



The Cost

Summary and Goal

Through the blood of Jesus, we have been united in His death and resurrection. This new life in Christ means death to sin and a daily dying to our old selves.

Main Passages

Romans 6:5-11

Session Outline

1. Jesus Frees Us from Our Past (Romans 6:5-7)
2. Jesus Secures a New Life (Romans 6:8-10)
3. Jesus Makes Us Alive in Him (Romans 6:11)

Theological Theme

Followers of Jesus have been united with Christ in His death and, consequently, in His resurrection. This eternal reality has immediate effects on the way we die to sin and live for Christ in this life.

Christ Connection

Christ alone has made it possible for us to be freed from the sin which enslaved us. His blood has restored us to God and given us hope for resurrection through Him.

Missional Application

The freedom we have through Christ alone should prompt us to demonstrate to those around us that they can experience the same freedom. Every person is bound by sin with no means of release on their own. Our call is to point others to the One who has the keys to free them.

Historical Context of Romans

Purpose

Paul's purpose in writing Romans can be identified from his direct statements in the text and inferred from the content. He expressly wrote that he wanted to impart spiritual strength to the believers at Rome (1:11-12; 16:25-26). He asked for prayer for the difficult task he was undertaking (15:32) and that he might be able to come and see them (15:30). He hoped to enlist the Roman churches to support a mission to the west (15:23-29). The content of the letter shows that the churches experienced tensions between believers from different backgrounds. Paul wanted them to be united and to avoid dissension and false teaching (16:17-18). The content also reveals his exposition of what is essential Christianity and what are matters of indifference.

Author

Paul the apostle is the stated and indisputable author of the book of Romans. From the book of Acts and statements in Romans, we learn that Paul wrote this letter while he was in Corinth and on his way to Jerusalem in the spring of a.d. 57, to deliver an offering from the Gentile churches to poor Jewish Christians (Ac 20:3; Rm 15:25-29).

Setting

All of Paul's writings grew out of his missionary/pastoral work and were about the problems and needs of local churches. The book of Romans is also of this genre, but it is the least "local" in the sense that Paul had not yet been to Rome. This letter was his opportunity to expound the good news message (the gospel). He could discuss the essence of sin, the salvation accomplished on the cross, the union of the believer with Christ, how the Spirit works in the Christian to promote holiness, the place of the Jewish people in God's plan, future things, and Christian living or ethics. Though Paul did not write Romans as a systematic theology, his somewhat orderly exposition has been the fountain for the development of that discipline.

Special Features

Paul's letter to the Roman house churches has been preeminent among the New Testament writings for its theological and pastoral influence. It focuses on the doctrine of salvation, including the practical implications for believers as they live out the salvation given to them through Jesus Christ.

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Session Plan

The Cost

Introduction

- ❓ Do you hang onto things from the past? Keepsakes? Items you associate with certain memories or experiences? Why or why not?
- ❓ In general, what do you think makes it hard to get rid of things we have held on to for many years whether physical possessions, old habits, or something else?

Paul wanted to make sure the believers understood the connection between Christ's death for their sin and the Christian's own death to sin.¹ We are united in Christ's death, so we don't have to die—even though we have been guilty. His death defeated sin and death and freed us from its rule and reign over us. Because we are united in His death, Paul emphasized that we are united in His resurrection as well. This union with Christ means eternal life with Him and a life here and now surrendered to Him. Christ has made us alive in Him, and our lives should reflect that new life here and now in thought, word, deed, relationships, worship, work, and everything in between.

1. Jesus Frees Us from Our Past (Romans 6:5-7)

Christ died for our sin, but was raised to life again. He died that death for us. The point of our dying to sin is so that we are also raised to new life with Him. This is the freedom found in Christ. We don't have to be trapped anymore. We don't have to be imprisoned anymore by our own thoughts, actions, and failings. We can be free from the shame that comes with our sin patterns. The reality of our sin has been fully atoned for and fully redeemed in the finished work of Christ. We have been justified: released from sin and set right with God through Jesus. The work is already done.

- ❓ What does it mean to be enslaved to sin? Since all believers still sin, are we still enslaved? If not, what is the difference?
- ❓ Are there areas of your life in which you still feel enslaved to sin? What is keeping you from walking in the freedom that Christ offers?

2. Jesus Secures a New Life (Romans 6:8-10)

Paul declared in verse 5 that we will be united in a resurrection like Christ's. In verses 8-10, He went on to explain this truth. We can't stop at the atoning death of Christ. Christ died so sin would no longer enslave us to death, but He was also raised that we, too, would know life eternal with Him. If we believe and trust in His death, we must also trust Him to bring us to new life. Christ's past action changes our present and future reality. Just as we were united in His death, so, too, are we united in His new life.

