

I. Introduction

A. Romans 6:11-18 . . . Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus. [12] Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts, [13] and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. [14] For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law but under grace. [15] What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? May it never be! [16] Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone as slaves for obedience, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness? [17] But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed, [18] and having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.

B. Prayer

II. What shall we say? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? No, never!

A. As I stated at the beginning of our study of Romans, this book is full of quotable quotes and particular sections that, if taken out of context, can be used to support doctrines and theology that are neither supported by scripture in general nor taught by the church for the first fifteen hundred years. And as I stated then, this danger should compel us to give due diligence and prayer to examining each part of Romans within its larger context, and to seek to discern how previous parts prepare us for succeeding parts, and how succeeding parts are built on previous parts.

1. Admittedly, parts of Romans are not easy to understand, yet I believe God has so written the Bible that each book and each part can be understood by the least of us, if we approach God's word with a sincere heart, a humble attitude, a thoughtful mind, plenty of prayer, and the commitment to live up to what we already know.
2. When we approach Romans this way, we see that Paul wrote Romans as a cohesive whole that builds the next truth on the previous truth so that no section can be treated as if it stands alone, or as if it teaches something that differs from the truth of the whole.

3. Therefore, before discussing Romans 6:14-16, I am going to quickly review what Paul has taught from Romans 5:20-6:13.
4. In Romans 5:20-21, Paul reminds us of the role of the Mosaic Law, the growth of sin, and the outcome of sin (*which is death*). And he reminds us that the grace of God is so abundant and powerful that it can overcome sin's destructive power, restore life to those who are dead in their sins, and enable us to live a new, righteous life.
5. In Romans 6, Paul begins talking about the Christian's relationship to sin, how God has freed the Christian from the power and practice of sin, why sin no longer is to be a part of a Christian's life, how the Christian is to deal with sin, and that dying to sin is only half the process – rising to live a new life of righteousness is the other half.
6. Finally, Paul speaks of dying to sin and rising to newness of life in three interrelated, inseparable ways. There is the spiritual or mystical part, the mental or mindset part, and the practical or daily working it out part. In vs 11, he talks about the mental or mindset part, and in vs 12-13, he talks about the practical part where God has given us the responsibility to do certain things in order to walk and grow in newness of life. And this brings us to vs 14, where Paul says:

B. Romans 6:14 . . . For sin shall not (*ought not, must not*) be master over you, for you are not under law but under grace.

1. I'm going to spend a few minutes talking about this statement because understanding it is important to understanding the second half of Romans 6, which begins with Paul's second question.
2. The first thing I want to point out is that the words "shall not" mean ought not or must not. In other words, Paul is saying that sin ought not or must not be master over you. And the immediate context for this "ought not" is this section where Paul is explaining how, in practical ways, we are to put off sin and put on Christ-likeness, or that we are to stop obeying sin and start obeying God.
 - a. As you recall, in vs 8-10, Paul used the example of Jesus death and resurrection to make the point that Jesus died to sin, one time for all time, and rose to live unto God, from the time of His resurrection forward. And Paul's purpose in using this example in this unique way, is to show us that in dying to sin, one time for all time, death no longer was master over Jesus.
 - b. Then Paul uses this example of Jesus dying to sin and rising to live unto God to urge us to work out, in very personal and practical ways, the fact that we have died to sin, one time for all

time, and have risen to newness of life, never to return to serving sin again. However, in doing this, Paul makes two slight changes.

(1) First, Paul speaks of Christ as having died to sin never to die again. But in applying this example to us, he makes a slight change, and instead of saying we cannot sin any longer, he says, do not allow sin to regain control over your body, and do not hand over the various members of your body to participate in sin. In other words, what we CAN do, by God's grace, we must choose to do and persistently work at doing if we are going to do it.

(2) Second, in referring to Christ's rising to live unto God, Paul says death no longer IS master over Christ, whereas in addressing the practical side of living out the fact that we have died with Christ and then been raised from the watery grave of baptism to live unto God, Paul says sin SHALL NOT or ought not or must not be master over you – inferring that it still can if we choose it to be or allow it to be.

c. Do you see the difference? And yet, it must be this way, for though the comparison between Christ and us makes the point Paul wants to make, it is not a perfect comparison. And why is it imperfect? Because –

(1) Christ is perfect, but we are still on the way to spiritual perfection.

