**Sermon Title: The Stripping of Sin’s Dominating Power, Part 1**

**Sermon Text: Romans 6:1-3**

**Sermon Purpose: To show the believer that he has been liberated from sin’s reign by the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus.**

**Sermon Proposition: Paul provides 3 aspects of the believer’s liberation from habitual sin.**

“Throughout church history Christian groups have fallen into the error of, insisting that conformity to countless man-made regulations and ceremonies are necessary for true godliness. The Church has always been in danger of contamination by false believers who wickedly use the freedom of the gospel as justification for sin. The life that is not basically marked by holiness has no claim to salvation. It is true that no believer will be sinless until he goes to be with the Lord by death or by rapture, but a professed believer who persistently disregards Christ’s Lordship and His standards of righteousness by disobedience has no claim on Christ’s Saving Grace.” [The MacArthur New Testament Commentary Romans 1-8]

“The Westminster Larger Catechism puts it like this: Question: ‘Wherein do justification and sanctification differ?’ Answer: ‘Although sanctification be inseparably joined with justification, yet they differ in that God in justification imputeth the righteousness of Christ; in sanctification his Spirit infuseth grace, and enableth to exercise thereof; in the former, sin is pardoned; in the other, it is subdued.” [Douglas J. Moo, Then New International Commentary on the New Testament; The Epistle to the Romans, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, Michigan. 1996, p. 350]

The basic idea Paul is dealing with is the Holiness of the believers who have been justified by faith. The believer can’t live as they once did because they are no longer the person they once were. Believers are dead to sin, alive to God.

Paul was dealing with an obvious objection to the doctrine of justification by faith: there were those who believed such an idea of declaring people righteous only encourages more freedom to sin.

Paul’s reply is that the believer must know that through our union with Jesus Christ in His death, burial and resurrection, we have died to the rule of sin and have been made alive to the virtue of holiness.

**I. The rebels of the believer’s liberation in Christ. V.1**

**II. The reaction to the believer’s liberation in Christ. V.2**

**III. The reasoning for the believer’s liberation in Christ. V.3**

**I. The rebels of the believer’s liberation in Christ. V.1**

A. Grace does not **provide** a believer free reign to live in sin. V.1a

The typical religious Jew of Paul’s day could not comprehend placing God apart from a strict adherence to the Mosaic and rabbinic law. To them, conformity to such law was the embodiment of godliness.

Legalistic Jews would charge the Apostle with that sort of antinomianism, of contradicting the laws of God and advocating moral and spiritual license, to do as one pleases.

“That is exactly the perverted interpretation taught by the infamous Rasputin, religious adviser to the ruling Romanov family of Russia in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. He taught and exemplified the antinomian view of salvation through repeated experiences of sin and false repentance. He believed that the more you sin, the more God gives you grace. So the more you sin with abandon, the more you give God the opportunity to glorify Himself. Rasputin declared that 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.” [John MacArthur, The John MacArthur New Testament Commentary Romans 1-8, Moody Press, Chicago, 1991,

p. 314]

The Greek word “Epimeno” (to continue) carries the idea of habitual persistence. Paul was not speaking of occasional falling into sin [***Galatians 6:1*** *Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted.*], but of intentional willful sinning as an established pattern of life.

The legalist in trying to avoid the liberal view and protect the faith from the idea of freedom to sin because of grace, however, injected a just as equally dangerous idea that salvation as well as spirituality – even for believers in Christ – is produced by conformity to external laws or rules.

Under the leadership of the Holy Spirit, the Apostle avoided the extreme of legalism and libertarianism. A saving relationship with God is undeniably linked to holy living, and a holy life is lived by the power of God working in and through the heart of the true believer. Paul was addressing the believer’s occasional falling into sin, as every Christian does at times because of weakness and imperfections of the unredeemed flesh.

B. Grace does not need **legalistic** rules to produce holiness. V.1b

**II. The reaction to the believer’s liberation in Christ. V.2**

The idea or suggestion that sin could in any way please or glorify was repulsive to Paul. Phillips translates “What a ghastly thought!” Not only disgusting, but impossible is the idea of “megenoito” “may it never be.”

How can the Christian who at one point in time in the past (second aorist tense) died to sin still live in it?

Paul argues that believers have died to sin. He does not mean that our sin nature, or fleshly nature has been removed or eliminated at the cross or at the moment of conversion and baptism. Instead, as he said elsewhere, God has rescued us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of the Son He loves [***Colossians 1:13*** *He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love,*]. Having experienced such a transferred and transformation inwardly, how dare we go on living habitually in sin?

Donald Grey Barnhouse states, “Holiness starts where justification finishes, and if holiness does not start we have no right to suspect that justification started.” [Romans, Vol 3 (Grand Rapids: Edermans, 1961) 2:12]

This idea refers not to the believers ongoing daily struggle with sin, but to a one-time event completed in the past. Because we are “in Christ” (6:11; 8:1), and He died in our place (5:6-8), we are counted dead with Him to sin.

**Colossians 3:3** For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.

**2 Corinthians 5:17** Therefore, if anyone *is* in Christ, *he is* a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.

Therefore, the person who is alive in Christ has died to sin once and for all, and it is inconceivable and self-contradicting to propose that a believer can henceforth live in the sin from which he was delivered by death.

Only the most perverted logic could argue that continuing in the sin from which he has supposedly been saved somehow honors the Holy God who sacrificed His only Son for sin.

(**1 Cor 6:11ff**)

**III. The reasoning for the believer’s liberation in Christ. V.3**

A. The uniformed **affirmation** of liberation in Christ. V.3a

In defense of his claim that believers have died to sin, Paul points out that through salvation we were baptized into Jesus Christ and His death.

As R. Mounce put it, “Christ’s death for sin becomes our death to sin.” [Romans, 149]

**Galatians 5:24** And those *who are* Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. **25** If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

B. The uniformed **identification** of liberation in Christ. V.3b

This does not refer to water baptism. Paul is actually using the word “baptized” in a metaphysical sense, as we might in saying someone was immersed in His work, or underwent His baptism of fire when experiencing some trouble.

**1 Corinthians 10:1** Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud, all passed through the sea, **2** all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, **3** all ate the same spiritual food, **4** and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ.

All Christians by placing saving faith in Him, have been spiritually immersed into the person of Jesus Christ, that is, united and identified with Him. [cf. …

**1 Corinthians 6:17** But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit *with Him*.

**1 Corinthians 10:2** all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea,

**1 Peter 3:21** There is also an antitype which now saves us-- baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,

**1 John 1:3** that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship *is* with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.

**Acts 2:38** Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.