

DO NOT OFFER ANY PART
OF YOURSELF TO SIN
AS AN INSTRUMENT OF
WICKEDNESS, BUT RATHER
OFFER YOURSELVES TO
GOD AS THOSE WHO
HAVE BEEN BROUGHT
FROM DEATH TO LIFE;
AND OFFER EVERY PART
OF YOURSELF TO HIM
AS AN INSTRUMENT OF
RIGHTEOUSNESS.

ROMANS 6:13

WHAT HE PROVIDES

THE STORY
OF CHANGE

DATE

November 28 & 29

WEEK

4 of 4

OVERVIEW

Romans 6

KEY VERSE

Romans 6:13

TEACHERS: It is important to read all four lessons to understand the flow of content.

SETTING THE STAGE

Paul never wanted a Christ-follower to be stagnant in his or her life. Paul experienced a dramatic change by Jesus and is adamant about making sure other believers understand exactly the sacrifice Jesus made on the cross. So often, we focus on the crucifixion, which is a part of why we are changed. But the story did not end with Jesus' death on the cross, nor in the tomb where He lay for three days.

While the death of Christ is a big part of our story of change, it does not end in the grave. Jesus victoriously rose on the third day. He then walked in the newness of life for 40 days on this earth, appearing before over 500 people, teaching, visiting, and even eating breakfast on the beach with His disciples. And then, He ascended into heaven and sent the Holy Spirit to lead and guide us on earth. Jesus reigns! He lives! Jesus is alive!

Paul wants us to understand that as Christ-followers, we are united with Christ fully and completely. Not just because of His death on the cross or being buried in the grave, but because of His resurrection and the newness of life that results. In Romans 6, we see a visual picture of what happens in our hearts, but the choice to be instruments of change is ultimately up to us.

LESSON OUTLINE

1. He Provides Grace
2. He Provides New Life
3. He Provides Purpose

THINGS TO KNOW

- Paul is writing to the Christians in Rome, providing details about their old life and new life in Christ.¹
- The English word "baptism or baptized" is translated from the Greek word "baptizo." The root meaning is "to dip, soak or immerse." Being baptized/ immersed in Christ (Romans 6:3) is equated with being united with the Messiah. (Romans 6:6) In the early church, baptism was their profession of faith as they raised their flag for Christ.

WHAT HE PROVIDES

Introduction

Imagine the most skilled craftsman in the world using all of his knowledge, dexterity, and care to create a perfect guitar. Every piece of wood, every fret, every curve, and every string are placed and situated to perfection. Now imagine that this perfect guitar is given to you, and every other guitar in the world is destroyed. You hold in your possession the most beautiful and perfect guitar—what should you do with it?

Even though the guitar is aesthetically beautiful, you would be making a mistake if you put the guitar on display as though it were in a museum. To share the true beauty of this instrument, either you or someone else needs to play it! A perfect guitar is perfect because it is an instrument that creates music, beautiful music that uniquely taps into the beauty of God’s universe. The value and the beauty of the guitar are in the music that it can create.

Today, we are going to focus on the fact that in Jesus Christ, God has provided us with the opportunity to truly live out our calling, to become the people that He created us to be and to make the ‘music’ that He created us to make. He did not create us to be framed and hung on the wall as a display; rather, we were made to live out God’s calling and reflect His image in our actions, our words, and our relationships.

This is our last lesson in the four-week series: the Story of Change. Last week, we discussed the question of “What we need” and established that all of us have a fundamental need to admit our sin and receive His grace to restore our relationship with God. In Romans, the Apostle Paul has built a case pointing out the fact that by grace, God has pursued us in such a way as to restore us to Him through His Son, Jesus Christ even “*while we were yet sinners.*”

1. HE PROVIDES GRACE

ROMANS 5:20-21 *The Law came in so that the transgression would increase; but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more,²¹ so that, as sin reigned in death, even so grace would reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

ROMANS 6:1 *What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase?*

Paul begins by asking a question based on what he had written in chapter 5, which was ultimately about the grace of God through Jesus Christ. Last week we realized that we have a problem called sin, and we have a need to be saved since we are sinners because of the fall of Adam (Romans 5:12). Paul made it clear that those who believe in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus have forgiveness, not because they earn or deserve it, but because of grace (Romans 5:10, 20-21). Paul anticipates that people will have questions and potentially push back on this issue.



¹ *The Complete Jewish Bible*, Hendrickson Publishers Marketing, Peabody, MA; 2016, p. 1613.

God is a loving and giving God. He intended to provide us with grace through Jesus Christ. It is logical that if we sin more, then God could offer more grace. No harm, no foul. In fact, it could be argued that we would be doing God a favor by sinning more so that He could show more grace, though a feeble argument. Look at Paul's response to the anticipated question.

ROMANS 6:2 *May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it?*

Here are how some other translations word the first phrase:

ROMANS 6:2A *God forbid!* (KJV)

ROMANS 6:2A *What a ghastly thought!* (Phillips)

ROMANS 6:2A *Of course not!* (TLB)

ROMANS 6:2A *I should hope not!* (The Message)

ROMANS 6:2A *By no means!* (NIV)

Suffice it to say, Paul could not fathom the idea of intentionally living a life of sin after you have entered a relationship with Jesus. He is not talking about living a life of perfection; we all sin, make mistakes, and fail at times. Paul is talking about intentionally living a lifestyle of sin as if completely unchanged by Christ, simply living the same kind of life as they did before they became a Christian.

