

**Dead AND Alive**  
Spilman Memorial Baptist Church, Kinston NC  
Dr. H. Powell Dew, Jr.  
February 19, 2023

Text: Romans 6:1-14

Purpose: Paul tells us that we are to consider ourselves as a dead person because of our identification with Jesus Christ. Our sin nature has been crucified with Christ. But it only remains dead as we “reckon” it dead. We must actively put our sin away so that it no longer reigns in us. Then we must walk in the new nature that has been given to us, walking by faith and not in the flesh.

A Sunday school teacher was discussing the Ten Commandments with her five- and six-year-olds. After explaining the commandment to "honor thy father and thy mother," she asked: "Is there a commandment that teaches us how to treat our brothers and sisters?"



Without missing a beat one little boy answered, "Thou shall not kill."<sup>1</sup>

We all have seen posters of the old western movies that tells us that a certain person is “WANTED – DEAD or ALIVE.” Maybe the person has murdered someone and a bounty is on their head. The justice of the

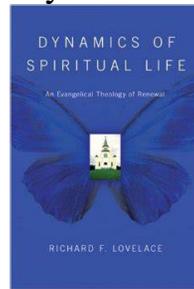


day said, “We want to make sure they get what they have coming to them – if you don’t kill them, then we will hang them when you turn them in.”

Paul describes our sinful nature in such a way that it can be both dead AND alive at the same time. If you have accepted Jesus as your Savior, then your sins have been crucified with Christ. They are dead and buried with Jesus there in Joseph’s tomb. But our sinful nature has a way of coming alive again and again in our daily lives. So, the sinful nature we have within us is dead in Christ, but alive bodily in us. So in a very real sense, it is both dead AND alive.

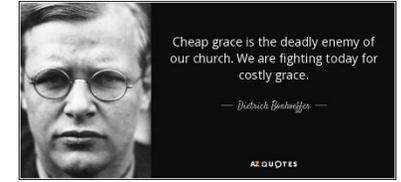
There in lies our problem as Christians. How we understand this critical issue of justification and sanctification helps us live our lives day in and day out.

Richard Lovelace in his book, *Dynamics of Spiritual Life*, identifies three ways of approaching our sinful nature and the grace offered in Christ. They are moralism, legalism, and cheap grace.<sup>2</sup>



**Moralism** is the approach to Christianity that concentrates on the teachings of Christ as moral imperatives to be addressed to society without adequate emphasis on the necessity for repentance and faith leading to justification. If you only live a good moral life, and teach others to do the same, and ignore the necessity of repentance, then you are justified before God by being morally good. Paul repeatedly tells us that we are sinners and our goodness is not sufficient to be justified with God. Our goodness is as filthy rags.

**Legalism** is based upon the deep commitment to justification by faith and a serious attempt to live as if they are justified through the keeping of various disciplines, rules and regulations. They are designed to keep the believer isolated from any influence that would hinder or mar their spiritual progress. Unfortunately, the emphasis is switched from abiding in Christ to a strict adherence to rules and the expectation of others to abide by those pre-determined rules.

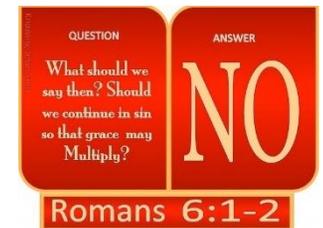


**Cheap grace** is a phrase coined by the German pastor and martyr Dietrich Bonhoeffer. It is sad when those that have been redeemed by Christ exhibit this kind of attitude. They in essence say, “I’ve been forgiven and I will go on being forgiven whatever I do, so I can do whatever I wish.” They flaunt their sinfulness in the face of God and others and continue in their sinful ways.

### Verse 1-2

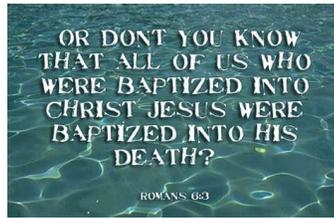
*“What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?” - Romans 6:1-2*

The most notorious person to encourage this “cheap grace” was Rasputin, the confidant of the Empress Alexandra of Russia. He defended this lifestyle of sexual immorality by teaching that it was necessary for salvation. To him and all others who feel that justification is an excuse to sin and grace is a free ticket to a life of disobedience and licentiousness, Paul would say, “No, No, No!”



