

## Romans 8 - Shall We Continue in Sin?

We have gone through Paul's explanation of how all have sinned and have no excuse before God in chapters 1-3. We looked at how Jesus saves us strictly by faith and that our works and keeping the law have nothing to do with that salvation. This is great news, because people can get caught up so easily in worry over whether they are ever good enough. The answer is, "No, you are not good enough. You never have been good enough. You never will be good enough. You never *can* be good enough." Now that doesn't sound very encouraging, but the rest of the answer is that your salvation doesn't depend on *you* being good enough. It depends on if Christ is good enough...and He is!

Eph 1:6-7 To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.

7In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;

In chapter five we read about how we are now at peace with God and the extent of our salvation:

Rom 5:20-21 Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound:

21That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.

This so very often leads people to ask the same question that comes up, now, in Romans 6. "If grace is so great, what stops me from sinning?" If there is no threat of punishment, what would be my motive for not sinning?

Rom 6:1-2 What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin,

that grace may abound?

2God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?

The question expresses the idea that if God likes to be so gracious to forgive us, we should make Him really happy by sinning even more so He can be even *more* happy. Paul's answer to this, of course, is God forbid!

# 1. Live and let live is not salvation -

For those who think that salvation means being able to do whatever they want makes you ask what their motivation was for turning to Christ. Did you make a profession of faith so you can be free to sin without any consequence? Did you understand what getting saved even means? This reminds me of an interview the editors of The Babylon Bee, a Christian satire website, had with with Elon Musk back in 2021.

Near the end, Musk made a joke about the interview taking place on Sunday, telling the Bee's editors they were all going to hell for not being in church. That's when the interview turned toward a real question about salvation.

The interviewer, Ethan Nicolle, said, not quite jokingly, "Babylon Bee is a Christian organization and we're a ministry...To make this church, we're wondering if you could do us a quick solid and accept Jesus as your Lord and Savior?...It's a quick prayer."

Musk sat stunned for a few seconds. Then he responded, "I agree with the principles that Jesus advocated. There's some great wisdom in the teachings of Jesus, and I agree with those teachings."

He continued, "Things like 'turn the other cheek' are very important, as opposed to 'an eye for an eye'. An eye for an eye leaves everyone blind," Musk

said. "Forgiveness is important and treating people as you would wish to be treated. 'Love thy neighbor as thyself.'"

"But hey, if Jesus is saving people, I mean, I won't stand in His way," Musk added. "Sure, I'll be saved. Why not?"

The Babylon Bee hosts celebrated Musk's response. "I think he just said yes," Nicolle asserted.

When asked if he wanted to be baptized, Musk said that he was as a child. He also indicated he still has plenty of questions about God, faith, and biblical accounts of Jesus.

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[www2.cbn.com/news/news/sure-ill-be-saved-elon-musk-says-he-agrees-teachings-jesus](http://www2.cbn.com/news/news/sure-ill-be-saved-elon-musk-says-he-agrees-teachings-jesus)

As much as we might appreciate about Elon Musk, or not, the interviewers were wrong to assume and suggest that he was now actually saved. Anything like "If God wants to save me, sure, let Him do what He wants," says "He does His thing and I'll do my thing. Live and let live. Now let me get back to my beer."

## 2. Professing Christ in order to sin is not salvation -

Martin Luther ran into a problem with people who seemed to make a profession in order to sin. He presented the boldness of the proposition of salvation this way:

Thou owest God nothing save to believe and confess. **[This is true regarding salvation]** In all things else he gives thee absolute freedom to do as thou wilt without any peril of conscience, so that he on his part does not even make any inquiry as to whether you put away your wife, run away from your master, and violate your covenant.

— (Newman, *A Manual of Church History*, vol. 2, p. 61)

As bad as this sounds, he was *technically* correct with regards to *salvation*. Salvation depends only on your confession that you are a sinner and you turn to God in faith for salvation. There is a way to try to explain the second part, but you have to jump through hoops to do it. This caused Luther a lot of criticism. He was trying to emphasize justification by faith so much that things like this made people accuse him of lawlessness. Evidently his followers, who were known as evangelicals, got the wrong message, too. They turned the idea of having spiritual liberty, being made free from the judgment of Hell, into license, being free from any judgment at all. Luther wrote this complaint about them:

Now our evangelicals become seven times worse than they were before. For after we have learned the gospel, we steal, cheat, lie, gormandize [**indulge in gourmet food**], and drink, and commit all sorts of abominations. While one devil has been cast out of us seven worse have been brought into us again, as is to be seen in princes, lords, gentry, burgesses, and peasants, how they now do and conduct themselves without any scruple, in contempt of God

– (Newman, *A Manual of Church History*, vol. 2, p. 63)

People recognize very quickly when I point out that if someone is motivated by permission to sin, then some prayer for salvation, in that case, would be worthless.

