

GOD-SHAPED

Obedience of Faith



**A Textual Study of
the Letter of Paul to the Romans**

**Sunday Mornings • Auditorium
April-September 2014
Taught by Jason Hardin**

• LESSON 11 (June 22) •

Romans 6:1-23

Dead to Sin and Alive to God in Christ

Romans 5 brought us to one of the great climactic points of Paul's letter. Sin came into the world through Adam, and death through sin. Death not only spread to all men, it *reigned* over all men, because all sin and fall short of the glory of God.

Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men. For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous. Now the law came in to increase the trespass, but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more, so that, as sin reigned in death, grace also might reign through righteousness leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. (5:18-21)

This leads Paul to a pivotal question and an explanatory reminder.

First, the pivotal question:

What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? (6:1-2)

Next, the explanatory reminder:

Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. (6:3-4)



"Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound?" Why would anyone even ask such a question?

What will it look like, practically speaking, if I answer that question with, "By all means"?

Redemption is available by God's grace as a gift "in Christ Jesus" (3:24). But how do I come to be "in" Christ?

- My family tree doesn't put me in Christ; it's full of sinners (3:23).
- The record of my own works doesn't put me in Christ; *I am a sinner* (3:20).
- Mere knowledge of the law doesn't put me in Christ; only doers of the law will be justified by the law (2:13).
- Physical circumcision doesn't put me in Christ; remember the God-breathed point already made by Paul in Romans 2:28-29:

For no one is a Jew who is merely one outwardly, nor is circumcision outward and physical. But a Jew is one inwardly, and circumcision is a matter of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter. His praise is not from man but from God.

How then do we come to be "in" Christ? With hearts full of faith (1:5; 3:21-25; 4:16, 23-25; 5:1; 16:25-27), we are baptized into Christ Jesus.

For in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise. (Gal 3:26-29)

In [Christ] also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead. (Col 2:11-12)

This is exactly the point Paul made in Romans 4:

In your own words, what does it mean to be "in" Christ?

Why does Paul repeatedly and consistently emphasize that these wonderful spiritual blessings are available to us in Christ "through faith"?

In Colossians 2:11, when Paul describes the circumcision made without hands as involving "putting off the body of the flesh," what does he mean?

- Even though his body was “as good as dead,” Abraham believed God’s promise that he would become the father of many nations (4:16-22).
- Righteousness will also “be counted to us who believe in him who raised from the dead Jesus our Lord” (4:23-25).

And so, Paul tells Christians in Colossae, we are raised with Christ in baptism “through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead” (Col 2:12).

And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. (Col 2:13-14)

Paul has reached the same point of gospel explanation in his letter to the Romans.

Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. (6:3-4)

Paul has used this point of explanation as a reminder.

What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? (6:1-2)

As those who have been brought “into Christ Jesus” and justified by God’s grace as a gift, we are no longer to live in sin. Our heavenly Father intends for us to walk in newness of life. What will this mean, practically speaking? Carefully consider what Paul communicates in Romans 6:5-14. How would you summarize these truths in your own words?

- ❖ “For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his.” (6:5)

Don’t miss the significance of these God-breathed connections. How would you summarize:

- Abraham was “dead,” but he believed God’s promise about new life

- Jesus was dead, but we believe that he was raised to life by God

- We are raised with Christ in baptism through faith in the powerful working of God that we might walk in newness of life

- ❖ “We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. For one who has died has been set free from sin.” (6:6-7)

- ❖ “Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. For the death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God. So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.” (6:8-11)

- ❖ “Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions.” (6:12)

- ❖ “Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness.” (6:13)

- ❖ “For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law, but under grace.” (6:14)

Once again, Paul anticipates a question and provides an inspired response.

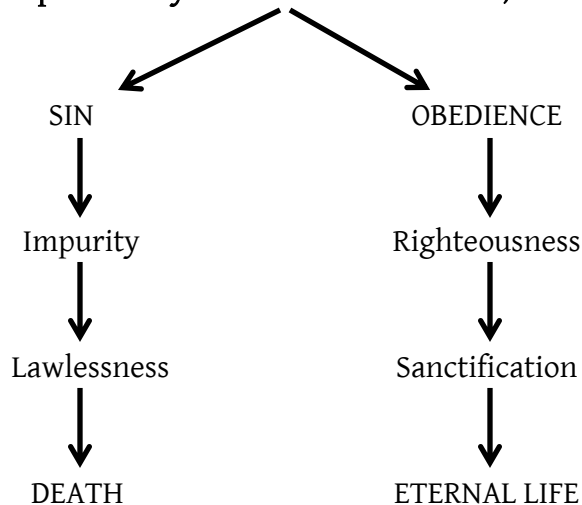
What then? Are we to sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means! Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness? But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed, and having been set free from sin, have

In everyday terms, what does it mean to “present” myself as an “obedient slave”?

become slaves of righteousness. I am speaking in human terms, because of your natural limitations. For just as you once presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness leading to sanctification. (6:15-19)

While on one hand Paul's letters are full of wondrous depths with challenging insights that even the apostle Peter described as "hard to understand" (2 Pet 3:15-16), he frequently leads us to very straightforward, distinct forks in the road.

I WILL present myself as an obedient slave, either to:



For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. But what fruit were you getting at that time from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death. But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the fruit you get leads to sanctification and its end, eternal life. For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. (6:20-23)

CLOSING THOUGHT: At this point, the choice is mine. God has provided everything that I need to enjoy reconciliation with him and to make an informed, wise decision. Reject God or be reconciled to him. The consequences are clear.

What is the significance of Paul's emphasis that Christians have been "obedient from the heart" (6:17)? Can you think of other New Testament passages that emphasize the same thing?

In your own words, what is "sanctification"?

Paul is making an appeal to our common sense in Romans 6:20. What does he mean?