

Romans: Verse-by-Verse

Romans 6:1 (Introduction)

Student Notes

As Paul finished the last section of chapter five, he gave us this very hopeful statement:

The law was added so that the trespass might increase. But where sin increased, grace increased all the more, so that, just as sin reigned in death, so also grace might reign through righteousness to bring eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer?

Romans chapter five: The idealized picture of the Christian life.

1. We are saved by faith; we are standing in grace and rejoicing in glory.
2. Before salvation, we belonged to Adam, the one who introduced into the human strain the powers of Sin and Death. Now, we belong to Christ, who has brought us salvation and the God-kind of life.
3. Even though the Mosaic Law multiplied sin, grace increased all the more. Grace has provided a way for us to live in victory.

- **The “Problem” with Grace:**

Paul’s opponents felt his portrait of a Christian was unbalanced: Many accused him of forgetting the requirements of the Christian life, spiritual growth, as well as the demands of spiritual discipleship. H

is critics saw his theology as excessively easy on sin: Their misquote in Romans 3:8 -- “Let us do evil that good may result”.

- **The Mistaken Formula:**

While sin increased, Grace increased all the more. Would it not make sense that the more a New Testament Christian sins, the more grace would be extended to them?

Two historical examples of this faulty thinking: 1. James Hogg’s, “Private Memoirs and Confessions a justified Sinner”. 2. Rasputin – the monk who served the Russian Romanov family.

Rasputin’s thesis: Someone who continues to sin with abandon enjoys more of God’s forgiving grace each time he or she repents.

- **The Corinthian evidence of Antinomianism:**

Paul had to address the extreme leniency that the Corinthians had displayed towards a young man who was sexually active with what must have been his stepmother. The church seems to have taken the view that their acceptance of his behavior was a source of spiritual pride.

Paul’s reaction: “It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that even pagans do not tolerate: A man is sleeping with his father’s wife. And you are

proud! Shouldn't you rather have gone into mourning and have put out of your fellowship the man who has been doing this?"

- **The Church at the Crossroads of Sin and Grace:**

1st-century teachers insisted that Christians the only way to instill the principles of sound morality in Gentile believers was to teach them the Mosaic law and demand their adherence to it.

This led to another dilemma – that of imposing the Law as a condition of salvation, over and above the requirement of faith in Christ.

- **The Purpose and Outline of Romans 6:**

Paul's purpose: A thorough, theological repudiation of the very question Paul's critics asked: "Shall we go on sinning, so that grace will increase?"

Romans 6 is written under two main banners. (A) Verses 1-4 show how we are united to Christ. (B) Verses 15-23 show how the believer has traded an oppressive slavery for one of freedom to Christ.

A Panoramic View of Romans 6: How the two banners share five main subjects:

1. Both sections emphasize God's grace and further explain such statements as "grace increased" and, "so that... grace might reign".

2. Both sections ask the same questions about grace and law:

Verse 1: "What shall we say, then? Shall we go on Shall we sin because we are not law but under grace?" Verse 15: "What

then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace?"

3. Both sections have a similar reaction to the impulse of sinning more so that more grace can be experienced.

Verse 2: "By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer?" Verse 16: "Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means!"

4. In both sections, Paul gives the same reason for the antinomian origin among believers: an ignorance on the part of believers. (To some extent – more so among Gentile believers.)

Verse 3: "Don't you know that all of us who baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?" Verse 16: "Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to someone to obey him as slaves, you are slaves to the one whom you obey?"

5. Both sections teach the same radical discontinuity between our pre-conversion, old way of life and our post-conversion, new way of life.

Verse 4: "We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life."

Verses 22-23: "But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves to God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life. For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Next time: Moving through Paul's exhaustive arguments about sin and grace.