

FIGHTING A BATTLE THAT'S ALREADY WON

In 1972 two men were hunting on the south-seas island of Guam when they made a startling discovery. They found a Japanese soldier. His name was Shoichi Yokoi. This man had been living on the island, in a jungle cave, for 28 years.

It was 1972, but Yokoi was still fighting World War II.

At one point, Yokoi found a pamphlet dropped by a U.S. plane offering amnesty to Japanese soldiers, but Yokoi chalked it up to war time propaganda.

For 28 years Yokoi lived in constant fear. He spent his days in the cave. He only came out at night. He ate frogs, rats, snails, nuts, and mangoes. The war was over, the victory won, the world had

changed. Yokoi could've enjoyed a new life had he only believed and received the good news he had earlier rejected.

I bring up this story because it parallels the experience of many Christians.

Too many of us endure a self-imposed bondage. Rather than walk in the light of God's grace we live in a cave called *doubt*. We spend our time fighting a battle that's already been won – against an enemy that's already been defeated.

The truth taught in Romans 6-8 is the good news - that if believed - has the power to set us free. Understand these truths and it will change your life.

Devotion Box - Don't Disgrace God's Grace

At the end of chapter 5 Paul made a statement, "where sin abounded, grace abounded much more..." Paul was conveying a glorious truth – *grace has no limits*. Sin might be strong, but grace is stronger. Sin can never dig a hole that grace can't plunge. A literal translation reads, "Where sin abounds, grace superabounds."

But Paul understands his comment might be misinterpreted. Someone might say, "*Hey, if the more we sin, the more grace God supplies, then it's our duty to really whip it up. It gives God more of an opportunity to show off His grace.*"

In fact, the Russian heretic Rasputin adopted this philosophy. He wrote, "If you are simply an ordinary sinner, you are not giving God an opportunity to show His glory, so you need to be an extraordinary sinner." For Rasputin and others, God's grace became an excuse to sin. They brought disgrace to God's grace.

Paul addresses this heresy in Romans 6. In verse 1 he asks, "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?" And his answer in verse 2... "Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?"

Paul's words, "Certainly not!", are emphatic. He answers with the strongest negative the Greek language offers. The NASB translates it, "May it never be!" The RSV... "By no means!" The Living Bible... "Of course not!" The KJV... "God forbid!" The NEB... "No, no!" The Phillips translation... "What a ghastly thought!" The Jewish NT... "Heaven forbid!" And the Sandy paraphrase... "No way, Jose!"

If you're thinking, "*Well, if God is going to treat me as if I'd never sinned regardless, why not sin to the hilt...*," then you don't understand God's grace. Write it down... God's grace is never an excuse for us to sin.

Devotion Box - A Double Cure

Up until now Paul has been describing Jesus' work *for us* – but He's also done a work *in us*. Faith in Christ *cleanses us of our sin*, but it also *changes us our nature*.

It delivers us from both the penalty of sin and the power of sin. This is what the writer of the famous old hymn, Rock of Ages, meant when he penned the line, "Be of sin the double cure, save from wrath and make me pure." *The double cure!*

In other words, Jesus has done more than just provide our lives a new paint job. He's overhauled the engine. And here in Romans 6, Paul pops the hood on the Christian life to reveal the transformation that occurs in the life of the believer.

Devotion Box - Dead Or Alive?

Two old country boys were playing with a turtle they'd found in the street. One of the guys pulled out his knife and chopped off the turtle's head – yet the turtle kept walking across the blacktop. This caused an argument...

The first guy said, "The turtle is dead. It doesn't have a head." The second old boy answered, "No, it can't be dead- it's still walking." Finally Bubba walks up, and they ask him, "Is this turtle dead or alive?" Bubba thought for a minute, then he replied, "Well boys, it seems to me the turtle is dead, he just don't know it yet."

That's the problem with many believers. We're dead to sin, and alive to God. We just don't know it and really believe it as true.

ROMANS SIX - KNOW, RECKON, PRESENT

Romans 6 is the spiritual schematic of our new life in Christ. Three words stand out in the chapter that serve as an outline. Verse 6, “know”. Verse 11, “reckon”. And verse 13, “present”.

