



When in Romans Do as the Righteous Do

"ReBorn Free"

Romans 6:8-14

Institutional syndrome refers to deficits or disabilities which develop after a person has spent a long period living in mental hospitals, prisons, or other remote institutions. One effect of living in these institutions is that once they return to 'normal' life they are often unable to manage many of its demands.

It's not a great illustration, but I think you can see a little bit of this in a person who becomes a Christian. God gives you life and freedom but you can be so affected by years of living in sin, responding sinfully by yielding your body to the world and the devil, that it's hard to walk as a 'normal' person the way God intended.

You can and theses verses tell you how.

Romans 6:8 Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him,

The spiritual fact is that when Jesus "died" on the Cross, we died as to our old state of being. We are no longer seen by God as being 'in,' or identified, with Adam. Jesus is our new representative and what is true of Him is true for us.

We "live with Him." We all either do or have 'lived' with someone. You share space and supplies and responsibilities with the folks you live with.

In a much greater and, of course, spiritual way, you share everything that belongs to, or is true of, Jesus.

Live with Him certainly looks forward to the future after we are either resurrected or raptured. But it also applies now as we realize that all spiritual blessings in heavenly places are ours to enjoy.

He was talking about experiencing resurrection life right now on a daily basis. We often summarize this truth by stating that the same mighty power which raised Jesus from the dead is available in your life right now. You have the present indwelling power of the Holy Spirit to apply the blessings and benefits of Jesus Christ's resurrection.

Romans 6:9 knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him.

“Knowing” is a key word. As we've said in each previous study, we appropriate these truths by faith. These are spiritual facts that require only our believing for them to be activated in our lives.

“Christ, having been raised from the dead...” Just a reminder that we believe Jesus rose from the dead in a glorified physical body. It is a foundational doctrine of the Christian faith.

“Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more.” Jesus raised many people from the dead during His earthly ministry. These all were raised in their regular physical body. These all died again.

When Jesus was raised from the dead, He was the first to be resurrected in a glorified human body. He was raised and will never be dead again.

“Death no longer has dominion over Him.” Death once held Jesus for a time. He was in the grave for three days - not as a prisoner, however.

Prior to the death and resurrection of Jesus, all people who died went to Hades. Hades was divided into two compartments – a place of torment, and a place of rest called Paradise. When Jesus died on the Cross, He descended into Hades, into Paradise. There He revealed Himself to all the

righteous dead from all time as the Savior they had put their faith in. Then Jesus led them to heaven in triumph.

(This is explained by the apostle Paul in a passage in Ephesians 4:8-10).

When He was in Paradise, awaiting His physical resurrection, He was Lord. There is no basis anywhere in Scripture for thinking that Hades is some sort of kingdom over which the devil reigns. Demons are not in Hades torturing and tormenting the souls of deceased unbelievers. A few really bad demons are already incarcerated in Hell. They are chained there, being punished. The rest of the demons, and the devil, are on the loose.

There is an awful heresy among health and wealth preachers that says Jesus was tortured and tormented by the devil after He died and was in Paradise. Nope.

Romans 6:10 For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God.

Since Jesus was sinless, how is it “He died to sin”?

1. First, He died to the **penalty** of sin by taking upon Himself the sins of the whole human race. He met the legal demands of sin for all mankind who would trust Him for salvation.
2. Second, He died to sin in that He broke its **power**. A major point of this section is that sin has no power over us anymore.

Jesus did this “once for all.” What the Lord accomplished in His death, burial, and resurrection cannot be repeated. It need not be repeated. By the way. This is one reason I don’t like crucifixes, where Jesus is still hanging on the Cross. His work on the Cross is finished. The empty Cross is our symbol, not the suffering Christ.

“The life that He lives, He lives to God.” Of course Jesus, as eternal, always lived to God – He always lived in relation to His Father and the Holy Spirit.

But with His resurrection He lives to God in the fulfillment of all that the Scripture has prophesied of His comings. His successful completion of His mission at His first coming, punctuated by His resurrection and ascension, assures us that the rest of God's plan will unfold just as it is written.

- Jesus lives to God as the One Who will step forward and take the scroll and unleash the Great Tribulation on the earth.
- He lives to God as the One Who will return to end the Battle of Armageddon
- He lives to God to rule over the earth for a thousand years.
- He lives to God to create a new heaven and a new earth.

