

Romans 6:1-11  
Monday, 22<sup>nd</sup>, January, 2023

### Die to sin and live to Christ

Hello everyone! I wonder that everyone is struggling from New Year's weight gain at this new year season. ^^We might be thankful that we all would have a pleasant New Year's with our family and friends.

How have you all been learning the book of Romans since last year? It's a little difficult, isn't it? But as I study Romans in detail, I become very proud of my faith in Jesus Christ. How about you? The book of Romans has 16 chapters, but we are starting with chapter 6 today, so we are a little less than halfway through. Especially chapters 6, 7, and 8, which we are going to study, are very important parts of the book of Romans. They are called the diamond of the book of Romans. The meaning of Christ's death and resurrection, sanctification of believers, and the work of the Holy Spirit will come out in detail. I pray that the Holy Spirit will work in each one of us so that we can understand the Word of God clearly.

Let's start from verse 1. "What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase?" This is the response of the people to verses 20 and 21 of chapter 5. In my last message, I said that, according to the Bible, Christ's grace abounds where sin and weakness are more increased. This was saying how great and powerful and thankful it is for Christ's grace to save sinful and weak people. But it seems that there were those who did not understand the meaning of these words thinking they were naive. Some were saying, "Well, then, let's sin a lot so we can have more grace!" There are not many children in this world who repeat bad things over and over again, saying that they have kind parents who will forgive them no matter how many times they do it. But for some reason, there were people in the Church of Rome who misunderstood the grace of the gospel and said that it was okay to sin without doing the right thing. This is a controversial issue even today in certain heresies.

What does the Apostle Paul say on this issue? He says firmly, "NO!" Look at verse 2. "By no means! We are those who have died to sin; how can we live in it any longer?" He explains this with the example of baptism. Look at verse 3, "Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?" Almost all of us have been baptized here. But I would like to examine the spiritual meaning of baptism for some of you who have not yet been baptized. Look at verses 4 and 5. "We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the

glory of the Father, we too may live a new life (4). For if we have been united with him in a death like this, we will certainly also be united with him in resurrection (5)." 'Baptism' means "immersion" in Greek. Last year, Jay's baptism was a drip baptism in the form of sprinkling water on his head, but behind him was a big Arakawa River. I am still moved when I picture that scene. I am sure there are many others who were baptized by immersion here. This may feel more real. Once you sink into the water, you stop breathing. "Oh, I'm in pain." For a second you are dead. It is a funeral experience. Then, after a few seconds, you get up out of the water and breathe, "Oh, I'm alive!" We have been attending church since this baptism until now, so you may be wondering why I am giving you an example about baptism now, but I thought, surprisingly, we may not know what this means. Because, even I had not fully understood before.

So, what exactly does baptism mean spiritually? The apostle Paul repeats it more specifically. Look at verses 6 and 7. "For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body ruled by sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin (6), because anyone who has died has been set free from sin (7)." Let me summarize what we have seen so far in verses 4-7.

The old self before the crucifixion  
was a being judged by sin  
was a mortal being in terms of eternity  
was a slave to sin  
was in the likeness of death  
received the reign of sin

Under the cross the old self was crucified.  
died with Jesus Christ  
slavery gone  
death's appearance gone

New self-resurrected with Jesus Christ  
Resurrected with Jesus Christ  
Got a new life  
Live forever  
Freed from sin  
Received the reign of grace.

Today I would like to go through a spiritual understanding of the actual death and resurrection of the "old self". I have heard this example before from a pastor. The story I am about to tell you is not from the Bible, but it is a mini-drama of about 2 minutes, so please listen to it.

There were two certain brothers. The older brother was an honor student and always kind. However, the younger brother was invited by his delinquent friends to play around with them since junior high school, and when he grew up, he joined an organized gang. I don't know which gangs involved in him. Anyway, he started to follow the boss's orders and commit crimes. In the end, the younger brother committed a very serious crime and was sentenced to death. At this time, his kind older brother said to him, " I will go to court on your behalf, stand trial, and receive the death sentence, and you will live right from now on." The young brother agreed to this outrageous proposal, and eventually his brother was sentenced to death and died. The younger brother was sad for his brother, but he made up his mind to live like his brother and started a new life.

