

THE LETTER OF PAUL TO THE ROMANS

*Lesson 9 – Study Questions
Romans 6:1-23*

Review: *From your experience at last week's Cornerstone meeting, share something new that helped build your faith.*

DAY ONE

Read Romans 6:1-3

1. With chapter 6 we begin a section pertaining to baptism. What is your understanding of the purpose of baptism?
2. What questions concerning sin does Paul pose in verse 1?
3. In the beginning of verse 2 how does Paul respond to the question he asked in verse 1, and how does Paul support his answer according to the end of verse 2?
4. In verse 3 Paul says that we were baptized into Christ. Into what else does he say we are baptized?

THINK: Our Catechism calls the Sacrament of Baptism “the gateway to life in the Spirit.” Do you know the date of your baptism or any interesting facts from that day?

5. In Article 1 of The Catechism of the Catholic Church, the section on baptism cites the following references as precursors to the Sacrament of Baptism. Look up one of the following passages and record what you learn from these verses that relates to baptism.

Exodus 14:21-27

John 3:5

1 Peter 3:20-21

6. **CONNECTION:** In Paul's day people were baptized by being completely immersed in water to symbolize death/being buried in water—dying to our old way of life. Coming up out of the water symbolized resurrection—rising to new life with Christ. Our baptism is our participation in the death/resurrection of Jesus. This sharing in the death of Jesus can take place daily in small ways as we try to live according to his teachings. Think of a time this week when you were able to act or react in a way that was in line with Jesus' way of love. Briefly describe what happened.

Pope Francis said this about baptism: "It is decisive even for all of us today to rediscover the beauty of being children of God, to be brothers and sisters among ourselves, because (in Baptism) we have been united in Christ, who redeemed us." Let these thoughts lead you into prayer.

DAY TWO

Read Romans 6:4-6

7. In today's passage Paul continues to speak of baptism. According to the beginning of verse 4, our baptism identifies us with Christ in what way?

NOTE: St John Chrysostom gives this explanation: "Baptism for us is what the cross and burial were for Christ; but with this difference: the Savior died physically, he was physically buried, whereas we ought to die spiritually."

8. In verse 4 Paul says that our unity with Christ in his baptism makes it possible for us to be born into a new life - "to walk in newness of life." Read Ephesians 4:22-24 to find out how this new life should look. Record your thoughts.

9a. Paul says that we are united to Christ by a death like his. Since we have been united with him in death, what will that mean for us according to the end of verse 5?

b. Why do you think Msgr. Mikesch says verse 5 should be read in conjunction with 1 Corinthians 15:12-19?

10. According to verse 6 how do we know that we are no longer under the dominating power of sin?

11. Read Galatians 2:20. Since we have been rescued from the power of sin, what can we say about our relationship with God?

12. CONNECTION: We have heard and read many times that Christ has conquered the power of sin and death. If we watch the evening news we can see that there is still plenty of sin and death all around us, not only in the world, but in our own lives as well. Yet, even with all the evil we witness in the world and the sins that continue to plague us in life, there is still reason for hope. How could you explain this? What inspires your hope?

Look back at Romans 5:20 and record the phrase that you feel relates to this passage. Let thoughts of Christ's power to bring his grace into even the darkest situation lead you into prayer.

DAY THREE

Read Romans 6:7-10

13. In verse 7 Paul says that a person who has died is free from sin (in some other translations "absolved"). In the catechism (CCC 1990) this is interpreted to mean "justified from sin." Keeping Paul's definition of the term "justified" in mind, explain what you understand this to mean.

14. Under what condition will we live with Christ according to verse 8?

15. We believe that Christ died once and for all. How does verse 9 express the truth of his dying only once?

16. In verse 10 Paul says that Jesus' death was "once for all." What part of Hebrews 10:10-14 best amplifies this for you?

17. Romans 6:10 speaks of Christ's resurrected life. Describe what comes to your mind when you think of resurrected life.

18. CONNECTION: Because Jesus died and rose from the dead, we have been freed from the fear of death, released from the power of sin, and reunited with God in love. In other words, this is the "new life in Christ" referred to in our readings. When have you had an experience of this with its accompanying peace, joy and community in The Cornerstone or elsewhere in your life? What do you see as our human restrictions to this joy? Write a few details to share with your group.