Paul has described what is true of us positionally. Now he turns to the practical outworking of this truth in our lives.

Romans 6:11 Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

“I reckon” is something Jed Clampet might say to Jethro. We take it to mean “I guess,” or “I suppose.”

In reality the word reckon is far more confident and robust. William MacDonald quotes Ruth Paxson who wrote:

[It means] believing what God says in Romans 6:6 and knowing it as a fact in one's own personal salvation. This demands a definite act of faith, which results in a fixed attitude toward “the old man.” We will see him where God sees him—on the Cross, put to death with Christ... The first step in a walk of practical holiness is this reckoning upon the crucifixion of “the old man.

That is the intention of the word “reckon.” You are to count as being really true what God says - that you are dead indeed to sin. By faith you conclude what God has declared.

God does not command you to *become* dead indeed to sin. He tells you that **you are already dead** indeed to sin and alive to Him, and then He commands you to act appropriately.

We reckon ourselves dead to sin by responding to temptation as a dead man would. The story is often told of Augustine being accosted by a woman who had been his mistress before his conversion. When he turned and walked away quickly, she called after him, "Augustine, it's me! it's me!" Quickening his pace, he called back over his shoulder, "Yes, I know, **but it is no longer me!**"

What he meant was that he was dead to sin and alive to God. A dead man has nothing to do with immorality, lying, cheating, gossiping, or any other sin.

Instead we are alive to God in Christ Jesus. This means that we are called to holiness, worship, prayer, service, and bearing fruit.

The next verses talk about your choice of master. You read of presenting yourself either to sin as your master, or to God as your Master. The NKJV uses the word "present," while the KJV uses the word "yield." You are to present yourself by yielding your will to God.

Romans 6:12 Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts.

Several years ago Bob Dylan wrote a Christian song entitled, *You Gotta Serve Somebody*. The title captures an important spiritual principle. You were created in such a way that you **must** serve someone. You might not like to hear that, but it is true! Only in serving the one you were created for will you find true humanity, purpose, and meaning.

Adam believed he could get out from under the service of God and become his own sovereign. What did he find instead to be true? He found himself the servant of Satan, and sin began to reign in his mortal body. God promised him a Savior whom he could submit to, whom he could surrender to - whom he could serve.

You were once "in Adam," the servant of Satan, with sin reigning in your mortal body. Now you are "in Christ," dead to sin. Sin is still present, both within and around you. You are still on the earth, still in a corrupting body.

Therefore you must daily choose whom you will serve, sin or the Savior, and whether you will let sin or righteousness reign.

Romans 6:13 And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin...

Sin expresses itself through your physical body and its appetites. Your eyes, your ears, your mouth - all of the members of your physical body - can become the instruments of sin.

Since your sin nature was crucified you need no longer yield to its lusts. Instead you can choose to,

Romans 6:13 ...present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.

It's a choice, every time, but one you can always make.

Romans 6:14 For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.

1. The first reason "sin shall not have dominion over you" was that our old man was crucified with Christ (6:6).
2. The second reason is that we "are not under law but under grace."

Sin has the upper hand over a person who is under law. Why? For two reasons:

1. The law tells you what to do but doesn't give you the power to do it.
2. The law stirs up desires in fallen human nature to do what is forbidden.

"Not under law but under grace" is another way to describe the radical change in the life of someone who is born again. For the Jewish person of Paul's day, living life under law was everything. The law was the way to God's approval and eternal life. Now, Paul shows that in light of the New Covenant, we are not under law but under grace. His work in our life has changed everything.

D. L. Moody used to speak of an old black woman in the South following the Civil War. Being a former slave, she was confused about her status and asked: "Now is I free, or be I not? When I go to my old master he says I ain't free, and when I go to my own people they say I is, and I don't know whether I'm free or not. Some people told me that Abraham Lincoln signed a proclamation, but master says he didn't; he didn't have any right to."

You can listen to your old slave master but "you be free" because Jesus has set you free! He alone had the right to do so, being the sinless Son of God - fully God and fully human.

Spurgeon said,

If God has given to you and to me an entirely new life in Christ, how can that new life spend itself after the fashion of the old life? Shall the spiritual live as the carnal? How can you that were the servants of sin, but have been made free by precious blood, go back to your old slavery?

Don't stay 'institutionalized' in your flesh.