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Sermon Notes

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United with Christ Means Dead to Sin and Alive to God

Romans 6:1-4

I. Dangerous Doctrine

A. The Powerful Gospel

Romans 1:16 I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes

1. Gospel a message of doctrine, and doctrine is dangerous!!
2. Sin's universal reign described: Romans 1-3

Romans 1 [Gentile pagans described as under the wrath of God]

They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips,³⁰ slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents;³¹ they are senseless, faithless, heartless, ruthless.³² Although they know God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them.

Romans 2 [Self-righteous, religious people and Jews also under the wrath of God]

2:13 For it is not those who hear the law who are righteous in God's sight, but it is those who obey the law who will be declared righteous.

Romans 3 [Summary: Everyone under sin and judgment]

3:9-12 What shall we conclude then? Are we any better? Not at all! We have already made the charge that Jews and Gentiles alike are all under sin.¹⁰ As it is written: "There is no one righteous, not even one;¹¹ there is no one who understands, no one who seeks

God. ¹² All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one."

3. Righteousness from God through Christ's death

3:21-25 But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. ²² This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, ²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴ and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. ²⁵ God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood.

Justification = God's declaration of "not guilty" over anyone who has received the gift of righteousness through Jesus Christ

4. Justification through faith alone apart from works of the law

3:28 For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from observing the law.

Romans 4 [Example of Abraham]

4:3 What does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness."

No works at all!! Simply believing a promise God made to him

Now, we have the promise of the Gospel, that anyone who trusts in Christ will be completely forgiven for his sins

Simple faith receives this incredible gift... no one can earn it, it must be received as a grace gift by simple faith

5. Assurance of final salvation if we have been justified

Romans 5:1-11 [Unbreakable chain of assurance]

"Since we have been justified through faith...": "Peace with God..." "access by faith into this grace in which we stand" "hope in suffering" "God's love poured out into our hearts by the Holy Spirit"

All combine to give total assurance... if you have been justified by faith in this mighty Gospel, you will most certainly survive the day of God's wrath and live with God forever in heaven!!

6. Assurance based on Adam/Christ analogy

Romans 5:12-21 [Adam a type of Christ; Christ's grace gift GREATER than condemnation in Adam]

5:18 Consequently, just as the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men, so also the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men.

Adam was our representative at the tree; we were united with him and when he sinned, we all sinned; so also Christ is our representative at Calvary; His act of righteousness becomes our righteousness... on that basis God justifies us!!

B. Total Complete Assurance!!!

5:20-21 But where sin increased, grace increased all the more, ²¹ so that, just as sin reigned in death, so also grace might reign through righteousness to bring eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

No matter how much sin there is to cover, God's grace is always enough!! No matter how much sin there is in your life, God's ocean of grace more than swallows it up!!

No matter how powerful sin and death reigned over us in Adam, the reign of grace in Christ is MUCH MORE powerful, bringing us without fail into eternal life.

C. Dangerous Doctrine

Romans 6:1 "What shall we say, then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may increase?"

1. Paul's doctrine seems to lead one way: sin all you want!!!
2. If we are totally secure in grace, let's sin more and more!
3. Thus "justification by grace through faith alone" is a dangerous doctrine!

How will Paul answer this question?

And what of the deeper question... what should I do about the sin I still see in my life? Does it matter at all? OR Does it prove I'm not really a Christian?

D. A Complete Savior, A Comprehensive Salvation

Matthew 1:21 "You will give Him the name Jesus, because he will save His people from their sins."

1. Jesus came to save us completely from sin and from sins
2. His salvation is thus COMPREHENSIVE!!
3. **Justification** saves us from the guilt and condemnation of sin
4. **Sanctification** from the actual practice of sins
5. **Glorification** from the very presence of sin

E. A New “Division” of Romans

1. Romans 1-5 Justification by Faith Alone
2. Romans 6-8 Sanctification by the Power of the Spirit

Wrestling with sins now... what answer does this mighty Gospel have for us?

II. The Question Posed

Romans 6:1 “What shall we say, then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may increase?”

A. The Significance of the Question

1. Paul’s style: raising objections then answering them
2. The question proves our understanding of the gospel
3. Imagine someone teaching a good works system based on human effort

Paul: Therefore, you must be a good person, love others, try your best to go to church and follow all the rules, and stay close to God as best you can

Why in the world would anyone ask this question of us?? If we are saved by good works, and kept by doing good works, why would anyone ask this question:

Romans 6:1 “What shall we say, then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may increase?”

