

Romans Part 21 – Chapters 6 & 7

Sunday, August 21, 2022

With input from John Vawter, David Jeremiah, John MacArthur, Max Lucado

Last week we studied that we are now creations in Christ, that justification is both a positional result and it includes a transformational result as well. We are no longer slaves to sin. We can offer ourselves as instruments of righteousness. We have a completely different relationship to sin – not a relationship that tolerates sin or allows sin, but a relationship to God that is characterized by one who has no tolerance for sin and is marked by holiness rather than sinfulness.

John MacArthur: “Christ does not declare anyone righteous whom He does not make righteous by transforming their nature.”

Now let’s look at God’s grace in chapter 6:

Romans 6:1-4

*What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that **grace may abound**? ² By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? ³ Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? ⁴ 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.*

God’s grace is magnanimous; God’s grace is powerful; God’s grace is superabundant; God’s grace is overwhelming. Wherever there is sin, grace conquers that sin.

But Paul has to answer the question that naturally come up with the focus only on God’s grace: “Why not go on sinning that the supply of grace might be increased and God therefore glorified in the display of grace?”

Perhaps the most notable, historical instance of the abuse of Paul’s teaching can be seen in the famous Russian monk named Rasputin, who was the evil genius of the Romanoff family in the last years of its power in Russia. Rasputin taught and exemplified the doctrine of salvation through repeated experiences of sin and repentance. He held and taught that, “*As those who sin require most forgiveness, a sinner who continues to sin with abandon enjoys every time he repents, more of God’s grace than any other ordinary sinner; so sin more so God can show more grace,*” said Rasputin.

This way of living is called **Antinomianism** (Wikipedia) “Ant-tin-know-me-an-is-um” (Ancient Greek: ἀντί [*anti*] "against" and νόμος [*nomos*] "law") is any view which rejects laws or legalism and argues against moral, religious or social norms, or is at least considered to do so. The term has both religious and secular meanings.

In some Christian belief systems, an antinomian is one who takes the principle of salvation by faith and divine grace to the point of asserting that the saved are not bound to follow the moral law contained in the Ten Commandments.

The distinction between antinomian and other Christian views on moral law is that antinomians believe that obedience to the law is motivated by an internal principle flowing from belief rather than from any external compulsion. John Eaton, a leader in the antinomian underground during the 1630s, interpreted Revelation 12:1 with a quote recorded by Giles Firmin: “*I saw a Woman Clothed with the Sun* [That is,

the Church Clothed with the righteousness of Christ, to her Justification] *and the Moon*, [that is, Sanctification] *under her Feet*." Scholars have speculated that the "*sun*" and "*light*" may have been code-words used to surreptitiously reveal antinomian sympathies.

Examples of antinomians being confronted by the religious establishment include Martin Luther's critique of antinomianism and the Antinomian Controversy of the seventeenth-century Massachusetts Bay Colony. In Lutheranism and Methodism, antinomianism is a heresy.

Free grace is a Christian soteriological (doctrine of salvation) view that anyone can receive eternal life the moment they believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God (John 20:31). Free Grace advocates believe that good works are not the condition to merit (as with Catholics), maintain (as with Arminians), or to prove (as with Calvinists) eternal life, but rather are part of discipleship and the basis for receiving eternal rewards.

The grace (gift) of eternal life is said to be free as the only condition for receiving it is initial faith. This view distinguishes between salvation and discipleship – the call to believe in Christ as Savior and to receive the gift of eternal life, and the call to follow Christ and become an obedient disciple, respectively.

Notice that Paul asks the question twice in chapter 6:

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

Romans 6:15 *What then? Are we to sin because we are not under law but **under grace**? By no means!*

Definitions of Grace:

1. God's unmerited favor
2. the spontaneous, unmerited gift of divine favor in the salvation of sinners, and divine influence operating in individuals for their regeneration and sanctification.
3. God's favor toward the unworthy
4. **God's**
Riches
At
Christ's
Expense

Quotes:

Jerry Bridges - "Grace is God reaching downward to people who are in rebellion against Him."

Max Lucado -

"Grace is God's best idea. His decision to ravage a people by love, to rescue passionately, and to restore justly - what rivals it? Of all his wondrous works, grace, in my estimation, is the magnum opus."

Michael Horton - "In grace, God gives nothing less than Himself. Grace, then, is not a third thing or substance mediating between God and sinners, but is Jesus Christ in redeeming action."