Write a prayer of gratitude to Jesus for this and let these thoughts lead you into prayer.

DAY FOUR

Read Romans 6:11-14

19. In verse 11 we read the wonderful promise that we can not only be dead to sin, but we can be, we are, through Christ Jesus, "alive to God." What does this phrase mean to you?

20. At the end of verse 11 we find the often used phrase "in Christ Jesus." What image does Paul use in 1 Corinthians 12:27 to express this belief?

21. How would you express Paul's admonishment in verse 12 in your own words?

22a. In the first part of verse 13 Paul describes an ongoing struggle that goes on within believers. What does Paul say Christians should not do?

b. In what two ways should Christians present themselves in this battle against evil at the end of verse 13?

23. In verse 14 (Good memory verse) Paul says sin will have no dominion over the Roman Christians. What reason does he give?

24. CONNECTION: There are many everyday examples of ways in which we can allow sin to rule our actions and measures we can take to deny sin the power to control us. Is there a trying, unlovable relative who causes you to lose your patience? Are there situations (such as driving in traffic or waiting in lines) in which “the devil” often takes control of your words and actions? Briefly describe an example of anything in which the power of sin threatens to exercise dominion over you.

Read and record James 4:7. Write a prayer today asking God for the power to resist temptation.

DAY FIVE

Read Romans 6:15-18

25. In verse 15 Paul repeats a question and answer similar to that found in Romans 6:1; “Should we sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means.” Why might he ask this question again to the Roman Christians?

THINK: Paul continues one of the on-going themes in his Letter to the Romans: grace versus the law. Recalling the discussion of grace in past lessons, consider why grace is needed.

26. Verse 16 describes two kinds of slavery. Name them and record the results of each.

27. Slaves are under the influence of the master. What are some of the forms of slavery to sin which we see in our time?

28. In verse 17 Paul says that the Roman Christians have accepted the faith in complete sincerity. How does Paul express this truth?

29. According to verse 18, the result of being set free from sin is to become slaves to righteousness. If we have been set free from sin and are under the power of grace, then we are slaves of God. Describe the freedom that this “slavery” brings?

30. CONNECTION: Today Paul says that we should be obedient from the heart. Yet often, our efforts to respond to God can best be described as “half-hearted.” However, there are moments when, through grace, we do respond with a full “Yes” to God’s commands. Recall one of those situations when you responded eagerly and obediently from the heart without hesitating. Record the circumstances here.

Read and record Isaiah 52:7. Begin your prayer today knowing that not only your feet—but all parts of your body—are blessed when used to announce and bring the good news to the world.

DAY SIX

Read Romans 6:19-23

31. As today’s lesson begins, Paul explains why he uses the imagery of human slavery to illustrate our allegiance to either sin or righteousness. What is the result of “slavery to righteousness” according to end of verse 19?

32. In verse 20 Paul intentionally uses the word “free” in a distorted sense. What do you think he is implying with this distortion?

33a. Paul begins verse 21 asking: “So what advantage did you then get from the things of which you now are ashamed.” What do you think are some of the “advantages” that entice people to choose to be “slaves of sin?”

b. According to the end of verse 21, what conclusion does Paul reach?

34. In verse 22 Paul says that “now that we have been freed from sin and enslaved to God, the advantage we get is sanctification.” What, then, is the end? (Or record the definition of sanctification)

35. Read and record verse 23, which contains one of the most famous truths in the Bible. (Good memory verse)

36. CONNECTION: We are free to either live in sin or live in the light of God. While we call this freedom, the word freedom is much abused in our culture. We're all aware of how our culture distorts the concept of "true" freedom and promotes false notions of freedom. These are examples of "freedom from righteousness." In what ways could your life reflect the true freedom to which Paul refers?

Read and record Jesus' words in John 8:31-32. Begin your prayer today asking God to illuminate the "true freedom" that leads to a life of goodness and righteousness.

Read pages 42-48 in the Commentary by Rev. Msgr. Gregory R. Mikesch, M.Div., M.A. The Cornerstone Catholic Scripture Study acknowledges that scripture quotations in this study are from the New Revised Standard Version Bible, Catholic Edition. Copyright 1989, Division of Christian Education of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

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