4. This question asked only of those teaching TOTALLY FREE GRACE

B. The Wickedness of the Human Heart

1. Sin always seeks some opportunity

2. Changing grace into license

Jude 4 They are godless men, who change the grace of our God into a license for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord.

3. Our own hearts: "God will forgive anyway!!"

Illus. One of Satan's most persistent temptations is, "What difference does it make? You can always confess it later and God will forgive!"

4. Illustrations

Voltaire: "God will forgive; that's His trade."

[Image is of a God who's like a shopkeeper, with a sign hanging outside: "Open for business"... the all-forgiving God, always happy to receive a customer!]

W.H. Auden "I like committing crimes. God likes forgiving them. Really the world is admirably arranged."

Gregory Rasputin [infamous depraved monk who help sway over the Russian Czar & his family 100 years ago]

Gregory Rasputin came from solid peasant stock. Gregory was born on January 10, 1869, in Prokovskoe, a small village in Siberia on the banks of the Tura River. As a young lad, Rasputin shocked his village by constantly finding ways to get into trouble with the authorities. Drunkenness, stealing and womanizing were activities particularly enjoyed by the dissolute young man. Rasputin in fact was developing into a rake, a man with a debauched, and endless, sexual appetite.

It was while on one of his escapades that Rasputin was first impacted by the mystical powers of the Russian Orthodox religion. At Verkhoturye Monastery Rasputin was fascinated by a renegade sect within the Orthodox faith, the Skopsty. Followers of the Skopsty firmly believed that the only way to reach God was through sinful actions. Once the sin was committed and confessed, the penitent could achieve forgiveness. In reality, what the Skopsty upheld was to "sin to drive out sin." Rasputin, one of the biggest sinners of the province, was suddenly struck by the potential held by this theory. It was soon thereafter that the debauched, lecherous peasant adopted the robes of a monk, developed his own self-gratifying doctrines, traveled the country as a "staretz" and sinned to his heart's content.

These examples could be multiplied... sin is a restless evil, a deadly poison, always seeking some advantage

Here, the idea of total forgiveness through the blood of Christ leads to a question:

Romans 6:1 "What shall we say, then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may increase?"

C. Understanding the Question

1. If the Law was given to increase sin and put the majesty of grace on display, would not more sin be even better?
2. Attack on Paul's doctrine!!! Free grace leads to more and more sin!!

III. The Answer Declared: Dead to Sin

vs. 2 *"May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it?"*

A. Paul's Passion

1. "May it never be!" or "God forbid!!" or "Absolutely Not!!"
2. Sin cannot be rejected coldly but with HEAT and passion

Psalm 97:10 "Let those who love the Lord HATE EVIL."

Paul: It is absolutely UNTHINKABLE that WE should sin more and more so that grace can abound!

Question: What is "Unthinkable" in your life? Do you respond to temptation with "ABSOLUTELY NOT!!!!" Or "Well, now, let me see... I better not right now."

Habakkuk 1:13 "Your eyes are too pure to look on evil, you cannot tolerate wrong."

God won't even look on evil... why do we respond so coldly to it??

B. Paul's Declaration

In question form, but really a declaration

1. Key fact: If you are a Christian, you are DEAD TO SIN
2. Deep theology... will take Paul three chapters to unfold it all
3. Note tense: WE DIED...
 - a. once for all time
 - b. not an ongoing, progressive death
 - c. it occurred the moment you trusted in Christ

Illustration: Two fields... "Sin" and "Grace" with a road in between; used to be a field hand working in "sin's field"; suddenly you were rescued; the old master calls across the road to give you orders that no longer apply to you

IV. The Answer's Foundation: Union with Christ

vs. 3-4 *Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? ⁴ 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.*

A. Answer's Foundation: Logic of Romans 5

1. Adam our first "head"; our first representative

1 Corinthians 15:22 For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive.

- a. spiritual union with Adam by flesh
- b. all of us sinned in Adam
- c. all of us condemned in Adam
- d. all of us die in Adam

"In Adam" = spiritual union between Adam and the human race

2. Christ our new head; our final representative

- a. spiritual union with Christ by faith
- b. all of us seen in Christ
- c. Christ's righteousness becomes ours
- d. all of us live eternally in Christ

"In Christ" = spiritual union between Christ and all who believe in Him

B. What You Know, How You Live

"Or don't you know that..."

