Lesson 9
November 1, 2026

Set Apart for Divine Service:

God sanctifies believers for His holy purpose.

THE LESSON OVERVIEW

Beginning with humanity's fallen state and the costly consequences of sin (5:12-14), Paul highlights the gift of new life available through union with Christ's death and resurrection (6:1-4). He then addressed being set apart for God, urging Christ's followers to live as instruments of His righteousness (vv. 5-14). The last portion of chapter 6 discusses deliverance from sin's control and contrasts the outcomes of obedience to God with the consequences of sin. Ultimately, this lesson provides a comprehensive understanding of salvation, sanctification, and the call to live in alignment with God's will.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Paul used the experience of death and life to portray the Christian's transformation through unity with Christ. He explained that baptism marks a symbolic death to sin, wherein believers share in Jesus' crucifixion, followed by resurrection unto a new life of righteousness. This signifies a decisive separation from sin's control while embracing a renewed call to godly living. Believers are urged to regard themselves as "dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ" (v. 6:11), empowered to resist sin and pursue holiness by God's grace.

THE LESSON OUTLINE

1. **RIGHT STANDING WITH GOD: Romans 5:12 through 6:4.**
    - A. Sin's Problem and Its Consequences, (5:12-21)
    - B. New Life Through Union with Christ, (6:1-4)
2. **SET APART FOR GOD: Romans 6:5-14.**
    - A. Dying to Die No More, (5-11)
    - B. Alive as Instruments of Righteousness, (12-14)
3. **FREED TO OBEY GOD: Romans 6:15-23.**
    - A. Righteous Living and Freedom from Sin, (15-18)
    - B. Contrasting Obedience and Sin, (19-23)

DISCUSSING THE LESSON

1. RIGHT STANDING WITH GOD: Romans 5:12 through 6:4.

A. Sin's Problem and its Consequences, Romans 5:12-21.

Paul explains humanity's collective guilt stemming from Adam's sin, emphasizing that Adam represented all humanity in his disobedience to God (v. 12). Sin became an inherent condition affecting every human being, as evidenced by death and the universal need for a Savior. While the Mosaic Law defined and magnified the extent of sin, it was powerless to cure humanity's sinful nature (v. 13-14). Instead, Jesus Christ born without sin and conceived by the Holy Spirit, offered the ultimate sacrifice, providing justification and righteousness to all who accept His grace through faith (vv. 15-16). Adam's disobedience brought condemnation and death, but Jesus' obedience brought life and redemption through the transformational power of grace over sin.

The solution to humanity's sin condition lies not in human effort but in God's abundant grace, which surpasses the depth and severity of sin (v. 17). Manifested through Jesus' sacrifice on the cross, God's grace provides forgiveness, victory, and eternal life to those who believe (v. 18). Unlike the temporary remedies of the Law, Jesus' sacrifice reconciles humanity to God, cleansing sin and renewing lives under the new covenant through the blood of Christ (v. 19). God's answer to sin was neither surrender to sin nor forced obedience, but unmerited favor through grace (v. 21). This grace lifts us from despair and defeat, offering hope and restoration regardless of past failures. Ultimately, the reign of sin is overcome by the reign of grace, because "where sin abounds, grace did much more abound" (v. 20).

B. New Life Through Union with Christ, Romans 6:1-4.

Some people had the absurd idea that believers should continue sinning so God's grace would be multiplied. Paul strongly refuted this notion, emphasizing that grace does not grant permission for a lawless life. He rejected any notion that God's abundant grace is a license to persist in sinful behavior. In verse 2, he used a forceful Greek expression, me genoito, translates as "God forbid" (KJV) or "Certainly not!" (NKJV). Paul emphatically dismissed the misunderstanding, emphasizing that those united with Christ by faith have died to sin and can no longer live under its dominion. Paul's rhetorical questions (vv. 1-2) challenges us to think about our identity in Christ, which entails a decisive break from the control of sin. This call to holiness reveals the ethical implications of salvation: Grace not only forgives but also empowers us to walk in the newness of life, reflecting our spiritual renewal.

Verse 3 addresses the believer's union with God through baptism "into Jesus Christ." It is a spiritual baptism into Christ's death, and therefore death to sin. This is a baptism by faith, which is powerfully symbolized in water baptism by immersion. Water baptism depicts the death and burial of one's old sinful nature, and is also a picture of resurrection as one come up from the water. Verse 4 emphasizes the life-changing power of salvation, with baptism representing our participation, by faith, in Christ's death, burial, and resurrection. It is a decisive separation form sin's rule, offering an opportunity to live free from sin through God's empowering grace.

Through the imagery of burial and resurrection, water baptism vividly represents a transformation, urging us to leave the past behind and embrace a Spirit-driven life of righteousness. It signifies a break from sin's dominion, as we are called to walk in the "newness of life" (v. 4), reflecting our union with Christ and His victory over death.