### Verse 3

*“Or do you now know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?” – Romans 6:3*

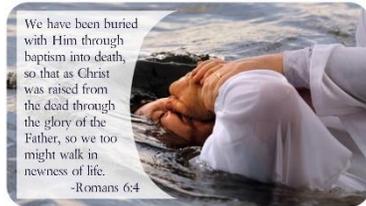


Paul in verse three tells his audience that don't you remember that you have been bought with a price? Don't you remember that when you were baptized, you were identified with Christ's death and you were raised to a newness of life? You should not continue in the old ways of life. Rather, you should live in a manner that glorifies God.

If you continue to dwell in sin, it would make me and others wonder if you were actually ever saved in the first place. One of my professors at Campbell once said, “The faith that fizzles at the finish was faulty at the first.” And if you are saved, and you continue to walk in sinful patterns, then you must not think a lot about your Savior and Lord.

### Verse 4-6

*Therefore, we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin.” – Romans 6:4-6*

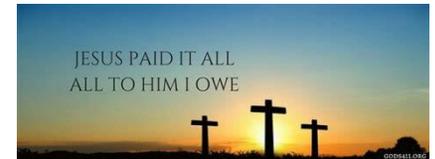


Paul was not attempting to give a lesson on baptism in this chapter. Rather, he was pointing to the identification we have with Christ during baptism. When we identified with Christ, we died to self and the old nature was crucified.

When we come to Christ and ask Him to be our Savior and seek forgiveness for our sins, we take on Christ. In many ways when we do that it is like the time when Noah and his family got in the Ark. The Ark made it through. The Ark was saved and all that were in it were saved. When we identify with Christ, our sins are appropriated to Christ and we are “in Christ.” As Christ was resurrected from the grave, we too shall be resurrected.

When Jesus died on the cross of Calvary almost 2000 years ago, our sins were crucified with Christ. We must accept the reality of our death in Christ.

The old hymn reminds us that “Jesus paid it all, all to him I owe, sin had left a crimson stain, but he washed it white as snow.” We may want to take care of our own sin by cleaning ourselves up, but only Christ can clean us from our sin nature.



The truth of the matter is we cannot crucify ourselves. We may be able to insert one nail in one hand, but we can never nail the second one. We are joined with Christ in His death and our sinful nature is nailed there.

But often that old nature has a mind of its own and has a tendency to want to get off that cross. Some people struggle in this area in their life. We can become

defeated in the attempt to live out our understanding of the Christian faith in our own strength. I have even seen believers become so discouraged that they quit and want to walk away.

But Paul tells us that Jesus didn't stay in the grave. Jesus paid the penalty for our sin. Our sin is buried there. But now Jesus is raised to a newness of life. We too, one day will be resurrected and be with Jesus.

### Verse 6

Let me re-read verse six to you:

*Knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin.” – Romans 6:6*



There are three important theological statements made by Paul in this section.

1. The ***old sinful nature is crucified with Christ***. It is forever gone. We need to appropriate it in our lives and not live as if it has power over us again. The power of sin in our lives is broken. We can invite sin back in time and time again (and that is a willful choice), but the power it has over us is broken.
2. ***The body of sin is done away with***. Some people believe that if they walk with Christ long enough, then they will never sin again. I am here to tell you that they are wrong. When you reach a point of thinking that you are perfect and will never sin again, watch out, you are about to make some serious blunders in life.

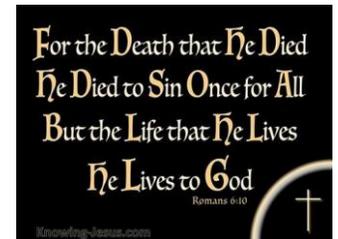
3. ***We are no longer slaves to sin***. Prior to coming to Christ, our entire life is centered around the big “I.” Every decision in life is centered on me, myself, and I. But we do not need to be a slave to it.

We need to live as free individuals. We are no longer under bondage. The power of sin no longer has the control over our lives like it once did. We are no longer slaves to sin.

Yet, some Christians continue to live in bondage. They are still bound by the sin that once enslaved them. They choose to continue in bondage instead of living out their freedom found in Christ.

### Verses 7-10

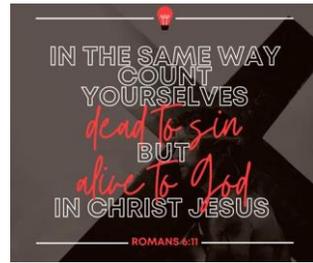
*For he who has died has been freed from sin. Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him. For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God. – Romans 6:7-10*



Paul tells us that now that we have died with Christ, we are free from the bondage. His death on the cross was enough to cover the sins of all the world for all time. Just as Adam sinned and the entire human race was condemned, those that accept Christ's sacrifice will be forgiven. Just as Christ is alive and gave His life unto God, we too must live our lives and live it as unto God.