1. Americans are VERY pragmatic
2. Tend to minimize DOCTRINE

3. Paul ALWAYS teaches sanctification the same way: teaching you what you are, then how you should live as a result
4. Roman Christians KNEW that Baptism = Unity with Christ

First command in the entire book of Romans: vs. 11

vs. 11 “Therefore, consider yourself dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus.”

Five full chapters on Justification by Faith alone, apart from works of the law

Then, ten verses of truths about you being dead to sin if you’re a Christian

THEN, 1st command: THINK OF YOURSELVES a certain way!!

C. Union with Christ the Key to Sanctification

1. Essence of Romans 5: we’re in a whole new country now!!

Formerly “in Adam”, now “in Christ”

Formerly “under sin”, now “under grace”

Formerly sin was our master, now grace is our King

This is a whole new identity based on union with Christ by faith

The old master has no authority over us, and no power to make us sin!!

Union with Christ is the key to sanctification... IDENTITY FIRST, then day to do practice second

2. This makes complete sense based on Christ’s own teaching

Matthew 12:33 “Make a tree good and its fruit will be good, or make a tree bad and its fruit will be bad, for a tree is recognized by its fruit.

John 15:1-5 “I am the vine and you are the branches... Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. ^s “I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.

Growth in holiness is impossible except through union with Christ

No one can fulfill the Law’s demands through personal effort

Only union with Christ enables us to escape the dominion of sin to being with, then fight sin's false claims over us day by day

3. Christ's Death IS Our Death

- a. if you are a Christian, you died at Golgotha at the moment Jesus Christ said "It is finished."
- b. by faith, union with Christ = total immersion into His death

Galatians 2:20 "I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."

4. Christ's Life IS Our Life

- a. Christ died to sin forever... sin no longer has anything to do with Him
- b. His eternal, spiritual life is now ours
- c. our union with Him IS our life forevermore
- d. it makes slavery to sin IMPOSSIBLE

Christianity is a LIFE TO BE LIVED, not a decision to be made... not a momentary decision, a walking the aisle, a signing the card, a raising of the hand while every head is bowed

When you trust Christ, YOU DIE FOREVER to the dominion of sin and death, and come alive forever to righteousness

D. "Baptism" = Spiritual Union

1. Baptists fond of this passage because it seems to teach
 - a. who should be baptized (believers only)
 - b. how they should be baptized (immersion)
 - c. significance of baptism (spiritual union with Christ)
2. Water baptism very significant part of Christian life... we'll discuss it in full next week
3. Debate over whether this refers to water baptism at all
4. Paul's declaration

vs. 4 “Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death...”

- a. apparently the baptism itself a means of union with Christ
 - b. BUT Paul NEVER teaches this of water baptism
5. Paul limits significance of water baptism

1 Corinthians 1:17 For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel

6. Perhaps baptism spoken of here is same as 1 Cor. 12

1 Corinthians 12:13 For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body--whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free--and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.

This is clearly NOT water baptism, but the baptism of the Spirit that occurs at the moment you joined Christ's Body... the moment you first trusted Christ

Galatians 3:26-27 You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, ²⁷ for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.

Summary: Central idea of passage is not so much about water baptism as about the eternal spiritual union of you and Christ which occurred the moment you were justified by faith

At that moment, God immediately united you spiritually with Christ, and you died with Him to sin, and you came alive with Him in a whole new life.

That death and that life mean sin shall never rule over you again!!

V. The Answer Applied to You

1. Begin by understanding total security in Christ

This question would never even come up if salvation were by good works!!!

Instead, where sin abounds, grace abounds all the more!!!

2. Grow to hate sin more passionately than you do

Paul said, “May it NEVER be!!!”

John Bunyan: “Sin is the dare of God's justice, the rape of His mercy, the jeer of His patience, the slight of His power, and the contempt of His love.”

A MILLION EVILS have entered your life because of sin... How can you not hate it passionately?
Never mind continue to live in it

3. Especially beware of Satan using grace to stimulate you to sin presumptuously

Thomas Adams: "Despair is hope stark dead; presumption is hope stark mad."

Richard Baker: "A sin of infirmity may admit apology; a sin of ignorance may find out excuse; but a sin of defiance can find no defense."

4. Realize that the issue is not perfection but CONTINUING TO LIVE IN SIN DAILY

William Gurnall: "A sheep may fall into a ditch, but it is the swine who wallows in it."

5. Take Paul's practical advice:

vs. 11-14 In the same way, count yourselves 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 evil desires. ¹³ Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness. ¹⁴ For sin shall not be your master, because you are not under law, but under grace.