



TRUTH APPLICATIONS

Sermon Notes

“Living To God In Christ Jesus”

Romans 6:1-14

Introduction

1. In *A Shattered Visage: The Real Face of Atheism*, Ravi Zacharias quotes an unknown author in despair over a four-decades long disintegration of culture:

In the 1950's, kids lost their innocence. They were liberated from their parents by well-paying jobs, cars, and lyrics in music that gave rise to a new term – the generation gap.

In the 1960's, kids lost their authority. It was the decade of protest – church, state, and parents were all called into question and found wanting. Their authority was rejected, yet nothing ever replaced it.

In the 1970's, kids lost their love. It was the decade of me-ism, dominated by hyphenated words beginning with self: self-image, self-esteem, self-assertion. It made for a lonely world. Kids learned everything there was to know about sex but forgot everything there was to know about love, and no one had the nerve to tell them there was a difference.

In the 1980's, kids lost their hope. Stripped of innocence, authority, and love, and plagued by the horror of a nuclear nightmare, large and growing numbers of this generations stopped believing in the future.¹

2. Similar paragraphs could be written about the three decades since the close of the 1980s.
 - a. In news stories, surveys, and personal encounters, we know of many people who have indicated that their expectation for the future is bleak, not hopeful.
 - b. Are we really surprised when people with such an outlook try futile things in search of meaningful life (see Ecclesiastes 1:2)?²
3. But, think about it from a different direction. Instead of condemning desperate people for the many places they have looked for answers, or pitying them for their choices, let's ask:
 - a. Do *we* who follow Jesus display a different passion for life and confidence in living?
 - b. For the sake of all those desperate people, are we showing a different way?
4. At the heart of the “good news” is the idea that people need not live in despair.
 - a. Even death, the ultimate example of hopelessness, does not hold sway as it once did.
 - b. Its ability to conquer, even to sting, has been blunted (1 Corinthians 15:55).
 - c. Because of Jesus' resurrection, we can thank God, “who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ” (v. 57).

¹ Ravi Zacharias, *A Shattered Visage: The Real Face of Atheism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1990), 103-104.

² “The Preacher's” (Ecclesiastes 1:1) experiments with multiple answers in his search for meaning “under the sun” (see 1:9; etc.) parallel the searches pursued by many in the modern world.

5. In our text, Paul goes beyond the fact of resurrection to show what it means to be “living for God in Christ Jesus” (v. 11, NAB).³

Body

I. Restating the Reality (1-4).

A. In the first five chapters of Romans, Paul has said:

1. *Everyone* has a sin problem; we’re guilty, but also beat down (1:18-3:20, 23).
2. God kept his promise and rescued us from sin’s imprisonment (see 7:23).
 - a) He kept his promise to Abraham, sent his Son to be “the sacrifice of atonement” (3:25, NRSV), and credits his work to us by faith (3:21-4:25; 4:3 cites Gen. 15:6).
 - b) God made this acquittal and its attendant blessings available to everyone, making it possible for us to be “reconciled to God” (5:10) despite being weak, ungodly, sinning enemies (5:1-11).
 - c) The Son reversed Adam’s way; “the grace of God and the free gift by the grace of that one man Jesus Christ abounded for many” (5:15, see 5:12-19).
3. Reversing sin’s increase as people followed Adam’s way, grace abounds for Jesus’ followers in an amount able to absorb the full amount of sin (5:20-21).

B. Some apparently misunderstood the meaning of the reversal, leading to Paul’s reminder of the most important reality.

1. Some, reasoning that since more grace is available where there is more sin, were apparently considering (subjunctive mood) continuing in the way of sin as the way to receive more grace; Paul flatly rejected their conclusion (6:1-2a).
2. Such a course is not possible for people who have “died [aorist] to sin” (6:2).
3. Our death to sin happened at a specific time we can identify (6:2-4).
 - a) It’s when we followed Jesus’ example as he moved from old life to new: when we were, in effect, laid alongside Christ in his grave in baptism.⁴
 - b) Our union with him continued through burial with him (συνετάφημεν, *synetaphēmen*, note the συν- prefix) to being raised with him.
 - c) The entire process had an ultimate purpose: “in order that (ἵνα, *hina*) . . . we too might walk (περιπατήσωμεν, *peripatēsōmen*, aorist subjunctive) in newness of life.”