KNOW

Romans 6:6, “knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin.” If you read the first 5 verses of the chapter you’ll see that Paul is explaining our union with Christ. We’ve been baptized, or initiated into Christ.

In a spiritual sense we now share in all that He’s done and accomplished. Verse 3 states, “as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?” According to verse 2, when Jesus *died for sin - we died to sin*. A change occurred in us.

Of course, the first question is, *how can this be?*

It’s strange to think we can share in an event that occurred 2000 years before we were born, and in a place we’ve never been... yet that’s what Paul tells us. Pascal once wrote, “One of the greatest principles of Christianity - is that which happened in Jesus Christ may happen in the soul of the Christian.”

Think of it this way. In the making of a movie, the scenes are first shot with the actors only. Later, the technicians dub the special effects and music on top of the original footage.

In God’s mind when you came to Jesus, you were dubbed in over the crucifixion. God transposed *my old man over His only Son*. Now when God rewinds the footage of the crucifixion, there you are crucified with Christ. Frank Gaebelin writes, “Our spiritual

history began at the cross.”

On the cross our old man - the sinful nature inherited from Adam - was crucified. It’s dead and buried. God has birthed a new nature within us.

Yes, as long as I live in a fallen world and inhabit fallen flesh, I will still sin. But no longer do I sin because my nature demands it. I have a new nature, one whose impulse is to love God and love other people. The real me - the inner me - the eternal me is indeed a new creation in Christ, and no longer stained with sin.

In high school I dated a girl who had a German shepherd. He was a mean dog, and I insisted she chain him. When I came to pick her up I could see it growling and licking its chops, but I proceeded, because I saw the chain around its neck. But as we walked to the car, I noticed the other end of the chain lying loose in the middle of the garage. The dog was free, but didn’t know it...

As the story goes, when the dog was younger it would run out to the end of the chain and be jerked backwards. It learned to go only as far as the chain allowed, then stop. It became such a habit that the other end of the chain no longer had to be secured.

There are lots of Christians like that dog. They’re on a chain called sin, but it’s not tied. The old man is dead. They can walk away if they just believe.

RECKON

Verse 11, “Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.” The word translated “reckon” means “to consider it so” or “to treat it as true”.

God wants us to see ourselves as new creations in Christ - dead to sin, alive to God. We need to adopt a new identity in Christ. We’re no longer sinners trying to be saints - we’re saints who’re learning how not to sin. We’ve become, first and foremost, children of God. This is not just wishful thinking, or positive confession. Hey, reckoning it so doesn’t make it so. We reckon it so, because it is so!

My favorite actor is John Wayne, who once made the statement, “When I take a role, I play John Wayne-regardless of the character I happen to be portraying!” Dress him up in Civil War attire, or cowboy chaps, or a marine uniform - and John always projected the same persona.

This is how we need to live as believers. No matter where we’re at, who we’re with, what we’re doing... we need to see ourselves as dead to sin and alive to God. If we see ourselves as Christians we’ll act like it. Identity determines behavior.

PRESENT

Verse 13, “And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.” In Romans 6 Paul views man as a dichotomy - there’s the inner man and the outer man. When we come to Christ, spiritually we’re made new, but outwardly we remain the same. Our members are accustomed and prone to sin. A Christian is transformed at the core, but his members need rehabilitation.

In my spirit I now love God - but in my hands and feet and eyes and thoughts, I’ve been conditioned by selfishness. It’s up to me to redirect my members - realign them with what I’ve become in Christ, and

present to God as His instruments.

Paul says in verse 19, “For just as you presented your members as slaves of uncleanness, and of lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves of righteousness for holiness.” Be as aggressive at seeking heavenly things as you once were at raising hell. People think being a Christian means “settling down”. Who says? A Christian life is still grabbing for the gusto... it’s just realizing that the real gusto is found in God.

Paul says in verse 23, “For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Why be a slave to sin? Sin leads to death. Be a slave to God - it leads to eternal life.