Remember, we are studying the Story of Change, which means we are supposed to actually *change* in our life because of our relationship with Jesus Christ. Paul was so emphatic with his response because of the reality that we died to sin. In his mind, how or why would we still want to live in it?

Note that Paul did not say it is impossible to live in sin, or that sin is dead to the Christian (i.e., that it no longer appeals to us). He meant it is unnecessary and undesirable to live in sin, to practice it habitually. ² Paul is also not saying that we are “in the process” of dying to sin as if it is something happening gradually over time. Paul is using the Greek aorist tense, which means this is once for all; we “died to sin.” Jesus took care of our sin problem on the cross, which is proof of the grace He provided.

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Jesus paid the price of sin once for all by His death. His crucifixion became our crucifixion. Paul would say it like this in Galatians 2:20, “*I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.*”

Back in Romans 6, Paul continues explaining death and life, specifically new life.

2. HE PROVIDES NEW LIFE

ROMANS 6:3-11 *Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? ⁴Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. ⁵For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection, ⁶ knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin; ⁷ for he who has died is freed from sin.*

² www.soniclight.com/romans

⁸ Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, ⁹ knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, is never to die again; death no longer is master over Him. ¹⁰ For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God. ¹¹ Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.

In these verses, Paul uses the words death, dead, died, or die 13 times. He is clearly expanding on what he said in verse 2 about being *dead to sin*. To fully appreciate the new life in Christ, we must understand the death that took place. We are never to forget the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross, dying for us while we were yet sinners. Jesus, who had never sinned, not only took on our sins, *He became sin on our behalf so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.* (2 Corinthians 5:21)

Paul asks a rhetorical question in verse 3 that he clarifies in the following verses. He is contrasting death and life, the old and new by the example of baptism. Many of us, when we see or hear the word baptism, we immediately think of water. It appears that Paul had both the literal and the figurative in mind in this paragraph, for he used the readers' experience of water baptism to remind them of their identification with Christ through the baptism of the Holy Spirit. ³ Baptism is a picture of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus.

The Greek word "*Baptizo*" means to dip or immerse. ⁴ So, if you follow the progression of someone being baptized by immersion in the water, it is clear to see the symbolic connection that Paul is making to the Christians in Rome in verse 4a, "*Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death.*" When someone goes under the water, it is a reminder that we have been "buried with Him" into death. Paul wants to make sure the readers understand that there is a death involved. Jesus died on the cross and was buried in the tomb, an immersion into the grave.

But then he writes in 4b, "*so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father.*" As someone comes out of the water, it is a visual reminder of Jesus rising from the dead and leaving the tomb empty. This is a picture of victory over death, victory over sin.

Those two truths are life-changing, to say the least, but it does not end there. Do not miss the end of verse 4 where he says, "*so we too might walk in newness of life.*" As someone comes out of the

baptismal water, there is symbolically a newness of life that was not there before. This is the full picture of baptism and the story of a changed life. It is not just being baptized in and out of the water; it is about the newness of life.

As a church, we use Romans 6:4 when someone is baptized, whether in the Worship Center, outside fountain, or on Beach Retreat. Below are the words the pastor will say as they are baptizing:

"In imitation of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and in obedience to His divine command, I baptize you (*name*) in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Buried with Christ unto death; Rise to walk in the newness of life!"

It is important to remember that baptism does not save you but is a picture of what has already happened in your heart by confessing and believing Jesus as your Lord and Savior. Paul realized that those Christ-followers in the First Century made it a practice to be baptized in the same manner as Jesus as a way to be identified with Him. Paul did not want them or us to miss the fact that as Christ-followers, we are also baptized, not with water but by the Spirit, when we become Christians. Paul is declaring there is a new life to be lived because we are united with Christ.

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³ Warren Wiersbe, *The Wiersbe Bible Commentary, NT*; David C. Cook, Colorado Springs, CO, 2007; p. 423.

⁴ www.biblestudytools.com/lexicon

Look again at verse 5, “For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection,” The word united is the Greek word, “*Sumphutos*” which means congenital, grow together, united with.⁵

When we are united with Christ, we are grafted together with Him. We are not in a tagalong relationship; we are one with Christ. In nature, if you take a branch of one tree and “*Sumphutos*” it with another tree, i.e. grafting; the branch is tied together in such a way that the life from the trunk of the tree flows into the branch and they grow together, until finally you cannot tell the difference between the graft and the natural branch. Life is fully shared.⁶

The Story of Change is all about becoming united with Him in the likeness of His death but also in the likeness of His resurrection. Our identification with Christ does not end in death to sin; it extends to our participation in His resurrection to a new kind of life.⁷

So, what does this resurrected new life look like? We find some clues at the resurrection of Jesus. Jesus never died again. He walked in newness of life for 40 days on this earth and is now even still alive in heaven sitting at the right hand of His Father.