## Verses 11-14

*“Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts. And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.” – Romans 6:11-14*



The only way to do this is through the “reckoning” process. It is counting our sin nature dead – daily – and then living our lives in such a way that we realize we are alive in Christ. When we are tempted with sin, we need to look at it and say to it, “you have no hold over me anymore. I am free and you will not have dominion over me anymore.” We are to consider ourselves dead to our sin, but alive in the spirit of God.

The lust of the flesh will draw us away daily. We should recognize it and crucify it daily to bring it under subjection. We do not need to put ourselves in situations that would lead us away from God and into sin.

Paul closes our passage by saying; sin shall not have dominion over you. We are no longer under the law, but under grace.

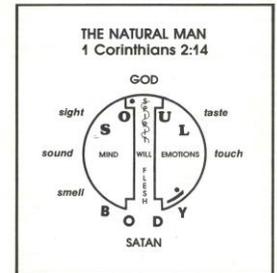
Theologically, Paul is telling us that we have been justified once we accept Christ as our Savior. But over time, we need to become sanctified through being obedient to Christ’s teachings.

## MasterLife Illustration of the Disciples Personality<sup>3</sup>

I want you to turn to the back of your bulletin and look at the three illustrations that may help us understand what Paul is trying to tell us this morning.

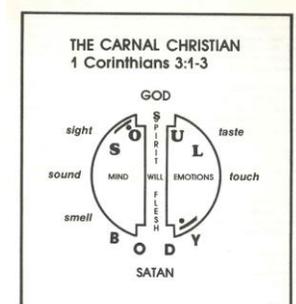
### The Natural Man

- Our body interacts with the world through our sight, hearing, touch, taste, and smell.
- We have a soul that dwells in us which includes our mind, will, and emotions.
- The Will is seated at the center of our being and is either led by the flesh or led by the spirit.
- The natural man is closed to the things of God because the spirit that dwells in us is dead to the things of God. Our natural state is sinful.
- The Big “I” controls our life, led by our will and flesh.



### The Carnal Christian

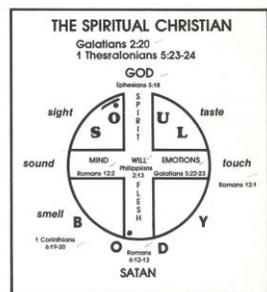
- The Carnal Christian has accepted Christ and their spirit is now alive within themselves.



- The Big “I” still rules their life, but the Spirit of God also instructs the will to obey God instead of obeying the desires of the flesh.
- The Carnal Christian has two influences pulling on them.

### The Spiritual Christian

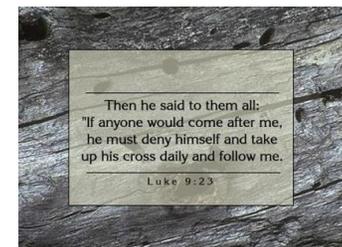
- Is one that recognizes the need to shut the door of the flesh and reckon the power of sin dwelling in their life as dead.
- When they crucify their sinful desires, then they will be able to live a victorious Christian life. Only as you crucify it daily will you be able to walk in the Spirit instead of walking in the flesh.



As we look at these three diagrams, we need to honestly assess where we are in life. Maybe you are here and you have never asked God to come into your life and be your Master and Savior. Maybe you have come to church all your life, but have never invited Jesus into your heart. Today, you do not need to stay in the state of the natural man. You can be changed.

Maybe you recognize that you fall into the category of a Carnal Christian. You are polarized and led by two natures warring within you. The Spirit of God is guiding you in one direction while the flesh is leading you towards a path of destruction. The scripture tells us we cannot serve two masters.

The key to living a life that is well pleasing to God is to reckon your old nature dead. Close the door to sin and do not subject your body to fulfill the lusts of the flesh. When you crucify the flesh daily, you can succeed. Jesus reminded His disciples, *“If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.”* Luke 9:23



The unique thing about all three of these diagrams is that the doorknob is on the inside. God has given us the free will to choose or reject Him. He has given us the free will to deny ourself and follow Him. What will be your choice today? Choose Christ and live!

### LET US PRAY

#### Notes:

<sup>1</sup>Mikey’s Funnies, A “Honor” Funny, 1/31/2023, forwarded by Gretchen Patti  
<sup>2</sup> The Communicator’s Commentary – Romans, D. Stuart Briscoe, page 130.  
<sup>3</sup> MasterLife, Book 1, page 115-120.