

Death Becomes Life

Romans 6:1-4,12-14,17-23 — Sunday School Lesson - August 2, 2026

Theme: *Dead to Sin, Alive to God*

Bible Truth: Christ provides freedom from sin and believers can be slaves of righteousness and thus receive sanctification and eternal life.

Memory Verse: *“Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life” (Romans 6:4)*

Lesson Aim

By the end of this lesson, students will understand that union with Christ means a decisive break from sin’s power and a new life empowered by grace.

1. INTRODUCTION

Paul has just finished explaining in Romans 5 that we are justified by faith and stand in grace. But he knows the human heart — when people hear about abundant grace, they may assume it gives permission to sin.

Romans 6 is Paul’s strong correction: **Grace doesn’t free us to sin — grace frees us from the punishment of sin.**

Background Scripture:

2 Corinthians correlation with Romans 6

I. New Creation (2 Cor 5:17) → New Life (Rom 6:4)

II. Old Man Gone (2 Cor 5:17) → Old Man Crucified (Rom 6:6)

III. Reconciliation (2 Cor 5:18–19) → Union With Christ (Rom 6:3–5)

IV. Righteous Identity (2 Cor 5:21) → Righteous Living (Rom 6:12–13)

V. Christ Became Sin (2 Cor 5:21) → We Cannot Continue in Sin (Rom 6:1–2)

The Lesson:

1 What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? 2 Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it? 3 Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? 4 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.

12 Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts. 13 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. 14 For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.

17 But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered. 18 And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness. 19 I speak in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members as slaves of uncleanness, and of lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves of righteousness for holiness.

20 For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. 21 What fruit did you have then in the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death. 22 But now having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life. 23 For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

What's Happening Here?

I. The Misunderstanding of Grace (vv. 1–2)

- People may think grace encourages sin.
- Paul says that's impossible — dead people don't keep living in their old life.

Paul starts with a question he knows people are thinking: “Should we continue in sin so that grace may abound?”

And he shuts it down immediately: **Absolutely not.** If we died to sin, how can we keep living in it?

Here's the point: Grace doesn't make sin safe. Grace makes sin *no longer your master*.

- **6:1–2 — The Big Question:** “Should we continue in sin so grace may abound?” Paul answers: Absolutely not. If we died to sin, we cannot live in it.

UNITED WITH CHRIST (Romans 6:3–7)

What's Happening Here?

II. The Meaning of Baptism (vv. 3–7)

- Baptism = identification with Christ.
- His death becomes our death to sin.
- His resurrection becomes our new life.

Paul explains this using baptism. Baptism is more than a ceremony — it's a picture of our union with Christ.

- When Christ died, our old self died with Him.
- When Christ rose, we rose with Him into new life.
- **6:3–7 — United With Christ:** Baptism symbolizes our union with Christ's death and resurrection. Our “old self” was crucified with Him so sin's power is broken.

1. Paul is talking about “union-with-Christ baptism”

*In Romans 6, Paul's focus is on what happens when a believer is united with Jesus in His death and resurrection. This is a **Spirit-created reality**, not a physical ritual.*

- We are **buried with Christ** → our old life dies.

- We are **raised with Christ** → we receive new life.

This is the baptism of **Romans 6**: the moment God places you “into Christ,” joining you to His saving work.

2. Water baptism is the outward sign of this inward reality

Paul assumes that believers understand water baptism as the **public symbol** of what the Spirit has already done.

- Water baptism pictures burial (going under).
- Water baptism pictures resurrection (coming up).

But the power Paul describes—dying to sin and rising to new life—comes from **the Spirit**, not the water.

3. Why this distinction matters

If Romans 6 were only about water baptism, then:

- Transformation would depend on a ritual.
- Only baptized people could walk in newness of life.
- The Spirit’s work would be secondary.

But Paul’s argument is that **every believer**, from the moment of salvation, is united with Christ in His death and resurrection. Water baptism simply **proclaims** that truth.

Missing pieces: vv 5-11

- **6:5-11 — New Life a New Mindset:** Since Christ lives, we live with Him. We must consider ourselves dead to sin and alive to God.

- A NEW WAY OF LIVING (Romans 6:12-14)

What’s Happening Here?

