *And Aaron and his sons shall eat the flesh of the ram, and the bread that is in the basket by the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.*

33 *And they shall eat those things wherewith the atonement was made, to consecrate and to sanctify them: but a stranger shall not eat thereof, because they are holy.*

34 *And if ought of the flesh of the consecrations, or of the bread, remain unto the morning, then thou shalt burn the remainder with fire: it shall not be eaten, because it is holy.*

The food and drink offerings themselves, which the priests ate, were sanctified, as they fulfilled a specific purpose in God's plan. We see here in verse 34 the parallel between sanctification and "holiness." Many often confuse *righteousness* with *holiness*. Holiness has to do with a thing being sanctified or set apart. We will discuss this more at length later.

Exodus 29:37

37 Seven days thou shalt make an atonement for the altar, and sanctify it; and it shall be an altar most holy: whatsoever toucheth the altar shall be holy.

Exodus 29:44-45

44 And I will sanctify the tabernacle of the congregation, and the altar: I will sanctify also both Aaron and his sons, to minister to me in the priest's office.

45 And I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will be their God.

Notice how God's "dwelling" among them requires their sanctification unto Him. This will become an important point to consider later as it parallels doctrine for the Church.

Exodus 31:13

13 Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying, Verily my sabbaths ye shall keep: for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am the Lord that doth sanctify you.