

## Believers Dealing With Sin

Harmony M.B.C., June 1, 2014

Robert P. Myers

**Rom. 6:1** What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?

**Rom. 6:2** God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?

**Rom. 6:12** Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.

**Rom. 6:13** 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.

**Rom. 6:14** For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.

Unmerited favor from God claims us as His children despite sin in our lives. Some heretics have promoted the idea that since grace is the all-encompassing panacea for sin, if believers disregard the presence of sin in their habits, if they refuse to resist sinning, if they treat sin in their lives as though it has a place there, then it will magnify grace because it demands more of God's unmerited favor to put up with it. This is what Paul is challenging here. VV. 1-2 categorically deny this. In fact, v. 2 asks a very pointed question that must be answered. "How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?"

I believe that a person who makes the argument that allowing sin to continue to be habitually in his life is OK because it magnifies grace has no idea what salvation means at all. He has never experienced any sorrow for sin that worked salvation.

Apart from that, we do know that sometimes believers use "everybody sins" as a reason for excusing their own. This is something we should never do. Despite how much sin abounds in the lives of other people, we should never use this as an excuse for continuing to pamper and allow our own sins. The heartfelt desire of every believer should be to get rid of sinful habits, and sin in all its forms.

I. Looking at the first part of Paul's statement here in our text, we want to ask the question once again, "Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?"

- This is like saying, "Let's take a knife and keep stabbing ourselves in order that the doctor may continue to have work." Or, "Let's continue to intentionally track mud on the floor, so our wife, who graciously cleans up after us, can have cleanup work to do."
- Grace has already abounded when it saved our unworthy souls
- Folks, we need to be warned by the word of the Lord that this kind of thinking is dangerous territory for a child of God (go to **Heb. 10:23-30**)
- **V. 23** - Do we know what it means to hold fast the **profession of our faith**? It means that we are to cling to the principles of that profession and act like that profession of faith dictates.
  - Let's illustrate: Let's imagine that I advertise around that I'm a carpenter. I want the public to know clearly that I'm a carpenter, so I try to talk like a carpenter and look like a carpenter. Now, suppose somebody hires me to build a house. I go out to the site, see that the foundation people have the foundation in place and it is ready to begin laying floor joists and flooring, put up the walls, etc. Now, suppose this carpenter that I am gets out his tools, and walks over to the foundation to begin work. In my hands are supposedly carpenter tools. I lay out a 2X8 to cut the first floor board for the floor system and I pull out an electric tester. Now let's imagine that I pull out a food blender to measure the length of the board with and when I get ready to drive some nails I pull out a crescent wrench. Would anybody be convinced that I was a carpenter? Or would I be

acting like the profession of carpentering dictates?

- **V. 24** - This is one of those “and by the way” verses and it connects directly to **v. 23**
  - Have we ever thought about the best way in the world to inspire people in spiritual things...like inspire them to new levels of Christian love, or inspire them to do good works themselves? It is by proving that we are serious about our profession of faith.
  - I suspect that Christian love is at a low ebb today because very few believers are inspiring others about it.
  - I have a feeling that productivity of Christians today is at its low ebb because they are not being provoked to produce by fellow-Christians around them.
- **V. 25** is another one of those “by the way” verses and here, the Lord uses what is apparently one of the most important ways that believers can provoke one another to love and good works (not forsaking the assembling)
  - He also uses the instance of believers laying out of church to remind us of the serious threat of hearing from God about continuing in sin

II. Now, let’s ask again the second question, “How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?”

- This question is what people call “rhetorical.” Paul is not looking for an explanation of how somebody might do this. He is saying this as a question to point to the fact that such a thing is not only unbelievable, but that is impossible to imagine a believer thinking like this.
  - Folks, you can say one of two things about people who continue in sinful habits: they are either lost or they are children of God headed for trouble.
- Now, let me bring the reality of this question home to each of us here by asking this: Have you ever noticed when that big fat green caterpillar that you find on your tomato plants forms a cocoon and a few weeks later comes out as this pretty green moth that it quits eating on plants? Why is that? It is because that caterpillar, in a fashion, has gone through a metamorphosis that has made him dead to the life of a caterpillar. He now lives the life of a moth.

III. Because believers are alienated from sin...that is, sin is seen by them as not a friend, not a companion, not a bosom buddy, nor something that can supply nourishment, nor something they need, Paul goes on to charge believers with a responsibility - **v.12** - “Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.”

- In this command, we see a few things:
  - 1) He engages you and me to do something about it: “Let not...” (It is a personal responsibility thing)
  - How many times have we heard preachers quote the apostle Paul (**Rom. 14:12**) “...every one of us shall give account of himself to God.”
  - 2) He directs us toward what to not let happen “let not sin...reign in your mortal bodies....”
  - 3) He points out the threat of sin being the ruler in our mortal bodies: “that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.”
    - A demanding dictator will be obeyed beyond everything else
      - ✓ One of the most obvious features of totalitarian dictators is that they do whatever is necessary to make their slave-subjects obedient
    - Sin can only rule (or reign) in a person’s body as a dictator

IV. In **v.13** Paul identifies other parts of this subjection to sin that we are to avoid: “Neither yield ye your members *as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin*”

- Now, sin being a dictator in a person's body will demand that the body serve the objectives of sin.
  - Like a conductor supervising the production of music by an orchestra, sin orchestrates the application of the body's members to generate unrighteousness
  - I think some people think that one coveted and protected sin will only affect them in a small way
  - What I think people find out is that one coveted and protected sin will engage the whole body in some way
  - It looks like when we drink a glass of water that only the mouth and intestinal tract is affected. But we know better. That water engages the whole body in a process
    - We know that when a disease virus goes into one cell, it won't be long until it has spread its effects throughout the whole body.
    - Going back to that orchestra conductor analogy, when sin begins its work, the mind sets the tempo, then each part of the body which is to be engaged in producing the final product plays its part in producing that unrighteousness...all orchestrated by the demanding dictator called sin
- The body is a wonderful creation. It can either produce that which is divine in origin, or it can produce that which is devilish in origin.
- What it can't do however, is function in either of these directions without your permission. This is the most important fact we need to remember.
- So, **v. 13** shows both sides. Don't yield yourself or your body's members to the act of producing sin, but do "yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead"
  - In this contrast he calls upon the higher person in you and I: "those that are alive from the dead."
  - He challenges us to orchestrate something more exalted than dead works: "your members *as* instruments of righteousness unto God."

V. In **v. 14**, Paul states a law of grace. This is not a wish he writes about. It is a law set by the Lord that applies to His people: "sin shall not have dominion over you."

- God didn't save us to let sin be a dictator in our lives
- If there is to be a king over us, it is to be King Jesus
  - We looked at Hebrews 10 a little bit ago to see how God deals with an attitude in any of His children where they know they are acting out sin, but they go on practicing it anyway. This method He has is exactly how He deals with the threat of sin becoming a dictator to us.