

Dead to Sin, Alive to God

Text: Romans 6:11-14

Related Reading 1 : Colossians 3:1-4

Related Reading 2 : Romans 6:1-11

I. Introduction - The necessity of holiness

- Prayer for illumination – based on Eph 1:15+
- Read the passage - Romans 6:11-14 (pew bible page #1754)
- This passage calls us to live a life where it is manifest that God, not sin, is reigning in our lives. It calls us to live a life set apart from sin and **set apart** for God. All that we are, including our bodies...our hands, our feet, our tongue, plus our mind, must be presented to God, wholly and completely, as instruments of righteousness.
- There is a theological word that mean to be "**set apart for a purpose**". We are first introduced to this word in Genesis 2 where God set aside the seventh day for a purpose...as a day of rest. God made this day what?... **HOLY**.
- Isaiah 6 INFORMS us: "*HOLY, HOLY, HOLY is the Lord God almighty.*"
- 1 Peter 1 EXHORTS us: "*Be Holy, because I am holy*".
- Heb 12:14 WARNS us: "*...without holiness **no one** will see the Lord.*"
- Holiness is both God's supreme attribute and his highest command for us.
- Holiness is a life brought into conformity with the purposes of God. It is a mind that understands and yields to the revealed will of God in His Word. It is the affections of the heart that resonate with desire toward God. It is a will that follows God- seeking desires in carrying out acts of righteousness that glorify Him. Holiness is the mind, the heart, the will, and actions in symphony with the character of God Himself.
- Yet many other ideas about holiness, that can only be classified as sub-biblical, are popular. I can think of 4 typical views about holiness that don't pass the biblical test:

- Nice Option

First of all are those who consider holiness as a **nice option** for "some people" not necessarily for themselves. Its not that they're against holiness, but its really something reserved for specialized Christians like pastors, missionaries, and evangelists...y'know, "professionals". Using a sports metaphor, they'd consider those people to be the first-string players, and themselves more like **bench warmers**. They consider themselves to be on the team and when the team wins a victory they'll celebrate and tell everyone, "Hey...we're on THAT team. They applaud the players because after all...somebody has to live a seriously holy Christian life...carry the torch, suffer for Christ, win those converts...Fortunately its just not our calling, we haven't been so- gifted...or so they think. "Bench warmers" are content in their mediocrity. For them, holiness is an option for some.

- The Legalist

A second viewpoint about holiness are those who consider themselves to be first- string holiness players, but **their** standards are manmade. They are self-deceived over their achievements. These are called **legalists** because they follow the letter of the law, or at least their version of it, but they don't follow the spirit of the law. They are like the Pharisees that Jesus addressed in Matthew's sermon on the mount. They consider themselves to be quite upright and technically holy, but they don't understand that true holiness extends beyond their external behavior and includes the mind, the thought-life, and their attitudes. Jesus called them murderers because they hated someone. Jesus

called them adulterers because they lusted in their hearts. Jesus called them thieves because they secretly coveted.

- The Licentious

A third viewpoint of holiness are those who purposely ignore the requirements of the law because after all, Christ died to forgive them, and they are going to get their "money's worth". They are the **licentious** (antinomian). This person is big on grace, but takes grace as a license to sin, considers salvation to be their get out of jail free card...their fire insurance. Why not throw off all restraint and sin without limit because grace will abound all the more....won't it?!

- The Disabled

The last example is probably the most common. These people view holiness as important, even desirable, but they have experienced so much defeat in fighting sin that they don't believe progress is possible. They are spiritually **disabled**. This is the person the Apostle Paul mimics in Romans 7. ch7:15 ":

"I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. ...

v 18b For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out. For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing."

- Sound familiar...can you relate to this desperate and disheartened cry from a person who desires to be holy. We'll do well to listen to what the Holy Spirit will teach us this morning. Paul will tell us what holiness God expects is what holiness God supplies.