(2) Christ will never die again, but even though we never have to sin again, and even though we ought never sin again, we can and we probably will sin again.

(3) Death no longer is master over Christ. He won't ever die again. However, even though Christ's redemptive work has broken the power of sin over us, we still have the ability and freedom to sin while in this human body. In fact, we can choose to hand ourselves back over to sin so as to serve sin. Peter put it this way – we can become like the dog who returns to its own vomit, and like the sow, who after being washed, returns to wallow in the mire (2 Peter 2:20-22).

(4) Therefore, instead of completing the comparison between Christ and us by saying that, "Sin no longer is master over you," Paul says, "Sin shall not (*ought not, must not*) be master over you."

3. The second thing I want us to look at regarding vs 14 are the words: "for you are not under law but under grace."

- a. The word “law” is translated with a small “l” by every Bible and commentary I have checked – and the “l” is supported by the context. If the word “law” began with a “L” it would mean Paul was referring to the Mosaic Law. But because it is a “l”, we know that he is not referring to the Mosaic Law – in whole or in part.
 - (1) At this point I want to remind you that on the second Sunday of our Roman’s study, we talked about the various ways Paul uses the word “law” in Romans. So if you want to refresh your memory of those various ways, you can look at that teaching.
 - (2) Now, as I said then, the word law appears 78 times in Romans. In the NASB, 50 of the 78 have the capital “L” and 28 are in the lower case. However, Paul uses the 50 that are capitalized in five different ways, and the 28 that are lowercase in three different ways. Therefore, we must carefully examine the context to discern how the word “law” is being used. And this context tells us that Paul is using the word “law” to speak of the law in general or the law as a principle.
 - b. The word “grace” appears 18 times in Romans.
 - (1) In all cases, the grace Paul is speaking of comes from either God or from His son, Jesus Christ.
 - (2) And in all cases, grace is given for a purpose, such as fulfilling the duties of one’s spiritual gift, such as apostleship. Grace is also involved in justification and eternal life, in setting us free from the enslaving power of sin, and ending the practice of sin. And grace is given to enable us to live righteously.
4. Therefore, when Paul says that sin shall not (*ought not, must not*) be master over you, because you are not under law but under grace, he is telling us that there is no reason to allow sin to rule over you, or to resubmit to sin as your master because you are not living under the rule of law but under the rule of grace.
- a. If you were living under the rule of law, the law would tell you what to do, warn you about the consequences of failure, judge you according to the standards of the law, and if guilty, punish you accordingly.
 - (1) But remember, the law has no inherent ability to assist or empower you live according to the dictates of the law.
 - (2) And the law knows nothing about repentance, mercy, or forgiveness. Those who administer the law may choose to show mercy and forgive, but there is no provision for such

things in the law. Besides, the law provides no means for reconciling damaged or broken relationships between the law give and the law breaker (*God and us*).

- (3) In other words, the law cannot help you live according to its commands or show mercy when you fail. It simply commands and judges according to its own established standards.
- b. In contrast to the law, there is grace, that is, God's grace. And like the law, God's grace includes demands – such as moral demands, the requirement to respect, reverence, and love God, and the command to love others as ourselves.
 - (1) However, unlike the law, God's grace goes before us and breaks the powerful hold sin has over us.
 - (2) God's grace comes along side us and provides ongoing empowerment and daily assistance to help us live according to the demands of righteousness.
 - (3) God's grace works in the background to protect us from being tempted beyond what we can handle.
 - (4) And should we disobey, negligently or even deliberately, God's grace includes mercy and forgiveness, if we repent, confess our sin, and return to doing what we know is right.
5. Therefore, because we are not under the law (*as a principle*), but under God's grace, we ought not, and we do not have to allow sin to rule over us ever again. If we continue to knowingly practice sin, it is because we choose that over God and God's way of righteousness.