C. We should notice two things from vv. 3-4.

1. Baptism is the point where we move from old life to new.
2. Paul’s purpose is not to defend baptism, but to call his readers to embrace and live the new life that began at baptism.

II. The Meaning of the Reality (5-11).

A. What at first looks like a repetition of vv. 3-4 is really a drawing out of the point.

1. Having been united with (σύμφυτος, *symphyutos*) him in death, we expect to share his new life; Paul’s emphasis is on the nature of that life more than on living on after death (v. 5).

³ The translation, “living for God” more literally renders the present participle ζώντας (*zōntas*; from ζάω, *zaō*) that Paul used in verse 11. “Alive to [for] God” is not an inaccurate translation *per se*, but using the form, “living” calls attention to the expectation that our life with Christ should be continually characterized by energy and enthusiasm.

⁴ For discussion of this concept, including material from G. R. Beasley-Murray’s analysis in his *Baptism in the New Testament*, see Douglas J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1996), 363.

2. In the process of joining his death and resurrection, we also joined with him in the defeat of death and the sin that led to it (v. 6a).
 3. No way, then, can we still “be enslaved to sin” (v. 6b).
 4. Why? Death is the means by which we are acquitted from sin, which in effect sets us free (the word for “set free” is δικαίωω [*dikaioō*], to justify, acquit) (v. 7)
 - a) See the ASV: “for he that hath died is *justified* from sin.”
 5. Verses 8-10 draw out the point more, stressing the finality of the old life, the conquest of resurrected life over sin, and the expectation that we will now live like Jesus, “to God.”
- B. Verse 11 is both summary and exhortation: Don’t live in sin to have more grace; embrace new life and be “living to God in Christ Jesus” (literally, reflecting the present participle ζώντας, *zōntas*; see note ³ above).

III. Living the Reality (12-14).

- A. Stop! (12-13a).
1. In the context, the Greek grammatical construction⁵ calls to a halt the direction of v. 1.
 - a) Since death no longer “lords” (κυριεύει, *kyrieuei*) over Christ and those united with him (v. 9), we should never let sin “reign” (βασιλεύτω, *basileuetō*) in our bodies so that we obey its passions (12).
 - b) Determined to follow Jesus, we will not present (παρίστημι, *paristēmi*; offer up, place alongside; cf. 12:1) our members to sin (13a).⁶
- B. Yield! (RSV, 13b-14).
1. We will “present” (παρίστημι, *paristēmi*) ourselves to God, living like people who died to sin.
 - a) Profession of faith is not enough; lives must match our claims.
 - b) Staying away from sin is not enough; Godlike living must replace old life.
 2. The result comes full circle to v. 1: we’re under grace, not so we can sin (v. 1), but so we can live (v. 14)!

Conclusion

1. As we conclude, think again about the despair expressed by the unknown writer quoted above, people who have experienced lost innocence, lost authority, lost love, lost hope, and the despair that has accompanied their lostness.
2. Romans 6 reminds us that it does not have to be that way, that the despair, dread, and sense of death in our world were defeated by Jesus. Those who follow him never need be burdened by them again.
3. We need to hear that. Our world needs to hear that. But, our world also needs to see people living to God in Christ Jesus and how that lifestyle has visibly and radically changed things. Are you living that life? If not, Jesus will give you new life, just as he did Paul and the Romans. Come, die to the old, and put on the new.

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⁵ The present imperative, used with the negative particle, μή, (*mē*).

⁶ For specific sins that Paul might have mentioned, see 1:24-32; see also 2:17-29.