II. Romans Tour

- In approaching our text this morning, we need to follow best practices and establish the context. We need to survey the Roman road of truth, so that this passage can be understood in the flow of Paul's thoughts.
- The first 5 chapters are the groundwork for Paul's exhortation in chapter 6.
- It is noteworthy, that the passage we just read contains the first commands in Romans. For five and a half chapters, Paul has laid out the most compelling, orderly account of the gospel of Jesus Christ of any book in all of Scripture. Why so much theology and not a single command until now? By the end of today's sermon, I hope it will be clear to you why Knowing and Believing always precedes and is always **followed** by obedience.
- So, it will be fruitful for us do a brief, high level flyover of the previous chapters and then descend to a lower altitude as we enter into chapter 6.

A. Bad News

- Paul's main task in the first 2 and a half chapters of Romans is to make it crystal clear that all human beings, including you and me, whether we be religious or pagan, and no matter where we land on the human moral scale, are, at heart, rebels against God and fully accountable before Him as sinners.
- We are without excuse and fully deserving of his undiluted wrath and condemnation to hell. In essence, this is the "bad news" of the gospel.
- Let's read Paul's assessment in chapter 3 beginning at verse 9:
What then? Are we Jews any better off? No, not at all. For we have already charged that all, both Jews and Greeks, are under sin, as it is written:

"None is righteous, no, not one;

no one understands;

no one seeks for God.

All have turned aside; together they have become worthless;

*no one does good,
not even one."*

- This blanket condemnation of the entire human race is concluded by Paul in 3:23 "For there is no difference for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."

B. Good News

- Having laid the necessary foundation that we are all lost sinners justifiably under the wrath of God, Paul enters into his main topic, the Gospel of Jesus Christ which means "Good News". Earlier, he gave us a peek in chapter 1 verse 16 where he wrote "*[The Gospel]...it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes*".
- It is only when we understand our utterly lost condition, that we can see the Gospel for what it truly is, as Good News. Look with me at the turning point from bad to good news in chapter 3 verse 21: "**But now** the righteousness of God has been made known apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it— the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe."
- So, all who believe are given a gift from God. They are given righteousness. In chapter 4 Paul uses Abraham as an illustration of a person who believed and was given righteousness. ch4:3 "*Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness*".
- In a nutshell, the Good News is that we are placed into a position of acceptance before God, not on the basis of anything we do as we have no merit in ourselves to recommend us to God. No, the only contribution we make to our salvation is our sin, which Christ personally took to the cross in His body. In place of our sin, He gives us His own righteousness. The result is summarized in ch5:1 "*Therefore, since we have been justified [past tense] by faith, we have **peace** with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.*"
- This is a completed act, a declared fact...Christians are credited righteousness just as Abraham was, by faith.
- How can this be true? I don't live a sinless life...just ask my wife or my children...(ok, on second thought, maybe you shouldn't), yet God accepts me as righteous? On what basis?

C. 2 Representatives

- Paul reveals this basis in chapter 5. He explains how every human being is represented by one of two men...either Adam or Christ. The actions of the representative are seen as the actions of the constituents.
- Our federal government is a good illustration of this concept. We have a representational form of government. When we elect and send an MP to Ottawa, he is our representative. As such, we expect him or her to vote in accordance with our wishes. Obviously, our government is an imperfect system and our MP's are not always united with us in our convictions in every vote. But God has instituted a perfect system where we are perfectly united with our representative such that what our representative does, we do.
- In 5:12 we read "*Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned*"
- We all sinned in Adam. Adam, though he acted for himself, also did our bidding in the Garden. This is why it is just that his one trespass led to condemnation for all men (v18).
- But look at ch5:18, we have another representative. His name is Jesus Christ and his "*one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men.*" "All men" who, like Abraham, believe God.
- So, though we are sinners in our practice, when God looks at the believer, he sees the righteousness of Christ our representative.