- ❓ How would you explain new life in Christ to someone not yet believing? How might this look different for people who come to faith in Christ at various ages and stages of life?
- ❓ Why is it significant that Christ has died but will not die again? How does this impact our lives in Him?
- ❓ If you're a believer, how does your life currently reflect the new life you have in Christ? What needs to change?

3. Jesus Makes Us Alive in Him (Romans 6:11)

To conclude Romans 6:1-10, Paul told the believers to consider themselves "dead to sin and alive to God." This means we are free from holding on to who we once were outside of Christ. Unfortunately, many of us have been made alive in Christ yet still hold onto the death that no longer defines us. We are alive, yet we go about life with our grave clothes on.

- ❓ Having been freed, why do you think Christians so often find themselves bound to their sinful ways?
- ❓ Do you feel the tension between who you once were and who Christ is calling you to be? In what areas of your life do you feel this the most?
- ❓ What ways do you daily remind yourself of who God says you are and how you are to live according that identity? What habits or rhythms have you found particularly helpful?

Conclusion

- ❓ Are there vestiges of your old self that you can't seem to get rid of? How can you submit these areas to Christ, seeking ongoing freedom from these areas of sin?
- ❓ Who are the people around you that spur you on to live in the newness of Christ? In what areas do you most need their accountability and help to point you to Christ? If you don't have those people, start praying for the Lord to bring those people into your life that can help you daily die to sin and live for Christ.

❓ For Further Discussion

Read the following: 2 Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 2:19-20; Colossians 1:21-22; Colossians 3:1-3; 1 Peter 1:3.

Which of the verses listed above do you need to cling to the most right now? Why does this resonate with you specifically?

❓ For Further Discussion

How does living new life in Christ point others to the truth of the gospel?



Expanded Session Content

The Cost

Introduction

- ❓ Do you hang onto things from the past? Keepsakes? Items you associate with certain memories or experiences? Why or why not?
- ❓ In general, what do you think makes it hard to get rid of things we have held on to for many years whether physical possessions, old habits, or something else?

Even if you are not naturally a collector of things or afraid of throwing things out, we have all found ourselves going through old boxes and belongings deciding what is worth holding onto. Maybe it was when you were packing to go away to college or when you got married. Maybe you have had to go through a family member's home or belongings for them. More than likely you picked up something random and insignificant and thought, "Why was I keeping this? Why did I think I would ever need or use this again?" A hideous sweater you never wore. An old pair of shoes that are falling apart. Hobbies you never got around to trying. Jeans you will never wear again. Sometimes we hang onto things for years even though we know we will never need them or use them in the future. But we hang on anyway.

Why? We rationalize our inability to get rid of things on the off chance that there might be some occasion where we would be lost without this one thing. In reality, though, it needs to go. But we stuff it away in the back of our closet, taking comfort in the fact that it isn't totally out of reach should the need arise.

If we are being honest, we do this with more than old clothes and trinkets. We often do this with our old sin patterns, our toxic habits, and the vestiges of who we were before we knew Christ. That is what Paul wanted to get through to the Roman Christians—their old selves had died with Christ, and He was calling them to new life made possible by His resurrection.

Session Summary

Paul wanted to make sure the believers understood the connection between Christ's death for their sin and the Christian's own death to sin.¹ We are united in Christ's death, so we don't have to die—even though we have been guilty. His death defeated sin and death and freed us from its rule and reign over us.

Because we are united in His death, Paul emphasized that we are united in His resurrection as well. This union with Christ means eternal life with Him and a life here and now surrendered to Him. Christ has made us alive in Him, and our lives should reflect that new life here and now in thought, word, deed, relationships, worship, work, and everything in between.

1. Jesus Frees Us from Our Past (Romans 6:5-7)

At the end of Romans 5, Paul reiterated, “where sin multiplied, grace multiplied even more” (5:20). With that truth comes a clear tension. We all want more grace, but how can our behavior change to reflect Christ, if we increase in sin? This is what Paul fleshed out in chapter 6. He framed this section around two questions that he asked in 6:1-2: Should we continue in sin so that grace may multiply? How can we who died to sin still live in it? Verses 5-11 were part of Paul's response to these two questions.

Paul wanted to make explicitly clear that believers have been fully united with Christ in His death in order to live a new life.² Ours is a death like His, and a resurrection like His. Our death to sin and new life point to Him who has given us the benefits of His death and resurrection.