John Vawter - “If we want to demonstrate the uncommon grace of Jesus to a world that worships power, we must set aside our combativeness to embrace gentleness”

John Vawter - “Sometimes the finest hour is not how heroic we are defending our cause but how honorable we are in surrendering it”

David Jeremiah: “Some people are hard to like, but not Jesus. Some are irritable, unkind, arrogant, rude, and even cruel. Jesus was none of those. He lived a grace-filled life. As our Savior, He transforms our personalities through His Spirit working in our hearts. Our lives should reflect His gentleness and love to those we encounter each day.”

Romans 5:15: *“The free gift is not like the offense. For if by the one man’s offense many died, much more the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abounded to many”*

Grace happens, and it acts. **Ephesians 2:8:** *“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God”*

Such grace can come only from God. It is the gift unsought, unmerited unlimited. For no matter what we have done, no matter the depth of our transgression, the darkness of our hearts—grace overrules them all. God pursues us relentlessly; He will not give up, and once He has captured us, He won’t let us go.

These are the broad outlines of the great idea. Yet it is as if we are mapping an uncharted territory—surveying the bounds of heaven, if you will. We can never take in the whole expanse. Grace is too dazzling, too bright, for it is powered by the holy heart of God. Trying to comprehend it in whole is like staring directly into one thousand suns.

Grace is as infinite and transcendent as the God from whom it flows. He is “the God of all grace” – 1 Peter 5:10, and He is abounding with mercy for the merciless, help for the helpless, redemption for anyone and everyone. There is no limit to the throng of guests invited to dine at the Master’s overflowing table.

As Griffith Thomas has said, “All this in full measure and overflowing abundance, because of nothing in the object, and because of everything in the Giver, God himself.”

Grace is the bridge over a chasm that seemed infinite—the canyon between our depravity and His holiness. That bridge is wide and sturdy and sure, beckoning us to cross over into a life too wonderful for us to imagine.”

Paul then tackles the idea that the Holy Spirit in us can keep us from sin:

Romans 6:17-22

¹⁷ 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, ¹⁸ and, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness. ¹⁹ 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.

²⁰ For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. ²¹ 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. ²² 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.

John MacArthur- “We were immersed into Him, into His death, and into His life. We are indivisibly united with Christ. Galatians 2:20, “*I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless, I live, yet not I.*” In other words, Paul doesn’t know where he ends and Christ begins. This is the great mystery of the Christian life.

If I asked you, “Who lives your Christian life,” you can’t even answer the question.

You say, “I do; I live my Christian life.”

Really, you do? So, whatever is holy and righteous and good, you’ve done that?

“Well, no, I take it back; I don’t live my Christian life, the Holy Spirit lives it.”

Okay. So, whatever is bad and evil and lustful, that’s the Holy Spirit?

“Well, no. I guess I don’t live it, and I guess the Holy – I can’t blame the Holy Spirit for this, and I can’t take credit for it.”

You see the dilemma? Even Paul didn’t understand. He said, “I’m crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I.” We live in that tension. We have been so immersed into Christ, we do know this, that whatever is good is His work, and whatever is bad is ours. It’s not just learning something about Christ that saves us; it’s not just facts; it’s not just a right interpretation of the facts. It’s shared life.”

In chapter 7 we will find that we are dead to the “powerless” system called the law (Rom.7:1-6) and that the Law cannot empower us to obey (Rom.7:7-25)

Romans 7:1-6 *Or do you not know, brothers and sisters (for I am speaking to those who know the Law), that the Law has jurisdiction over a person as long as he lives? ² For the married woman is bound by law to her husband as long as he is alive; but if her husband dies, she is released from the law concerning the husband.*

³ *So then, if while her husband is alive she gives herself to another man, she will be called an adulteress; but if her husband dies, she is free from the law, so that she is not an adulteress if she gives herself to another man.*

⁴ *Therefore, my brothers and sisters, you also were put to death in regard to the Law through the body of Christ, so that you might belong to another, to Him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit for God. ⁵ For while we were in the flesh, the sinful passions, which were brought to light by the Law, were at work in the parts of our body to bear fruit for death.*

⁶ *But now we have been released from the Law, having died to that by which we were bound, so that we serve in newness of the Spirit and not in oldness of the letter.*