IV. The New Lifestyle (vv. 12-14)

- Don’t let sin reign.
- Present your body to God.
- Grace teaches us how to live.

Paul shifts from identity to action.

He says:

- Don't let sin reign in your body
- Don't offer your body to sin
- Offer yourselves to God

This is daily, practical obedience. Every day you choose who you obey.

And then Paul gives one of the most freeing statements in the chapter: **"You are not under law, but under grace."**

Grace doesn't weaken obedience — grace strengthens it.

- **6:12–14 — Don't Let Sin Reign:** We choose not to let sin rule our bodies. We present ourselves to God as instruments of righteousness.

Filling in the missing pieces

No Excuse for Sin" (Romans 6:15–16)

- His point is not, "Grace means rules no longer matter." His point is, "Grace changes who owns you." Under grace, believers are no longer slaves of sin and therefore should live in a way that reflects their new master.
- Live a holy life – **I Peter 1:15** But as he who has called you Holy... Be ye Holy for I am Holy.
- Give yourself over to God and walk in Holiness.

What's Happening Here?

V. The New Master (vv. 17–19)

- Everyone serves something.
- Grace transfers us from slavery to sin → slavery to righteousness.

Paul uses slavery language to make the point clear: Everybody serves something.

Before Christ, we were slaves to sin. But grace transfers us to a new Master — righteousness.

This isn't about perfection. It's about direction. Your life is now moving toward God, not away from Him.

- **6:17–19 — Slaves of Righteousness:** Everyone serves something — either sin or righteousness. Grace makes us servants of righteousness.

TWO PATHS, TWO OUTCOMES (Romans 6:20–23)

What’s Happening Here?

VI. The New Outcome (vv. 20–23)

- Sin pays wages: death.
- God gives a gift: eternal life.

Paul closes with a contrast:

- Sin leads to shame and death.
- Serving God leads to holiness and eternal life.

And then the famous verse: **“The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”**

Sin pays wages. God gives gifts.

- **6:20–23 — Two Paths, Two Outcomes:** Sin leads to shame and death. Serving God leads to holiness and eternal life. “The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

KEY DOCTRINAL TRUTHS

A. Grace Doesn’t Excuse Sin — It Empowers Victory

Grace is not a license; it is liberation.

B. Union With Christ Changes Identity

We are not “trying to be better people.” We are new people with a new Master.

C. Sin Is No Longer the Boss

Paul uses slavery language intentionally: Sin used to command us. Now righteousness commands us.

D. Holiness Is the Fruit, Not the Root

We don't pursue holiness to earn salvation — we pursue holiness because salvation has changed us.

APPLICATION

A. Identity: “I am dead to sin.”

Not “I’m trying to stop sinning.” “I am no longer under sin’s authority.”

B. Daily Choices: Present Yourself to God

Every day we choose who we obey.

C. Holiness: A Gift and a Calling

Holiness is the natural fruit of a changed heart.

D. Gratitude: Eternal Life Is a Gift

We don't earn it — we receive it.

6. DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (Teacher & Student Friendly)

1. Why do people misunderstand grace as permission to sin?
2. What does it mean to be “dead to sin”?
3. How does baptism help us understand our union with Christ?
4. What does presenting our bodies to God look like in everyday life?
5. Why does Paul use slavery language?
6. What are the “wages” of sin in real life, not just spiritually?
7. How does knowing eternal life is a gift change your walk with God?

Romans 6 is not about perfection — it's about direction. We are no longer walking toward sin; we are walking toward God. Grace doesn't make sin safe — grace makes holiness possible.

APPLICATION — HOW DO WE LIVE THIS OUT?

1. Embrace Your Identity

Say it out loud: “I am dead to sin. I am alive to God.”

2. Present Yourself to God Daily

Your body, your mind, your habits — offer them to Him.

3. Walk in Grace, Not Guilt

Grace doesn't excuse sin — it empowers transformation.

4. Remember the Gift

Eternal life is not earned. It's received.

CLOSING

Romans 6 reminds us that salvation isn't just forgiveness — it's transformation. You are not who you used to be. Sin is no longer your master. You are alive to God, empowered by grace, and called to walk in newness of life.