- ❓ What does it mean to be enslaved to sin?
- ❓ Since all believers still sin, are we still enslaved? If not, what is the difference?

In verses 6-7, Paul began to elaborate on what it really means to be united in Christ's death. Based on the truth he gave in verse 5, “we know” (v. 6) with certainty that sin and death no longer reign over us as they once did. This is the difference between being enslaved to sin and being a transformed follower of Jesus in a broken world. Sin is still a reality because we are not yet fully united with Christ as we will be in eternity. But it does not hold the power to control us anymore. It has been “brought to nothing,” annulled, abolished.

United

The Greek word translated in verse 5 as “united” is the *symphytos*. This is the only time it is used in the Bible, but it was a fairly common Greek word at the time. It is a term that would typically describe how items that grow together appear inextricably linked—as if they were one. Additionally, the verb translated as “we are” is written in the present-tense indicative, which means the uniting was something that happened in the past, but had continuing effects for those to whom Paul was writing.³

Our sin has been crucified, so that we are freed from sin. Before we knew Christ, we were bound to and enslaved to sin. But in being united with Christ in His death, we are freed from the chains that used to bind us. Our old selves were put on the cross with Christ. That old person is no longer who we are.

- ❓ Are there areas of your life in which you still feel enslaved to sin?
- ❓ What is keeping you from walking in the freedom that Christ offers?

Christ died for our sin, but was raised to life again. He died that death for us. The point of our dying to sin is so that we are also raised to new life with Him. This is the freedom found in Christ. We don't have to be trapped anymore. We don't have to be imprisoned anymore by our own thoughts, actions, and failings. We can be free from the shame that comes with our sin patterns. The reality of our sin has been fully atoned for and fully redeemed in the finished work of Christ. We have been justified: released from sin and set right with God through Jesus. The work is already done.

2. Jesus Secures a New Life (Romans 6:8-10)

Paul declared in verse 5 that we will be united in a resurrection like Christ's. In verses 8-10, He went on to explain this truth. We can't stop at the atoning death of Christ. Christ died so sin would no longer enslave us to death, but He was also raised that we, too, would know life eternal with Him. If we believe and trust in His death, we must also trust Him to bring us to new life. Christ's past action changes our present and future reality. Just as we were united in His death, so, too, are we united in His new life.

- ❓ How would you explain new life in Christ to someone not yet believing?
- ❓ How might this look different for people who come to faith in Christ at various ages and stages of life?


If sin truly has no more hold on us (v.7), this has significant implications for our lives as Christians. Simply put, our lives should look different. This idea is often posed as a question: How does your life look different now than it did before you met Christ? It is tempting to think we need a dramatic "before and after" experience. If you started walking with Christ at an early age, it may feel like your sins were less apparent before salvation. Yet, all of us have sin patterns. All of us have chosen sin over surrender to God at some point. And in some seasons, sin patterns—be it

actions, thoughts, mentalities, or attitudes—have had more control over us than they should. The hope that Paul reminded believers of in these verses is that our future resurrection with Christ is certain, and that certainty of eternal life must inform our life in the present. This is the costly part of walking with Jesus—dying to our old selves for the sake of the new man or woman that Christ is shaping us into.

 Why is it significant that Christ has died but will not die again? How does this impact our lives in Him?


It is kind of odd for Paul to say that Christ will not die again. But his point was clear: our new life is forever; it doesn't require any more death. Jesus' death for us was sufficient—He completed the work for us, once and for all. Death no longer has power over Him because He defeated death. And because we live in Him, death doesn't reign over us either. It can't. Jesus has claimed us for eternity. His was a one-time death for an eternity of life. His death for our sin was final because He was without sin.⁴ As Christians, our death to sin is a continual death. Meaning, though our eternity is secured in Christ, and therefore sin doesn't have an eternal power over us, we must daily choose to die to the sin of our flesh (Rom 12:1).


Jesus' work of the full and final sacrifice means, not only that His blood has restored our relationship and access to God, but also that we are free to live in His righteousness.⁵ It's often said that we must remember not only what we are saved from but also what we are saved for. The life of the Christian shouldn't be solely focused on avoiding sin, but also on pursuing holiness.

 If you're a believer, how does your life currently reflect the new life you have in Christ? What needs to change?

3. Jesus Makes Us Alive in Him (Romans 6:11)

To conclude Romans 6:1-10, Paul told the believers to consider themselves “dead to sin and alive to God.” This means we are free from holding on to who we once were outside of Christ. Unfortunately, many of us have been made alive in Christ yet still hold onto the death that no longer defines us. We are alive, yet we go about life with our grave clothes on.