This thing that would never happen in this world actually happened spiritually through our elder brother, Jesus Christ. **Roman 8:29, "For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters."** Jesus Christ is our elder brother, God's firstborn son. Our old self died spiritually when this elder brother, Jesus died for us. And we are free from sin because of Him. **Rom. 4:25, "He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification."** Jesus Christ died in our place; we can live this life with dignity as sinless people. Is that really possible?

Now let's go back again to the mini-drama I told earlier. One day one police officer saw the younger brother on the street. The police said, "Hey, I know you. The scoundrel who committed that terrible crime! Right now, go to court and atone for your crime!" He was caught and made to stand in court. The trial began. So, ladies and gentlemen, is the younger brother guilty? Is he innocent? If you dozed off, please listen to the recording. The answer is 'innocent'.

Look at **verse 8,9. "Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him (8). For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him (9)."** Jesus Christ died once to save Himself from the dominion of death over people. But the resurrected Jesus Christ will not die a second time. Thanks to the death of the kind brother, the younger brother does not have to undergo the death penalty again. Thus, because Jesus Christ died once for us, we do not have to die and we are not ruled by death. This is a great, great blessing! The moment we believed in Jesus, this kind of

heavenly creation happened spiritually!

How should we, who are in this amazing new life, live? Look at verses 10 and 11. "The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God (10). In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus (11). Jesus Christ died on the cross, was resurrected, and now lives in the presence of God the Father. Therefore, we should also live before God. In order to live before God, we should live holy lives like sinless people. I will give you a message about 'sanctification' in my next turn, so please look forward to it.

How was today's message, everyone? It is not our church, but it happened at a church I used to attend. There was one member of the congregation who was very self-centered. Seeing her unchanged after decades of faith, a member of the congregation complained. "She is so concerned about herself. I am sure she will not go to heaven. Heaven will not admit someone like that." To be honest, I did not understand the Bible very well at the time, and I did not know exactly what the answer would be. How would you answer this difficult question? Will self-centered believers who are baptized and believe in Jesus Christ go to heaven? Or will they go to hell? This answer based on today's study in Romans is that she will go to heaven. She is surely saved because she believes in Jesus Christ. When we get to heaven, we will be amazed at each other because she will be there too. And she will say, "Wow! You too?" And we'll say, "Yes! Me too!" By believing in Jesus Christ, her status has changed, and she is now a child of God in status and can enter heaven. This is real grace, not from good deeds. Unfortunately, during her lifetime, she would not have grown up to the likeness of Jesus Christ. There are some Christians like that around me. I am one of them too, and I pray that I can continue to grow even now.

We may sometimes lament that we want to quit being Christians because of various failures in our lives. Or we may be criticized by others who say, "You don't seem to be a Christian. You are not a good person!" These thoughts are temptations from Satan. Romans 8:1-2, "Therefore, there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus (1), because through Christ Jesus the law of Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death (2)." We have been totally renewed through the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Our identity has been completely changed. We have been renewed, and we are able to hold on to hope and not give up in the face of daily failures. By God's grace, we can grow and live without fear of failure. We grow into the likeness of Jesus Christ at every age. This fact is the gospel. It is a blessing to live with faith in this gospel, Jesus Christ.

I am sure that through today's message, some of you have realized freshly what a blessing

the gospel of Christ is. I hope those who have not yet been baptized will enter ~~into~~ this amazing grace. And I, and those who have already been baptized with faith in Jesus Christ, would be grateful if we would deeply examine the meaning of our baptism.

Let's pray. Beloved Heavenly Father, thank you for your word today. We thank you that we were delivered by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. We believe in our Redeemer, the firstborn Jesus Christ. Thank you for the forgiveness of all our sins that we commit while living. And thank you, Holy Spirit, for helping us to live today as a new creation. Help us with all our illnesses, relationships, legal and financial problems, etc. Help us to learn more about God the Father through these various hardships. We pray in the name of Jesus. Amen.