

I. Introduction

- A. Years ago (and I mean 30 years ago) a guy came charging up to me after Bible class
1. I suggested in an alternative view to the marriage-divorce-remarriage issue
 - a. And let's just say he didn't fully appreciate my alternative approach
 - b. Hey, that's OK. Half the time I'm not that I fully agree with me either!
 - c. But he didn't come to disagree; he came frothing at the mouth and ready to fight.
 2. He demanded that we can't allow ANY divorced person in church for ANY reason
 - a. We can't baptize a divorced person until they separate from unscriptural mate
 - b. We can't allow divorced people to place membership until they too separate
 - 1) He didn't even want to allow divorce on grounds of adultery... just to be safe!
 - 2) When I pointed to Jesus in **Matt 19**, he started to say, "I don't care what..."
 3. He said, "If we allow any divorced in, pretty soon the church will be full of sinners"
 - a. My response was, "Between you and me, the church is already full of sinners"
 - b. "Between you and me..." Best. Line. Ever. And it blew right past him!
 - c. He wanted to keep sinners out of the church by following right rules and rubrics
 - 1) The problem is that sooner or later, you gotta let someone in (*or it gets lonely*)
 - 2) No matter what lists or laws, rules or rubrics— no will follow them perfectly
 - d. And then we're right back to square one. And that was Paul's point (**Rom 3:20**)
- B. We continue today our much-interrupted series *Unashamed: The Message of Romans*
1. It's been awhile since we've heard from Paul—holidays, snow days and dedication
 - a. **Quick Review:** Paul is bringing together Jewish and Roman Christian in Rome
 - 1) Neither Jew nor Gentile gets any advantage (though both thought they should)
 - 2) Ground is level at cross, the meaning of God's grace in Jesus (**Rom 3:22-24a**)
 - b. This justification by faith is illustrated by Paul in the life of Abraham (**Rom 4:2-3**)
 2. Because we have also been justified by faith, we have peace with God (**Rom 5:1-2a**)
 - a. The sin that caused a rift in our relationship with God was removed at the cross
 - b. The debt was paid, but more than that—Christ became victorious over sin and death
 3. Our review ends with bold statement about the power of grace (**Rom 5:20-21**)
- C. So much for our review. And that's where Paul is taking as we begin **Romans 6**

II. Dead and Alive: Grace with an Attitude (Romans 6:1-2)

- A. Paul begins the text, “*Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase*” (**Rom 6:1**)
1. Paul had been accused of drinking too deeply of the intoxicating wine of grace (**3:8**)
 - a. Paul doesn’t do what we usually do when accuse. Doesn’t soft pedals or apologize
 - 1) What he does is tells them they deserve to be condemned! *Well that’s harsh!*
 - 2) He keeps right on harping on grace. Misunderstand grace? Tough beans!
 - b. This is the gospel we’re talking about; you can’t talk gospel without talking grace!
 2. **Question:** Do people really say, “*Let’s sin more so God can forgive us?*” (**Rom 6:1**)
 - a. People ACT like that way. “*Hey, it’s easier to get forgiveness than permission*”).
 - b. But do people really plan to sin so that God can give them more grace?
 3. Maybe what fits better, “*Paul, keep talking about this grace stuff and pretty soon...*”
 - a. This is the knot-head I mentioned who’s afraid the church would fill up with sinners
 - b. Nothing intimidates faithful more than saying faithfulness doesn’t give inside track
 - 1) We’re all for grace, but we mean just enough grace to make sure WE get in!
 - 2) We know all about Pharisee’s prayer, “*Lord, I thank Thee I’m like other men*”
 - 3) But deep down, we must admit that we have a little bit of him inside us!
 - c. When Paul starts in on grace, it’s not just knot-heads that get nervous. We do too.
- B. Grace is Paul’s story and he’s sticking to it—but it’s grace with an attitude! (**Rom 6:2**)
1. Paul wants us to know that grace doesn’t mean what we think it might means
 - a. It doesn’t mean that obedience in unimportant... or less important than it was
 - b. It doesn’t mean we can be unconcerned about knowing God or details of His word
 - c. It certainly doesn’t mean that God somehow stop caring so much about our sin
 2. Just the opposite. Grace means we died to sin and that we can’t live in it any longer
 - a. All through this chapter, Paul use the metaphor of death to sin (**Rom 6:10-11**, NCV)
 - b. We cannot continue to live in sin. Why? Well, because of God’s grace at the cross
 - 1) Paul tells Colossians the cross means our life is hidden with Christ (**Col 3:3**)
 - 2) And that has real implications for the ways that we live our lives (**Col 3:5**)
 - c. The message of the cross is the message of the grace of God that saves us from sin
 - 1) But grace also saves us from ourselves; it transforms into the image of Christ
 - 2) We do not save ourselves by slavishly following some list of rules and rubrics
 - 3) We’re saved by grace, but that grace transforms us to look more like the Savior