- So what do you think of the idea that Christ represents you and me before God? Pretty sweet eh? In fact, wouldn't it be great if we could just live any way we please, and our sins would be met by an equal offsetting amount of grace. Isn't that what we read in chapter 6, first verse: "*Shall we go on sinning so that grace may abound?*"

D. United with Christ

- What is Paul's answer ch6:2?"**Meh genoito!**" Greek for "*may it never be*", "*by no means*", "*that's absurd*", "*outrageous*", even "*God forbid!*" *How can you ask such a lame brain question? (see there are dumb questions)*
- Why? Because we are not only represented by Christ, we are **united** with Him! Paul responds in v2 "*How can we who died to sin still live in it? Do you not know that all of us who were baptized into Christ were baptized into His death?*"
- Baptism is an illustration of our union with Christ. When we went under the water, we declared we died and were buried with Christ. When we came up out of the water, we declared we arose with Him to live a new life.
- If we are united with Christ, there are 3 facts about ourselves that we must accept:
 1. FACT:Our old self has died v6 - "*We know that our old self was crucified with him..*" The old self is the person we were before we were saved. He was put to death with Christ on the cross.
 2. FACT:We are no longer enslaved to sin - v6 "*...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.*"
The power of sin to control, dominate, or enslave us has been broken.
 3. FACT:We have been raised to a new life - v4 "*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.*"
All Scriptures agree. At salvation we experience the **new** birth. We are a **new** creation, we have **new** hearts, we are given a **new** spirit, and we have a **new** self.
- These three propositions are a **one time, completed past event**. As Paul concludes in v10" "*For the death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God.*"

III. The Battlefield Survey

- With those main heads of doctrine established, we can now better understand the commands in our text vv11-14.
- Let's look at this passage from 2 perspectives:
 - First we'll **survey** the battlefield - which includes the topography, the participants, their modus operandi, as well as the rules that govern the battle
 - Then we'll **extract** battle-winning strategies and apply them.Let me highlight 7 elements on the battlefield.

A. 1. Kingly Throne

- There is a **kingly throne** or reign v12 "*Do not let sin reign.*"
- There is a reign that is being contested in this passage. The battle is over a throne.

B. 2. Challenger to the Throne

- There is a challenger to this throne, a revolutionary, a rebel who wants to take over the kingdom, namely, Sin. v12 *"Do not let **sin** reign."* He is in revolt and mutiny and means to lead a coup and gain the throne.
- Sin is personified as a power with a will. Sin is not just our actions. v12: "Let not **sin reign** in your mortal body."
- Sin threatens to reign. It lusts after the throne of our lives. We seriously underestimate Sin if we think of it only as our actions.

C. 3. Town and a Castle

- There are a town and castle that are under attack by the "challenger to the throne" which is your body. v12 *"Do not let sin reign in your **mortal body**."*

D. 4. Servants

- There are servants in the castle who may be seduced to defect and become enemy agents in your castle body. These servants are called "desires."
- v12 *"Do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its **desires**."*
- The NIV translation has added an extra word "evil" in front of the word desires which does not exist in the original. Desires is the only word there. The Greek word for "desires" is a neutral word. The same word is used by Paul when he says, "I **desire** to depart and be with Christ" (Phil 1:23).
- But Sin can capture legitimate God-given desires and pollute them and redeploy them against us.
- For example the appropriate desire for food is **hunger**. But when corrupted, it becomes gluttony. **Thirst**, corrupted, becomes alcoholism or dependence on caffeine. The **healthy** desire for sleep mutates into laziness. The desire for **recreation** becomes an entertainment obsession, wasting your life. The desire for **sexual satisfaction**, intended to be a joyful celebration in marriage, becomes lust and destroys relationships and so on.

E. 5. Weapons

- There are **weapons** in the castle walls that are **the parts** of our body: v13 *"Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as [**weapons**] of wickedness..."*. Instead we are to employ them as weapons for righteousness.
- Instead of the word weapons, your translation may use the more neutral word, **instruments**. In every other case in the New Testament the word is translated **weapons**. It means "**weapons**" especially in this context where an insurrection is being threatened.
- These weapons are **the parts** of your body – your eyes and ears and tongue, your hands and feet, your sexual organs.
- The rebel, Sin, seeks to capture the members of your body and turn them into weapons against the true King...

F. 6. True King

....Speaking of which...

- There is a true king over the realm, namely, God. He is on the throne reigning in the castle of your body that He purchased with His own blood.

v13 *"but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as [weapons] of righteousness to God."*

- So the true King is God. Sin is the rebel and the insurrectionist. Your loyalty to your King will be tested in battles every day.

