

Some Glorious Highlights from Romans Chapter 6

by Karl Kemp October, 2013

INTRODUCTION. Romans chapter 6 is one of the most important passages in the Bible, if not the most important, that shows that Christians are called, enabled, and required to walk with the victory over all sin. This is good news, very good news! God says these things to transform us, by grace through faith, not to condemn us. This chapter is very special to me. God used this passage to show me that I could have the victory over sin when I cried out to Him for help as a very young Christian. I was 26 years old, but I had only been a born-again Christian for a month, or two. When I became a born-again Christian some sin problems were solved automatically, but there was at least one area where temptation increased. When I cried out to God for help, the first thing that He did (that I know of) was to open up Romans chapter 6 to me.

The New Testament makes it very clear that the victory over sin is far from being automatic or always easy. The world, the flesh (the old man) and the devil and his hosts are against us. Also, large segments of the body of Christ have accepted the idea that we cannot have the victory over in this life, so they cannot give you strong support and encouragement. Many will tell you that we will sin daily in thought, in word, and in deed as long as we live in this world.

If we want to adequately understand a passage, we need to study it verse-by-verse and in context with the rest of that book of the Bible and with the rest of the Bible. I have discussed this super-important chapter in a modified verse-by-verse manner on pages 96-104 in my book, "Holiness and Victory Over Sin: Full Salvation Through the Atoning Death of the Lord Jesus Christ" and in a verse-by-verse manner in Article #s 4-6 in my paper "Twenty-Eight Articles on Holiness and Victory Over Sin" that is on my internet site (Google to Karl Kemp Teaching), and the articles are available individually on this Christian article site (click on my name for a listing of my articles on this site). My goal for this rather short article (a short article is different for me) is to present some super-important highlights from Romans chapter 6 while skipping many of the details.

I am using the New American Standard Bible, 1995 edition. I am using double parentheses (()) instead of footnotes in this paper, since the format here doesn't permit footnotes. I suggest you skip the double parentheses the first time through. They all deal with cross-references to my other writings for further study on those passages.

ROMANS 6:1, 2. "What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase [or abound]? (2) May it never be! ["God forbid" (King James Version, KJV)] How shall we who died to sin still live in it?" Shall we continue to

sin? God hates sin and He paid an infinite price in the sacrifice of His Son to give us the victory over sin. We are called to be dead to sinning. In the ideal case we would never sin again after we become born-again Christians. Forgiveness is provided when we repent, if we should sin, but we need to put all the emphasis on appropriating God's sanctifying grace by faith to stop sinning.

One reason the apostle Paul emphasized the call, enablement, and requirement for Christians to be dead to sin and to be "slaves to righteousness" (Rom. 6:19; also see 6:18) in his epistle to the Romans was that some were accusing him of presenting a gospel message that set aside the Law of God and made plenty of room for sin. I'll quote Romans 3:8: "And why not say (as we are slanderously reported and as some claim that we say), 'Let us do evil that good may come'?" Paul hated that false accusation. The gospel that Paul received from heaven fully deals with the sin problem. In Rom. 2:26, 27 and 8:4, for example, the apostle shows that Christians are called, enabled, and required, to fulfill the requirements of God's moral law (but not the ceremonial law of the Old Testament). And in 1 Cor. 7:19 he says, "Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but *what matters* is keeping the commandments of God." ((Romans 2:26-29 are discussed on page 74 of my book, "Holiness and Victory Over Sin" and in my article "The Christian, the Law, and Legalism, Part 2" on this Christian article site.))

In Romans 6:2-6 the apostle showed HOW we died to sin. I'll quote most of ROMANS 6:6, "...our old self ["man"] was crucified with *Him* [with Christ], in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin." We should no longer have a "body of sin" and be "slaves to sin." According to Paul's gospel, believers have become united with the Lord Jesus Christ in His atoning death, burial, resurrection and ascension. We are called, enabled, and required to be "slaves to righteousness" (Romans 6:19; also see 6:18). Again, this is good news, very good news! Who wants to be a slave of sin, especially in the light of the fact that judgment day is coming? No true Christian wants to sin (rebel) against God! God hates sin!

ROMANS 6:7. "for he who has died is freed from sin." We know what the apostle meant by "he who has died," since he spoke of this death to sin and the old man through union with the Lord Jesus in His atoning death and resurrection in verses 2-6. In the ideal case those who have died to sin and the old man and who have been born again through appropriating the resurrection life of Jesus, being united with Him through faith, will live as "slaves to righteousness" from that time on. We have been resurrected spiritually, and we will be caught up into the fullness of the eternal life and glory of God at the end of this age.

ROMANS 6:11. "Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus." The KJV and NKJV have "reckon" instead of "consider"; the NIV has "count." Since Christ has conquered sin and spiritual death in our behalf through His atoning death and resurrection and we have been "freed from sin"

(Romans 6:7), we are to consider/reckon/count ourselves, by faith in God and His gospel, to be dead to sin but alive to God, living for Him as "slaves to righteousness."

ROMANS 6:14. "For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law but under grace." One of the primary points that Paul made here, and other places in his writings, was that the old covenant, which was established on the Mosaic Law, did not have the authority or power to overthrow spiritual death and bondage to sin (see Romans 7:5, 6; 8:3, for example), but that the new covenant, which was established on the atoning death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, has overthrown spiritual death and bondage to sin for all who appropriate new-covenant salvation through God's saving GRACE in Christ by faith. (See all of Romans chapter 6 and Romans 8:1-14, for example.) ((Romans 8:1-14 are discussed on pages 116-123 of my book, "Holiness and Victory Over Sin" and in Article #s 6-8 in my paper "Twenty-Eight Articles on Holiness and Victory Over Sin, and the articles are available individually on this Christian article site.))