3. The reality of life in Christ motivates us to serve God, not sin -

What *is* our motivation? You have to get it right. It reminds me of an actor asking the director what his motivation is for a particular scene. They especially have to do that because although we see a movie in a sequence of acts, they do the filming fractured and out of sequence

according to their filming schedule needs. It is easy for an actor to not know what was supposed to have happened before. You couldn't just say, "Your dog just died." I would want to know if my dog died because my neighbor was being vindictive and killed my dog. Perhaps my friend had not been careful and my dog died but he was very sorry. Maybe my dog died heroically. The actor has to know so he can *act accordingly*. They give a lot of thought to have as genuine a response as possible in an artificial setting. When we consider our response to what Christ has done, we are called upon to give as genuine response as possible in the ultimate reality of life. When someone gives an artificial response in the ultimate reality, it is worse than disappointing: it is tragic.

The ultimate reality was first laid down in the previous chapters. You are unrighteous, guilty, and going to hell. That reality was the motivation to fear God. Jesus died for your sins. That reality was the motivation to love God. God would give you His righteousness. That reality was the motivation to desire God. Paul went on to describe the ultimate reality and the genuine response to that ultimate reality. If you had a firm grip on all those realities and ceased in your rebellion and turned to Christ to receive that salvation then you are ready for the next reality. You are dead to sin and your new spirit is alive to God and the things of God.

Rom 6:3-11 Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?

4Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

5For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also *in the likeness* of his resurrection:

6Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with *him*, that the

body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.

7For he that is dead is freed from sin.

8Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him:

9Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him.

10For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.

11Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Your old spirit, from before you were born again, is dead to the world. Your new spirit, since you've been born again, is free from sin. I will cover the problem of temptation and failure more thoroughly next week.

Let it be said, for now, that if someone resents living for God or they don't look forward to the joy of serving God, even though it might be while they are struggling, then there is a problem. You might be weary from frustration and a heavy load. You might be struggling to serve. And yet you still be excited about the joy of serving God at the same time. But if you resent being put upon to serve God, then there is a problem. If someone only has enough spirituality to think he will get God off his back and leave him alone, then there is a problem. If someone only has enough spirituality to twist God's Word to have an excuse to sin, then there is a problem.

A modern fable tells about two men applying for a job as a truck driver. When asked about their skills, one man bragged that he was so good that he could speed down a hill within three inches of the edge of a cliff all the way. The other driver humbly admitted that he wasn't that good and stayed far away from the edge when he drove. The braggart was surprised that he didn't get the job since the other man admitted that

he was far less skillful. The employer explained that he didn't want the driver who was going to take the most risks and crash, but the one who could be guaranteed of delivering both his cargo *and* his truck.

There are too many people who live their Christian lives like that. They exercise their liberty by living as close to the edge of sin to see what they can get away with. That is not a genuine response to what the Lord has done for us. It is not genuine because it is not consistent with what the Lord is all about.

Our job is to deliver the cargo *and* the truck. The *Gospel* is the cargo and *we* are the truck. If you can't deliver the truck, you can't deliver the cargo. If you crash and burn, you can't deliver the Gospel.

If you didn't surrender your life to be dead to sin, then you didn't surrender your life to God. There is belief and then there is belief. Belief with the intent to submit to God is salvation. Belief with no intent to serve God is to be left in your sin.

Jas 2:19 Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble.

You have to know the difference. The devil is a believer, but he is not a Christian.

The genuine response if the new life in Christ actually *is* your reality is to yield yourself to God.

Rom 6:12-18 **Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body**, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.

13Neither yield ye your members *a s i n s t r u m e n t s* of unrighteousness unto sin: but **yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members *a s* instruments of righteousness unto God.**

14For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the

law, but under grace.

15What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid.

**16Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?**

17But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you.

**18Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.**

Those words *let*, *yield*, and *obey* are *will* words. They are *choosing* words. Your perception is that you might feel weak and tempted, but your reality is that you have a new spirit, if indeed you are saved. The response to the reality of the new life is to not *allow* sin to take control in your life. The response to the reality of the new life is to *yield*, or *give in* to God. What you serve is what you are obeying. If you are serving your flesh, then you are a slave to the world. If you are serving righteousness, then you are a slave to God. Someone might balk at the idea of slavery, but the fact is you *will* be a slave, either to unrighteousness or righteousness. The right response is to *consciously* yield yourself to righteousness.

We have to drive *away* from the edge of the cliff. We can't flirt with drugs, alcohol, lust, spiritual slothfulness, envy, grudge holding, rebellion, spiritual resistance, holding back on the brethren, pride, and cheating and not expect to suffer. Romans 6 closes with,

Rom 6:23 For the wages of sin *is* death; but the gift of God *is* eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

For the Christian, it is only a physical death. For the unbeliever, it is eternal death. It has been said, you can live once



and die twice, or die once and live twice. You can live life now without Christ but your physical death is not the only death you will suffer. You will have the eternal death to follow. Or, if you accept Christ, you will live now and in the hereafter and only suffer physical death in between. The only truly realistic response to the motivation of that reality is to surrender to Christ. God forbid that you should struggle to hold onto your sin! What sin are you clinging to?

Eph 1:6-7, Rom 5:20-21, Rom 6:1-2

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2. Professing Christ in order to sin is not salvation
3. The reality of life in Christ motivates us to serve God, not sin - Rom 6:3-1-23, Jas 2:19