 Having been freed, why do you think Christians so often find themselves bound to their sinful ways?

 Do you feel the tension between who you once were and who Christ is calling you to be? In what areas of your life do you feel this the most?

Sufficient Sacrifice

Under the Old Covenant (prior to Jesus establishing the New Covenant), Mosaic Law required constant sacrifice to atone for Israel's sin. Daily the priests had to offer various sacrifices to God, offering the blood of those animals as payment for their sins. Jesus, when He died on the cross, was both the perfect High Priest and the perfect, spotless sacrifice (Heb 9:13-14; 1 Pet 1:19; Rev 5:12). His one death was sufficient because His blood was immeasurably more powerful than the blood of animals.

Living in Grave Clothes

Read John 11:38–44. Jesus raised Lazarus—he had been dead and then he was alive again. But when he came out of the grave, his feet and body were still bound. Jesus commanded someone to unbind him. We, too, once we have been raised, must consider ourselves dead to sin. There's no need to hang on to that which once bound us in the grave.

A life in Christ means that we need to continually be reminded of who God says that we are now. This is what Paul meant by “counting” ourselves dead to sin and alive to God. If we have been saved by Him, our eternity is not in question. We are dead and alive in Christ. Yet we are still living in the flesh, in a broken world. We have to be reminded of our identity as Christ-followers.⁶ We must continually consider the truth of our new identity in Christ.

- ❓ What ways do you daily remind yourself of who God says you are and how you are to live according that identity?
- ❓ What habits or rhythms have you found particularly helpful?

One of the best ways that we can remember who God says we are is by faithfully reading and trusting His Word. Here are just a few places that God's Word reminds us of the newness of life that we have through Christ:

- Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, and see, the new has come! (2 Cor 5:17)
- For through the law I died to the law, so that I might live for God. I have been crucified with Christ, and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. (Gal 2:19–20)
- Once you were alienated and hostile in your minds expressed in your evil actions. But now he has reconciled you by his physical body through his death, to present you holy, faultless, and blameless before him (Col 1:21–22)
- So if you have been raised with Christ, seek the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. (Col 3:1–3)
- Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Because of his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead (1 Pet 1:3)

We have to constantly seek to remember what is true because we are prone to believe the lies that culture, other people, and the enemy tell us. Those lies say that the sin we are seeking to resist will truly satisfy this time. They say that God doesn't have our best interests at heart; that He is holding out on us. They tell us we will never be good enough. The list goes on and on. We face the temptation to believe these lies each day. What a gift we have in being reminded of the truth. Our problem often isn't knowing, but remembering and truly believing who God is and who He says we are based on the blood of Jesus Christ.

- Which of the verses listed above do you need to cling to the most right now? Why does this resonate with you specifically?

Conclusion

Paul reminded the believers in Rome—and he reminds us—that they had been united with Christ. We are united in His death, and therefore we are also united in His resurrection. This inherently changes our identity, both for eternity and the present.

As Christians, we can't simultaneously be alive to sin and alive to God. Those two realities can't co-exist. If Christ has released us from the hold that sin had on us, we must also relinquish the hold we have on our sin. Christ has given us freedom from sin, and yet we often reach back—to our old selves—for the sin that so easily entangles. As those justified by Christ, we must also follow Him towards the sanctification He had promised.

- Are there vestiges of your old self that you can't seem to get rid of? How can you submit these areas to Christ, seeking ongoing freedom from these areas of sin?
- Who are the people around you that spur you on to live in the newness of Christ? In what areas do you most need their accountability and help to point you to Christ? If you don't have those people, start praying for the Lord to bring those people into your life that can help you daily die to sin and live for Christ.
- How does living new life in Christ point others to the truth of the gospel?

Prayer of Response

Pray and thank God that He has made you alive in Christ and dead to sin. Ask Him to help you walk in light of that truth by the power of His Spirit each day.