III. Dead and Alive: The Point of Baptism (Romans 6:3-14)

- A. Paul's argument for this transformation is found in the waters of baptism (**Rom 6:3-4**)
1. We often to come to this text to find a “*proof text*” for the importance of baptism.
 - a. This certainly does speak to the importance of baptism, but this no proof text.
 - b. Paul isn't arguing FOR baptism here; he is arguing FROM baptism here
 - c. Baptism is not his POINT; baptism is the PICTURE he uses to illustrate his point
 2. He takes them back to their baptismal experience and reminds them if what it meant
 - a. I would argue that they all (Jew and Gentile) gone through such an experience
 - b. I'd also argue you can learn the significance of the theology of baptism after the fact
 - 1) They didn't all go, “Oh man, no we all have to be re-baptized in the right way
 - 2) I read about one guy in restoration who was baptism a couple dozen times...
- B. Here is what baptism reminds us about God's grace and the call of
1. **First**, baptism says that we died to sin and can't live it any longer (**Rom 6:6-7**, NLT)
 - a. We are crucified with Christ, so that the old person of sin no longer exists.
 - b. Baptism reminds us that we left those of desires, that old person on the cross
 - 1) The change doesn't take place instantly or overnight—and it's never complete
 - 2) The crucified nature never wants to stay on the cross and keeps rebelling
 - c. But baptism reminds us that we have died to sin. Our invitation song will tell us
*Buried with Christ my blessed Redeemer, dead to the old life of folly and sin
Satan may call, the world may entreat me-- there is no voice that answers within*
 - 1) Old ways of living and acting are no longer the driving force in our life.
 - 2) Because we have accepted grace, we no longer respond in the same way.
 - d. In Uganda there's an expression people say to someone returning from a funeral.
 - 1) They have a lot. Darrel said Wednesday the average life expectancy there is 54
 - 2) When you return from a funeral, they say “Galekeyo.” Means, “*Leave it there.*”
 - e. Some missionaries began to use that as an expression for baptism. Leave it there
 - 1) Leave your failures, guilt, and shame—Jesus has washed that all away
 - 2) But you must also leave your sinful life behind—can't live that any longer
 - a) **Famous Story:** Former mistress ran into Augustine on street after his conversion
 - b) She was very confused when he failed to acknowledge her, “Augustine, it is I.”
 - c) “*Yes, madam, but it is no longer I.*” I don't know if that is true, but it's right!

2. **Second**, baptism reminds us that we live a new life with God (**Rom 6:13-14**, NCV)
 - a. It's not enough to just to be against sin; I must live the life of God
 - b. Later in Romans, Paul is going to make a transition to very practical applications
 - 1) He'll talk about living in unity, using their gifts for others, living as citizens
 - 2) He begins that section by describing a total metamorphosis (**Rom 12:1-2**, NLT)
 - a) The word here is Greek for "*metamorphosis*," a total and radical transformation
 - b) This starts on the inside and changes what happens on the outside of our lives
 - c. Paul point is that reflecting on our baptism is to remind us of this radical change

IV. Conclusion

- A. We can make two mistakes when it comes to sin and our new life in Christ
 1. **Entitled**: We can think God loves us so much we can do anything we want
 - a. One well-known megachurch leader was quoted saying he doesn't talk about sin

"There enough negativity in the world today; we try to keep things as positive as we can here."

 - 1) Another megachurch preacher redefined sin as the "*loss of human self-esteem*"
 - 2) This reduces the gospel to be being saved from feeling bad about yourself!
 - b. I don't think anyone literally says, "*Let's go on sinning so grace may increase*"
 - 1) Many of us (*all at some point?*), act like, "God won't care all that much..."
 - 2) Like entitled, spoiled children, we presume on God's love & live as we please
 - c. Paul says to the Romans, "*You can't live like that—you've been baptized!*"
 2. **Obsessed**: Others live as if wrangling sin—real and imagined—is out only tasj
 - a. The thing is, when I'm primarily "*against sin*," my focus tends to be on others
 - b. We get obsessed with making rules, taking names and keeping the church pure
 - c. That's the guy I mentioned earlier making sure we rooted out sinners in church
 - 1) Let's make sure everyone is right the money on marriage-divorce-remarriage
 - 2) Make sure they've right millennial theory. Which one? Mine, of course!
 - 3) Let's root out anyone who to TOO Calvinistic or not Calvinistic ENOUGH.
 - d. That kind of obsession makes sin the master! *We're not under law, but grace!*
- B. Let me one more time point you to the words of the song we will sing as invitation

Sin hath no more it's cruel dominion, walking in newness of life I am free...

 1. That is the invitation this morning, "Sin hath no more it's cruel dominion..."
 2. It's also a challenge; are we living what our baptism has so eloquently proclaimed?