MARRIED TO MR. PERFECT

Living under the Law was like being married to Mr. Perfect. Ladies, imagine waking up in the AM, rolling over to kiss your hubby, and there he is, Mr. Perfect - not a single hair out of place - a smile on his face. He leaps out of bed to do his 100 sit-ups. He races downstairs to prepare your breakfast. And we're not talking sweet rolls and coffee. No way! This is the perfect breakfast: skim milk, tomato juice, fresh fruit, and a bowl of granola.

This sounds good at first... but before long, Mr. Perfect expects perfection from you. He points out how you need to shed a few pounds, suggests that you cut out chocolate, and eat more granola. He's always running a white glove over the top of the fridge, and checking for dirt behind the kids' ears.

After a while Mr. Perfect turns into Mr. Pest. In fact, life with Mr. Perfect gets so frustrating you

want a divorce... *but on what grounds?* After all, your husband is perfect!

In desperation you try to kill him. You poison his tomato juice, but he's so healthy it doesn't faze him. Finally, you realize the only way out is to die yourself.

And that's Paul's point in 7:4, "Therefore, my brethren, you also have become dead to the law through the body of Christ, that you may be married to another - to Him who was raised from the dead, that we should bear fruit to God." We were bound to the Law as long as we were alive, but as Christians we died with Christ. Our union with Christ ended our obligation to both sin and the law. We're now married, not to *the Law*, but to *the Lord!*

Romans 6 explains how a believer in Jesus is dead to sin. Romans 7 explains how we're also dead to the Law... and both realizations are vital to victory.

THE PITFALL OF THE LAW

In verse 5 Paul identifies the problem he had with the Law - *it aroused his sinful passions*.

Let me illustrate. Let's say you instruct a child not to snatch a cookie - but the moment you issue the command, in the child's mind, that cookie jar begins to loom larger. Before the prohibition, the child may not have even thought about a cookie, but now *the cookies* are all that's on his mind.

We have a problem here at the church with people driving by and throwing beer cans onto the front lawn. In response, let's say we posted a sign that read, "Don't throw beer cans on the church lawn." What do you think would happen? The next day the church would look like a fraternity house after a Bulldog game. There would be beer cans everywhere. All the rules do is provide the sinner a tar-

get. Hearts are changed by the Holy Spirit, not the holy standard.

If you're a believer, your focus is on Jesus - His love, His pardon, His power. That is, until I interject the law. Chocolate ice cream is prohibited. Chocolate ice cream is full of calories and fat. I need to stay away from thick, creamy, delicious chocolate ice cream. But the more I think about chocolate ice cream, the more I want a bowl. The harder I try to resist it, the stronger the temptation becomes.

Under the Law the issue is *the sin in my life*. Under grace the issue is *the Son in my life*. It's the joy I find in Jesus that lessens sin's appeal, and neutralizes its temptation. I progress as a Christian by believing my sin has been dealt with on the cross, and preoccupying myself with *following the Son* - not *fighting the sin*.

Devotion Box - The Christian's Struggle

Romans 7:15-19 describes the struggle all Christians experience at times... "For what I am doing, I do not understand. For what I will to do, that I do not practice; but what I hate, that I do... But now, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me. For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find. For the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice."

Paul is *a redeemed spirit packaged in a corrupt flesh*. He says in verse 17, "it is no longer I who do it..." At his spiritual core... the real Paul is pure and holy. But in his members sin is still present. And Paul is responsible for his members.

Paul confesses in verse 21, "For I find then a law, that evil is

present with me, the one who wills to do good." Peterson's paraphrases, "I truly delight in God's commands, but it's pretty obvious that not all of me joins in that delight."

Verse 22, "I delight in the law of God according to the inward man. But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind..." It's a constant struggle! In my heart I want to follow, but my flesh sabotages my obedience.

Here's a poem, "Within my earthly temple there's a crowd. There's one of us that's humble, one that's proud. One that's broken-hearted for his sins. One that's unrepentant - sits and grins. One that loves his neighbor as himself, and one that cares for nothing but fame and pomp and self. From much care I should be free. If I could once determine which of these is me..."