Grace, in its boundless depth, is the remedy for humanity's struggle with sin. Through Adam, sin brought guilt and separation from God, but in Christ, redemption pierces that darkness, offering forgiveness and transformation. His sacrifice embodies a love that meets us in our imperfection and renews us through His grace. Baptism, as Paul explained, signifies unity with Christ – dying to sin and rising empowered to live righteously. Grace is not an excuse to sin but a call to a transformed life, where past failures are deleted by God's restoring favor. Grace allows us to triumph over sin, inviting us to walk in victory each day and to step forward in faith as new creations in Christ.

2. SET APART FOR GOD: Romans 6:5-14.

A. Dying to Die No More, Romans 6:5-11.

This Scripture passage presents a profound theological truth about our union with Christ in His death and resurrection. By faith we have died with Christ, so it follows that we are also raised with Him. "We know that our old self [our human nature without the Holy Spirit] was nailed to the cross with Him" (v. 6 AMP), thereby breaking the chains of sin's power over our lives. This identification with Christ signifies a transition from being enslaved to sin to living in the freedom of grace and righteousness. As Paul succinctly stated, "For he that is dead is freed from sin" (v. 7). Moreover, death to sin through faith in Jesus leads to life with Him (v. 8).

A story is told of a man who was preparing to make turtle soup. He was shocked to find the turtle still running around after its head had been cut off. When his neighbor, a retired minister, greeted him from over the fence, the man asked, "Preacher, is this turtle dead or alive?" The minister answered, "That turtle is like many Christians I know. It's dead, but it doesn't act like it because it really doesn't believe that it's dead."

In verse 11, Paul urged Christians to "reckon" themselves dead to sin but alive to God, we are to examine the authenticity of our faith and submission to Christ. Victory over sin requires complete surrender – a willingness to die to self and sin to experience the fullness of life in Christ. Religious practices, church memberships, or outward displays of devotion cannot substitute for this inward transformation. We must ask ourselves if we have genuinely experienced the regenerating power of grace, whereby "old things have passed away" and "all things have become new" in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17 NKJV).

B. Alive as Instruments of Righteousness, Romans 6:12-14.

As Jesus' followers, we must not allow sin to "reign" in us or "obey" its desires (v. 12). When we trusted in Christ, we experienced the power of grace, which enables us to live as "instruments of righteousness" rather than slaves to sin (v .13). We have the responsibility to align our new identity in Christ. Satan will continue to tempt us to sin, but through grace, we have the power to resist sin and instead "yield" ourselves to God (v. 13). By presenting ourselves

to God, we are empowered to reflect His character and purposes in our daily lives. Sin no longer has dominion over us because we are under grace, not the Law, emphasizing the liberating nature of God's redemptive work (v. 14).

Living as instruments of righteousness involves a conscious and ongoing surrender to God's will. It requires us to resist the pull of sin and dedicate our lives to serving God's purposes. We are to view our bodies, talents, and opportunities as tools for advancing God's kingdom and demonstrating His love and justice in the world. The grace of God not only forgives sin but also equips us as His people with the strength to walk in the newness of life. In doing so, we become living testimonies of the transforming power of grace, shining as beacons of hope and righteousness in our broken world.

God's grace changes lives. It breaks the power of sin and enables us to live in righteousness through Christ's death and resurrection. No longer slaves to sin, we're made alive in God, finding joy in renewal. Though sin's pull persists, grace empowers us to resist and reflect God's love and purpose. This renewed life requires daily reliance on grace and alignment with our identity in Christ. As Paul assures, we are no longer under sin's reign but live under grace. Let's embrace its power, walking in holy freedom as witnesses of God's love, trusting fully in its sufficiency.

3. FREED TO OBEY GOD: Romans 6:15-23.

A. Righteous Living and Freedom From Sin, Romans 6:15-18.

Verse 15 asks, "What then? Shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid." The notion that grace permits continued sinning is incompatible with the power of salvation. Believers are no longer "servants of sin" but have been set free to become "servants of righteousness" (v. 17-18). This freedom is not an invitation to moral laxity; rather, it is a call to wholehearted obedience to God. The transition from being servants of sin to becoming servants of righteousness reflects a radical change in allegiance, made possible by the grace of God through Christ. Grace is not a license to sin but a means to walk in newness of life, demonstrating the fruit of righteousness.

The believers in Rome, like all believers today, were once bound to sin, living in disobedience and estrangement from God. However, through their acceptance of the Gospel and their commitment to Christ's teachings, they had been delivered from the dominion of sin. This newfound freedom was not aimless; it was directed toward living in alignment with God's will and purpose. The phrase "obeyed form the heart" (v. 17) signifies that this obedience was not mere outward compliance but a genuine, heartfelt response to God's grace. The shift from bondage to sin, to servitude under righteousness, illustrates the believer's new identity in Christ, marked by holiness and an active pursuit of God's glory.