G. 7. Constitution

- The last observation of this battlefield that there is a Constitution that governs the battle. v14 *"For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not **under** law but **under** grace."*
- The Law looms like a guillotine above the necks of everyone who is in Adam. By their works they will be judged on the last day. But what do the early chapters of Romans tell us about this? It is bad news. Nobody will be judged righteous by following the Law.
- But we who are in Christ live under Grace. Grace satisfied the requirements of the Law through the cross and we are no longer under its threat. By grace we now stand, by grace alone.
- Being under Grace changes the battle strategy completely. And that is our next topic.

IV. The Battle-Winning Strategy

- What battle-winning strategies can we extract from this text?
- This may be the point in the sermon where some will wake up and say, "**Oh great**, NOW I am listening...just give me the practical stuff...just tell me what to do?"
- Sorry, you woke up too late...because the starting point for battle- readiness is **Knowing**, not **Doing**. Scripture always identifies knowledge as the foundation of our practice:
- *Col. 3:10 "put on the new self, which is being renewed **in knowledge** after the image of its creator."*
- *John 8:31-32 So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in him, "**If** you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will **know** the truth, and the **truth** will set you **free**."*
- So don't try to drive a wedge between the learning the great truths of the Bible (aka Doctrine) and your pursuit of holiness as if they are separate things. God uses the regular **means of grace** to sanctify us...Bible study, sermons, instruction, and prayer; that which plants the truth in our hearts where it will grow and produce the fruit of obedience.

A. Foundational Strategy

- Our strategies are embedded in 2 main commands. If you are using the NIV, the phrases are (1) to **count** yourself in v11 and the second (2) to **offer** yourself in v13. For clarity, here are the equivalent words from the other translations.

Verse 11 RECKON Yourself	Verse 13 PRESENT Yourself
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Count (NIV) • Consider (ESV, NASB) • Reckon (KJV) • Impute 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer (NIV) • Present (ESV, NASB) • Yield (KJV)

- As handles for these 2 commands, I am going to use RECKON Yourself and PRESENT Yourself.

B. Strategy #1 - RECKON Yourself Dead to Sin, Alive to God v11

- The Greek word behind the verb "to reckon" is an accounting term used for crediting accounts. In banking, a transaction is completed, such as depositing your paycheck. It is credited or "reckoned" to your account.
- Let's apply this concept to Truth. Propositions are Truth claims. We deal everyday with Truth claims do we not?
"This bottle contains 100% of your daily nutritional needs and not only that, it melts fat" -sounds good
"This shampoo will make your hair feel like silk!" [flicks hair]
"Invest with us and you will be financially free at 55" -really
- Outside of the Bible, not everything you hear or shows up in your Inbox that claims to be true is in reality true. Every day you are engaged in sorting out truth from error. Some do this quite soundly and we call them discerning. Others, not so well and we call them gullible.
- Once you've decided on the truthfulness of a proposition, you deposit it in either your Truth Bank or in the "round file". When you deposit a proposition into your Truth Bank you are reckoning the proposition as true.
- Jesus prayed to the Father, "Your Word is Truth". Thus, we are to **always** reckon **biblical** propositions into our Truth Bank. "Reckoning" is in essence, putting your faith in a proposition.
- Here's our command > v11 *"in the same way [reckon] yourselves dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus"*. The phrase *"in the same way"* refers back to our union with Christ vv3-10.
- [Show diagram on slides w/ pointer]
- These truths which are related to our position as united with Christ are what we call positional truths. When we call something a positional truth what we mean is this: At the time of salvation, the believer enters into a position of spiritual union with Christ and remains in that **position forever**.
- We are to **Think** this way about ourselves. **Know** yourself this way. **Reckon** this to be true about yourself as a believer in Christ.