God's saving grace in Christ has dethroned our former master of sin. Now we are called, enabled, and required to be "slaves to righteousness." A big part of what it means to be "enslaved to God" (Rom. 6:22) is to be "slaves to righteousness" (Rom. 6:19; also see 6:18). We could translate "servants" or "bond-servants" instead of "slaves," but the word slaves helps emphasize the fact that we are totally obligated to be faithful to our new master, God, and to be "slaves to righteousness."

ROMANS 6:17. "But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin [back before we became born again Christians], you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed [I prefer the NKJV's "to which you were delivered"]." Faith includes being "obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were delivered." As born-again Christians we are enabled to obey God's Word by grace through faith. That "form of teaching" here refers to, or at least includes, the requirement for God's people to be faithful to Him by living in His truth, righteousness, and holiness. We only have two options: We can stay in the kingdom of spiritual death and bondage to sin, or we can accept the gospel on God's terms and be delivered over to be enslaved to Him and His righteousness. That is a very good and healthy enslavement!

ROMANS 6:18. "and having been freed from sin (compare Romans 6:7), you became slaves of righteousness." We have been set free from being enslaved to sin in the kingdom of spiritual death and Satan and have been called, enabled, and required to live for God from our hearts, by His enabling grace through faith, in accordance with His Word, as "slaves to righteousness" (Rom. 6:19). We "became slaves of righteousness."

The word "righteousness" is used five times in Romans chapter 6 (here in verse 18 and in verses 13, 16, 19, 20). It is very important to see that the word is used

of living for God, in agreement with His moral commandments, from the heart, by grace through faith, in all five of these uses. This is the typical use of the word righteousness in the Bible; however, large numbers of Christians think righteousness is typically limited to the ideas of being forgiven and having a right standing with God (positional, legal righteousness). The word is used that way on occasion, but that is not the typical use of the word in the Bible, Old Testament or New Testament.

This is so important I'll quote 1 John 3:7, "Little children, make sure no one deceives you, the one who practices [or, "who is doing"] righteousness is righteous, just as He [God] is righteous." (Being righteous as God is righteous certainly includes the victory over all sin, doesn't it?) We are enabled to do righteousness through God's saving grace in Christ by faith. He gets all the glory for the righteousness that is manifested in our hearts and lives. God imparts His righteousness to us through new-covenant salvation. As we walk by the indwelling Holy Spirit of Righteousness, which we are called, enabled, and required to do on a continuous basis, we are walking in the righteousness of God (compare Galatians 5:16). ((Galatians 5:16-25 are discussed on pages 195-200 of my book, "Holiness and Victory Over Sin" and in Article #s 1-3 in my paper "Twenty-Eight Articles on Holiness and Victory Over Sin"; these articles are available individually on this Christian article site.)) The First Epistle of John (1 John), along with a very large number of other books of the New Testament, strongly confirms that we are called, enabled, and required to be faithful to God, by grace through faith, and to be "slaves to righteousness." ((Many key verses from 1 John are discussed on pages 200-216 of "Holiness and Victory Over Sin" and in Article #s 15-18 in my paper "Twenty-Eight Articles on Holiness and Victory Over Sin"; these articles are available individually on this Christian article site.))

ROMANS 6:22. "But now having been freed from sin [compare verses 7, 18] and enslaved to God, you derive your benefit, resulting in sanctification [holiness; an abiding state of holiness], and the outcome eternal life." Born-again Christians already partake of eternal life in a preliminary sense (see John 5:24, for example), but the fullness of eternal life is reserved for the end of this age, when we will be glorified (see Mark 10:30; Galatians 6:8-10; 1 Timothy 6:12; Titus 3:7; and Rom. 8:16-39, for example). ((Romans 8:16-39 are discussed in a paper on my internet site.))

I would translate "holiness" instead of "sanctification" with the KJV, NKJV, and NIV. (So too in verse 19.) The apostle Paul was speaking of the abiding state of holiness that Christians are called, enabled, and required to dwell in. ((I dealt with this abiding state of holiness in some detail in the last chapter of my book, "Holiness and Victory Over Sin.")) Dwelling in an abiding state of holiness includes loving God and being "dead to sin," being "enslaved to God" and being a "slave to righteousness." Loving God and His Son includes keeping His commandments (John 14:15).

I'll quote 1 Peter 2:24, where the apostle Peter summarized much of what the apostle Paul said in Romans chapter 6: "and He Himself bore our sins [He bore our sins with the guilt (so we could be forgiven) and with the penalties of spiritual death and bondage to sin (so we could be born again and walk with the victory over sin)] in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed." ((This verse is discussed on page 33 of my paper "The Christian, the Law, and Legalism" on my internet site and in Part 5 of that paper on this Christian article site.))

ROMANS 6:23. "For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." Sin and Satan will promise you much, but when judgment day (payday) comes the wages of sin is "death," the second death of Revelation 20:14, 15.

May the will of God be fully accomplished through this article and His people be edified to the fullest extent possible!

© Copyright by Karl Kemp