Bible Scan - Romans 6-8

Calvary Chapel

If you have questions on tonight's study email Pastor Sandy - sandyadams@calvarychapel.org
For back issues of Bible Scan study guides: www.calvarychapelstonemountain.com/biblescan.htm

Calvary Chapel Announcements - Men's Prayer Breakfast, Saturday, May 4th at 8 AM
Men's Raft Trip, Sunday, May 19th—Monday, May 20th
High School/Middle School Retreat: Sunday, July 14th—Sunday, July 21st
Kid's Camp: 1-2nd grade, Tues, 7/16—Thurs 7/18; 3rd—5th grade, Thurs, 7/18—Sun, 7/21
- Next Bible Scan - April 28, 2002 - Romans 9-11

“And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.” - Romans 8:28

Bible Scan
Memory Verse

TIME TO REBOOT

Let me set up chapter 8 in computing terms. Like a computer we consist of hardware and software. Your physical body is the hardware, but it's controlled by software... by mind-sets, beliefs, assumptions, and perspectives.

Imagine two operating systems - both loaded onto your hard drive. One is *the law of the Spirit of life*. The other is *the law of sin and death* - which by the way, was an Apple product - first launched in the Garden of Eden. Each day you have a choice. Which operating system am I going to boot up that day? Will I orientate my life around the Spirit - or will I gravitate toward the things of the flesh?

When Paul came to Jesus, the Lord erased the sinful nature and downloaded a new nature. New software was installed. But for new software to run, what has to happen? You've got to reboot. Change your mentality from pride to trust - flesh to faith - grit to grace.

Paul says in 8:5, “For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.” Are you performance-oriented, or faith-based? Are you sweat or Spirit?

Verse 6 tells us, “For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.” Outlook determines outcome. Identity shapes behavior. Do you have a spiritual mindset - or do you rarely think of God? To win the battle Paul described at the end of chapter 7, we need to be spiritually minded.

I don't know much about computers, but I've learned one truth over the years - when all else fails, reboot. And this also applies to my spiritual life. When I begin to struggle - when I find myself doing what I hate and not doing what I want to do - I reboot! *I check my mind-set: is it law, or grace— faith, or works— flesh, or Spirit?*

LIFE IN THE SPIRIT

Verses 12-13 tell us to *live by the Spirit*. Hey, we owe nothing to the flesh. Often our pride wants us to prove our worth or righteousness. We forget we can do nothing on our own. Live in the Spirit.

Verse 14 tells us we're to be *led by the Spirit*. “Led” means “to be carried or driven”. When I'm at the beach I love to body surf. You can stretch out on a wave and it'll pick you up and propel you to shore. The same is true with the Holy Spirit. Stretch out your faith and He'll carry your life.

Verses 15-17 tell us we are *loved by the Spirit*. Verse 15 calls the Holy Spirit the “Spirit of adoption” - He makes us part of God's family.

We're told he even cries out within us, “Abba” - an Aramaic word which can be translated, “Daddy, or Papa”. It's a term of closeness, or endearment. The Spirit provides us an intimacy with God.

The Spirit also bears witness with our spirit - He confirms our connection with God. The Spirit is the dial tone that lets me know I'm connected. I've got a line. I'm God's child and heir of all His riches.

Guys, I could tell my kids over and over I love them, but if I never hugged my daughter, or gave my son a high-five it would be a hollow love. Think of the Holy Spirit as the hug of the Godhead. We feel God's love through the Holy Spirit.

Devotion Box - Groanings Around, Groanings Within, Groanings On Behalf

There are three groanings mentioned in Romans 8 - *the groaning around us - the groaning within us - and the Spirit's groaning on behalf of us*.

First, the creation groans. Julie Andrews sings, “The hills are alive with the sound of music”, but they sing in a minor key - nature's song is a funeral dirge. Sin knocked nature out of sync with God and subjected it to randomness. Nature longs for God to redeem it and return it to its original state.

Second, we also groan. Paul says we “groan for the redemp-

tion of our bodies”. The older I get, the more of this groaning I do. I'm looking forward to a new and improved body.

Finally, the Spirit intercedes for us through indecipherable groanings. The Holy Spirit is the perfect prayer partner.

Understand God has a purpose for our groanings - groaning causes growing. We are *adopted into God's family* - and that causes us to rejoice. But we are also *adapted into God's family* - and that causes us to groan. It's called growing pains.