1. Results?

- Some of you may be skeptical about the value of spending so much time consuming positional truths. You wonder, what are the results? What is the practicality?
- No, far from a waste of time, reckoning positional truths about yourself is immensely practical.
- The fact is, how you see yourself **DOES** affect your behavior.
- To **reckon** things true about yourself are not mind games where we trick ourselves into thinking a certain way, but rather, it is embracing objective truth and building our life on it.
- The biblical pattern is to first teach you great positional truths then call you to obedience.
- For example, in Paul's epistle to the Ephesians, there are 3 chapters of positional truths, especially about who we are in Christ. There is not a single command in those 3 chapters. Then in chapter 4 he calls them to live accordingly. Eph 4:1 *"As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received."*
- First, God's Word show us who we **are** in Christ
Then, God's Word exhorts us to live in accordance with that reality.
- This is NOT the "power of positive thinking", a bankrupt concept that is packaged and sold in crystal cathedrals and by psycho-babbling white-suited evangelists. What is the difference?

- SIMPLE. Those teachers of positive thinking tell you to visualize a fiction. Picture yourself as..."successful", specifically in a Great Gulf home, driving a Benz, and president of a growing company. **Its fiction.**
- in contrast, believing the propositions of the Bible about yourself is not fiction, it is REALITY.
- Ultimately, reckoning yourself Dead to Sin, Alive to God, will result in obedience plus a few side benefits along the way:

1. Optimism

- For example, you will be optimistic because it is God's will for you to be holy and He will work it in you: Phil 2:13 *"for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure."*
- This confidence that God is working in you lifts a great mental weight from your soul. As you digest these doctrines you will experience more joy and more confidence in the midst of the daily battle.

2. Freedom From Paralyzing Guilt

- Further, a person who reckons himself dead to sin will no longer be immobilized by guilt. Now good guilt serves God's purposes by convicting you of sin and driving you to the cross. But just like Desires, Sin can make guilt **its** ally. Using misinformation and doubt about God's declaration of your righteousness in Christ, Sin employs guilt to incessantly accuse us of being failures. Truth will set you free from paralyzing guilt.

C. Strategy #2 PRESENT Yourself Wholly to God for Holy Service v13

- If strategy #1 is faith in Truth. Strategy #2 is that faith in action. The order is important. We cannot submit our will until we have submitted our minds to God's truth.
- [Referring to slide] This slide illustrates the process. On the left we have Revealed Truth. Jesus said the The Holy Spirit will lead us into all Truth and God's Word is Truth. By Bible study, biblical sermons, through fellowship with the bible-saturated saints, these truths are taught and reinforced and we increasingly reckon them as True. What happens next? God's Spirit honours the Word planted in our hearts and works in us to bring our wills in line with His Truth. I quote again Phil 2:13 *"for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure."* So growing Obedience is the result.
- The first command in verse 11 was to reckon Truth into our Truth Bank, the next command in verse 12 is to act on it: **"Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its desires."**
- The word "therefore" shows us that this is an application. Why are we not to let sin reign in our bodies? Because v11 tells us that we are dead to it and alive to God. Strategy #2 is a big "therefore". We take the truth that we reckon by faith, and now we act on it. We "appropriate" truth by taking what we know is true and deploy it into our lives.
- How?... v13 *"Do not **present** your members to sin, as weapons for unrighteousness, but **present** yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as weapons for righteousness."*
- Presenting ourselves to God is a heart-stance, a submission to God's rule where you pray, "Lord you have the right to reign in my life. This is what I desire. Take this throne and all that I am.
- The verb **present** is in the present tense in Greek, meaning its an ongoing action. Its not something you do once and say, ok, I presented my myself to God in 1963. No its new every morning, new every moment. You are always to present and re-present yourself to God.
- Folks, will power is useless here. In fact, the moral advice of the bumper sticker or the T-shirt that says "Just Say No" is not Christian. **Rather**, we "Just say YES"....to God. When Sin tries to seduce

us into reigning for even just a moment what do we do? We **prefer** another Ruler. We prefer to serve our Lord.

- Can we do this on our own? Of course not, this desire, the preference for God is an act of the Holy Spirit as we already read in Phil 2:13 *"for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure."*
- When we prefer God our choices follow this preference and He gets the glory because He is more beautiful, more magnificent, and more satisfying than ANY of the fleeting pleasures of Sin.

Let us pray

Benediction

Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to **present** you **blameless** before the presence of his glory with great joy, to the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, **before** all time and **now** and **forever**. Amen.

Jude 24-25 (ESV)