The Story of Change is all about becoming united with Him in the likeness of His death but also in the likeness of His resurrection.

Jesus conquered death and sin once for all and lived. His death and resurrection are ours, so we are, in fact, dead to sin and able to walk in the newness of life. There is freedom in this life in both physical reality and the promise of the future in heaven. Notice there is a movement not stagnation in the word “walk.” Our salvation is not merely to save us from hell or get us into heaven. Instead, it is to give us the freedom to walk in newness of life.

We are to change from the inside out as a result of our salvation. Our attitudes should be different from what they were before we became united with Christ. Our emotions should be different from what they were before we became united with Christ. Our thoughts, relationships, goals, and values should be different as a result of being changed by Christ.

Christ has provided us new life to walk in a forward motion with purpose.

3. HE PROVIDES PURPOSE

ROMANS 6:11-14 *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 any part of yourself to sin as an instrument of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer every part of yourself to Him as an instrument of righteousness.¹⁴ For sin shall no longer be your master, because you are not under the law, but under grace.*

Paul tells us that we must count ourselves dead to sin and alive to Christ. Because of this, sin should no longer reign in our bodies, but we must become an instrument of righteousness. This comes down to total surrender lived out with intentionality. This kind of purpose does not happen by accident, nor should it only happen in times of convenience. This newness of life should be lived out with purpose based on the realization of exactly what Jesus Christ did for you in your union

⁵ www.biblehub.com/greek

⁶ www.raystedman.org/romans6

⁷ *The Necessity of Sanctification*, www.bible.org/seriespage

with Him. He died, you died. He was resurrected, you are resurrected. He lives, you live. There is no greater truth in all the world. Does this mean we will be perfect? No. Does this mean that we will never face temptation? No.

Consider the literal translation, based on the verb tenses in the original Greek language:

“Do not constantly allow sin to reign in your mortal body so that you are constantly obeying its lusts. Neither constantly yield your members of your body as weapons or tools of unrighteousness to sin; but once and for all yield yourselves to God.”⁸

The best way to walk in the newness of life is by purposely taking one step forward at a time.

The best way to walk in the newness of life is by purposely taking one step forward at a time. There will be situations where you take two steps forward and three steps backward. There will be times when you actually fall down and proverbially skin your knee or sprain your ankle; get up, shake the dirt off, and start walking again. Peter denied knowing Christ three times in a matter of hours, yet he got up and started walking again. Thomas did not believe that Jesus was truly resurrected from the grave and would not believe until he could touch the scars of Jesus. When he did, Thomas got up and started walking again. Paul prayed on at least three occasions for the “thorn in his side” to be removed, and it was not, yet Paul got up and started walking again.

We are to be an instrument of righteousness. An instrument is meant to be played. Even a Stradivarius violin, the most valuable of instruments, is not fulfilling its intended purpose hanging on a wall in a museum. It was designed and created to be an instrument that plays music. And so, it is with those who are Christ-followers. We have been paid for by the costliest of prices on the cross. The design and purpose of our life in Christ are to walk in the newness of life. We are to be instruments that play a symphony of music for the glory of God.

Everything that we have in life—our resources, our relationships, our talents and abilities, our time, and our energy—does not ultimately belong to us. These things are given to us by God for a purpose: to know and serve Him and to bless others. It is when we step into our calling to reflect the image of God that we can experience the fullness of purpose and experience satisfaction with the blessings that God has given us. There are few things sadder than seeing a person waste their potential because they are either unmotivated, distracted, or sidetracked by lesser pleasures.

It is because of God’s grace that we surrender ourselves to Him, playing the instrument for His glory. We have a new conductor in Jesus Christ. Our challenge is not to simply be on display collecting dust; we are to walk, live, serve, and surrender to the One who changed our lives for a purpose.

HOW HIS PLAN SHAPES OUR PURPOSE

At the beginning of our Story of Change, it seems almost impossible to connect who we are and who Christ is. We are sinners. Jesus is the image of God, perfect and preeminent in all ways. We were doomed if left on our own spiraling downward literally and figuratively. We deserved death, total separation from God, who is Holy. But God had a different plan in the form of a free gift. *Continued on page 81 >*

⁸ Warren Wiersbe, *The Wiersbe Bible Commentary, NT*; David C. Cook, Colorado Springs, CO, 2007; p. 425.

ROMANS 6:23 *For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

There is nothing logical about this verse. We deserved death because of our sin. But the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus. That, in a nutshell, is the Story of Change. God provided a gift based on grace. It is nothing we could earn or deserve; all we have to do is accept the gift as our own.

It is in receiving this gift that causes us to be grafted into Christ, shaped into a new life with a new purpose. It is now time to tune up your instrument and let the music of grace fill this world for the sake of Christ.

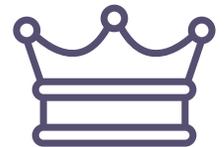
THE STORY OF **CHANGE**

WHO **WE ARE**

WHO **CHRIST IS**

WHAT WE **NEED**

WHAT HE **PROVIDES**



COMING UP NEXT:

THE STORY OF **HEAVEN**