B. Contrasting Obedience and Sin, Romans 6:19-23.

Paul used the metaphor of slavery to illustrate yielding oneself to sin. The word "iniquity" (v. 119) comes from a Greek word meaning "lawless." It emphasizes the rebellion of the sinner

against the life God demands. The phrase “iniquity unto iniquity” means the purpose of the sinner is lawlessness – rebellion simply for the purpose of breeding more rebellion. By comparison, the goals of the righteous are revealed in the phrase “servants unto holiness.” The word holiness come from a Greek word meaning “consecrated or devoted.” It reflects commitment to the ways of God. The righteous life serves to reflect a deep devotion to God.

Sin, though alluring, enslaves individuals and ultimately culminates in death and an eternal separation from God (v. 23). On the other hand, obedience to God’s will is not merely a duty to be performed but a pathway to freedom, holiness, and eternal life. This passage reveals the importance of deliberate choices in our spiritual journey. As followers of Jesus, we are called to present ourselves as instruments of righteousness, reflecting our new identity in Christ.

Paul contrasts “the wages of sin” with “the gift of God,” presenting the stark difference (v .23). Sin earns death, which is an inevitable consequence of rebellion against God. However, God offers the gift of “eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” This is a grace that cannot be earned but is freely given as the gift of God to those who surrender to Him. This distinction between wage and gift emphasizes God’s unmerited favor while warning against the destructive nature of sin. The passage serves as both a sobering reminder of the consequences of sin and an inspiring call to embrace the freedom found in obedience to God. It challenges us to live intentionally, choosing righteousness over sin, and to rejoice in the eternal hope secured through Christ.

Paul’s teaching illustrating the profound transformation that flows from embracing God’s grace. Jim Cymbala, longtime pastor of Brooklyn Tabernacle, writes:

> I have since learned that the most mature believer is the one who is bent over, leaning most heavily on the Lord, and admitting his total inability to do anything without Christ. The greatest Christian is not the one who has achieved the most but rather the one who has received the most (Fresh Faith: What Happens When real Faith Ignites God’s People).

CALL TO DISCIPLESHIP

As Christ’s disciples, we are on a journey that began with our trusting in Christ’s sacrifice and will end in the eternal presence of God. This walk requires us to keep our eyes on the prize.

MINISTRY IN ACTION

Churches should guard against the temptation to teach works-based righteousness. Instead, we should teach salvation by faith in God’s grace, which empowers Christians to live holy lives.

Paul's Scriptural Preaching and Teaching

Before the New Testament was written, Jesus and His apostles and disciples cited the Old Testament Scriptures as Scriptural proof of the truthfulness of their preaching and teaching. There are abundant examples of this in the Four Gospels and the rest of the New Testament.

The Apostle Paul's Letter to the Romans is an excellent example of his reliance on the Old Testament for his preaching and teaching. In Romans, Paul either quoted or alluded to passages of Scripture in the Old Testament 142 times.

The largest number of these references to the Old Testament in Paul's Letter to the Romans is 24 times in chapter 9, and 20 times in chapter 11. The least of these references is once in each of chapters 14 and 16.

The preaching, teaching, and writings of Jesus' apostles and disciples in the first decades of Christianity (AD 30-70) were based on their personal knowledge of Jesus' preaching, teaching, and ministry and the Old Testament Scriptures.

In AD 66, shortly before his death, the Apostle Paul wrote to Timothy, "From childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures," and "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work," and then went on to say, "I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ … Preach the Word!" (2 Timothy 3:15-17; 4:1-2). Paul was talking about the Old Testament Scriptures.

Today, all Christians (Catholic, Protestant, Orthodox, Independent) have, essentially, the same New Testament (27 books), although it is printed in hundreds of languages and versions. And the New Testament is regarded by Christians as Holy Scripture, the same as the Old Testament is Holy Scripture. Christians today preach and teach from both the Old and New Testaments, but we need to remember and appreciate the fact that the Bible of the first Christians was what we call "The Old Testament" and the Jews call "The Tanakh."

WORKSHEET

Looking to God

Through the imagery of burial and resurrection, water baptism vividly represents a transformation, urging us to leave the past behind and embrace a Spirit-driven life of righteousness. It signifies a break from sin's dominion, as we are called to walk in "newness of life" (Romans 6:4), reflecting our union with Christ and His victory over death.

1. **Where and when were you baptized in water?**

2. **What was your understanding of water baptism then?**

3. **Has your understanding of baptism changed since then? If so, how?**

4. **In what sense are Christians "no longer slaves" but "set free" (vv. 6-7 NLT)?**

5. **According to verses 16-18, what kind of slavery is pleasing to God, and what is the freedom in this type of slavery?**