C. Romans 6:15 . . . What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? May it never be!

1. Considering all Paul said and inferred in vs 14, it seems strange that he would ask this question.
 - a. However, as with his first question in vs 1, there were those in his day and there are those in our day who want to believe that God's grace is of such a nature as to make it safe to sin willfully and repeatedly.
 - b. And there are those who want to use God rather than become a slave of God, who want God to save them from the fires of hell while showing them mercy and forgiveness for the sins they don't want to give up, or are too lazy to drive out.
2. Therefore, Paul asks this question to deal with those who are afraid to sin under the unmerciful, unforgiving law, but willing to take advantage of God's merciful grace. And like his first question, this

question focuses on treating God's grace as a safety net for continuing in sin after conversion. And Paul's answer is exactly the same as the answer to his first question: NO! NEVER!

3. Then Paul explains why we are not to sin anymore. And this time, instead of explaining we cannot sin because we are dead to sin, he explains that if we go on sinning it means we are serving sin. And his point is that no one serving sin can be under grace, for God extends His grace to those who obey Him and serve righteousness, not to those who obey sin and serve unrighteousness. Listen carefully –

D. Romans 6:16 . . . Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone as slaves for obedience, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness?

1. The essence of Paul's answer is this: If you are knowingly and willfully continuing in sin, for any reason, you are still a slave of sin, and serving sin only results in death. You must present yourself to God as His slave, and obey Him – which results in living a righteous life – if you are to come under God's grace.
2. John said it this way: "Little children, make sure no one deceives you; the one who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous; [8] the one who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning...No one who is born of God practices sin, because God's seed abides in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. [10] By this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious: anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God" (1 John 3:7-10).
3. With this short explanation in mind, I want us to look deeper into this answer that Paul's gives us.
4. First, we see that we are not as free as we may think. According to this scripture, there are only two masters. Therefore, we either serve Satan or God, sin or righteousness, the flesh or the Spirit.
 - a. But why can't we serve both? Because no one can serve two masters.
 - b. Well, what if we don't serve either? That too is impossible, because no one among us is so free as to have no master.
5. Second, regardless of whom we claim to serve, the one we obey is the one we are serving. Therefore, if we are obeying sin, we are serving sin. If we are obeying God, we are serving God. And how do we know we are obeying sin? If we are willingly committing the same

sin, repeatedly and unrepentantly, we are serving sin. And how do we know we are obeying God? If we are making a worthy effort to live up to the truth we know, and if we fail, we confess and return to making a worthy effort at living up to what we know, we are serving God.

6. My final point about vs 16 begins back in vs 15, where Paul implies that no one in his right mind would sin while under the law, because the law is too strict. Then he implies there are those who feel safe to continue in sin because they think God's grace is tolerant of repeated sin and willful sinners.
 - a. However, in explaining his answer (vs 16), he makes no mention of law or grace. Instead, he focuses his answer on whom we are serving.
 - b. Now you may think he is changing comparisons, but he isn't. Both law and grace require obedience. The law requires obedience to the law giver, and grace requires obedience to God, who is the giver of grace.
7. What Paul is doing here in vs 16, is putting the focus on whom we obey, because that is what demonstrates whether we are serving sin or serving righteousness.
 - a. The only possible outcome of serving sin is death. And without question, sin – or the devil – have no ability to offer grace of any kind. Plus, it is against their nature to be gracious, for their goal is our spiritual destruction and eternal separation from God.
 - b. Grace comes only from God, and He bestows it on those who obey Him (*i.e., it is not the hearers of the Law who are just before God, but the doers of the Law will be justified - Rom 2:13*).
8. Therefore, the significance of the truth Paul is presenting here is this: Those who have repented and presented themselves to God as slaves for obedience, have entered into the grace of God. Being obedient slaves of God, they serve no one else, and especially not sin, which is why they no longer continue in sin, but rather press forward in continuing to live righteously.

III. Conclusion

- A. May we find truth, conviction, hope, direction, and encouragement to press forward in the Christian life as we ponder these words of Romans 6.