Additional Resources

- *Romans 6: The New Man* by D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones
- *Be Right* by Warren Wiersbe
- *Romans 1-7 For You* by Timothy Keller

For Next Week

Session Title

- Christ Crucified

Main Passages

- 1 Corinthians 2:1-5

Session Outline

1. Only Christ and Him Crucified (1 Corinthians 2:1-2)
2. His Power Perfected in Weakness (1 Corinthians 2:3-4)
3. God's Power, Not Human Wisdom (1 Corinthians 2:5)

Memorize

¹⁰ For the death he died, he died to sin once for all time; but the life he lives, he lives to God. ¹¹ So, you too consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

-Romans 6:5-11

Daily Readings

- Monday - 1 Peter 1:14-16
- Tuesday - 1 John 3:6-10
- Wednesday - 2 Corinthians 7:1
- Thursday - 1 Thessalonians 5:23
- Friday - Philippians 4:8
- Saturday - 1 Peter 2:24

Extended Commentary

Romans 6:5-11

6:5 If it is true that we have been united with Christ in his death — and we have—it then follows that we are also united with him in his resurrection. As he was raised victor over death, so also are we set free from the bondage of sin. Death precedes life in the realm of the Spirit. Since it is true that we are “one with Him by sharing in His death” (Weymouth), then certainly we are one with him by sharing in his resurrection life. New life in Christ follows death to sin as certainly as Christ’s resurrection followed his crucifixion.

6:6–7 Our confidence in a resurrected life rests upon the fact that our old self was nailed to the cross with Jesus. We were “crucified with him” (v. 6). Believers, by definition, are those who by their union with Christ died with him on the cross. That death had a definite purpose in the spiritual life history of the believer. We were crucified in order that our sinful nature might be stripped of its power. “Might be done away with” translates a form of the Greek verb *katargeō*, which speaks of being “reduced to a condition of absolute impotence and inaction, as if it were dead.” Death fulfills the demands of sin. But death opens the way for resurrection. Resurrection lies beyond the control of death. It is the victor over death. With the old self rendered powerless, it is no longer necessary for a person to continue in bondage to sin. In Christ we are set free. Since sin exhausted itself in bringing about death, from that point forward it is powerless to overcome new life.

6:8 The reader will notice how often Paul repeated himself in this section. As a good teacher he knew that truth once stated is not necessarily absorbed. Remember that the book we are studying is first of all a letter written by the apostle to Christian believers in Rome. Paul stressed certain truths basic to an understanding of what it means to be united with Christ and living the new life of the Spirit. So in v. 8 he again stated the basic proposition that those who have died with Christ will also live with him. This is not a promise of life after death with Christ in heaven but of a life to be lived out here and now. Death, far from being simply a negative concept, is in fact the gateway to life. Elsewhere Paul paradoxically stated, “I have been crucified with Christ but I live by faith” (Gal 2:20). Put simply, to live one must die.

6:9–10 Paul now appealed to a point of common knowledge among God’s people. Having been raised from the dead, Christ cannot die again. His resurrection was unlike that of Lazarus, who had to meet death once

again. But Christ's resurrection broke forever the tyranny of death. That cruel master can no longer exercise any power over him. The cross was sin's final move; the resurrection was God's checkmate. The game is over. Sin is forever in defeat. Christ the victor died to sin "once for all" and lives now in unbroken fellowship with God.

Many of the ancient cathedrals in the old world portray in their statuary a dead or dying Christ. But Christ crucified (if no more were said) is not the gospel. The church needs a renewed awareness of Christ as victorious over death and the grave. It is the resurrection that makes the news good news. Rising triumphant over Satan's ultimate show of force, Jesus Christ is forever crowned King of kings and Lord of lords. Join the triumphal parade! Celebrate the defeat of Satan, that rebel whose fate is now forever sealed.

6:11 Christ is our example. By his death he ended once for all his relationship to sin. Now he lives forever in unbroken fellowship with God. "In the same way," wrote Paul, we are to consider ourselves dead to sin and alive to God (cf. 1 Pet 2:24). When Christ died for sin, he also died to sin. Now we are to take our place with him and regard sin as something to which we also have died. Paul was not suggesting that we imitate Christ. He was speaking of a reality that took place when we by faith were incorporated into Christ. Our responsibility is to take with all seriousness the fact that in Christ we have died to sin. Fitzmyer writes: "Ontologically united with Christ through faith and baptism, Christians must deepen their faith continually to become more and more psychologically aware of that union." We are to consider ourselves "dead to the appeal and power of sin" (Phillips) and alive to God through our union with Christ Jesus. The very idea of responding positively to sin's invitation should strike the believer as morbid. For the Christian to choose to sin is the spiritual equivalent of digging up a corpse for fellowship. A genuine death to sin means that the entire perspective of the believer has been radically altered.⁷

References

1. Thielman, Frank. *Romans*. Edited by Clinton E. Arnold. Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2018.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid.
7. Mounce, Robert H. *Romans*. New American Commentary. Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 1995.