

1. **Introduction:** Today we continue Romans chapter 6. The introduction is a little longer than usual because it includes some review. Critics made two specific claims in attacking Paul's preaching of justification through grace by faith alone. The first was that justification through grace by faith alone meant believers could sin as much as they wished without penalty, because grace would increase to cover the added sins. We will look at the second later.

- The first claim is tricky since Paul steadfastly declared God's grace to be sufficient to deal with every sin.
- Indeed, God's grace is sufficient to deal with all sin.
- But the critics were implying that sin's increase caused God's grace to increase so that forgiveness covered the added sin. With that assumption, they said increased sin must be good because it leads to an increase in grace.
- That was a complete misunderstanding. Sin does not "cause" God's grace to increase. Sin can exist endlessly without the grace of forgiveness.
- God's love for humanity is the cause of His gracious forgiveness.
- The critics claim ignores the truth that God is holy and righteous, cannot tolerate sin, and is under no compulsion to forgive any sin.
- Sin always is subject to a penalty. The penalty for every sin must be paid.
- Under the Law, legal righteousness and freedom from sin's penalties could be achieved only by perfect personal obedience of the Law.
- Since obedience means doing the right thing for the right reason, human sin nature means such perfect obedience is beyond human capability.
- How then can anyone become righteous before God?
- God is both law-maker and law-keeper. He abides by His Law. Solutions to the human sin problem must satisfy the Law's requirements. God's plan has 2 steps.
- In the first step He provides "legal righteousness" apart from requiring perfect personal obedience to the Law.
- God's Law allows a "legal substitute" to take the place of a person subject to the Law. The legal substitute must be someone who can satisfy the Law.
- A substitute's satisfaction of the Law's requirements will be credited to those represented. The principle is seen in the concepts of "kinsman redeemer" and "federal head."

- The person who can satisfy the Law's requirements as a legal substitute will need to be a very special person since every ordinary human's sin nature means they cannot perfectly obey the Law.
- To solve that dilemma, God (John 3:16) gave His Son to become incarnate on earth as the God-man, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus lived a sinless life as the legal substitute for those who would believe in Him. He satisfied the Law's requirement of perfect obedience, and paid the death penalty due sins.
- Because Jesus satisfied the Law's requirements on their behalf, the Father rightfully declares those who believe in Jesus to be legally righteous.
- God's act of justification, based on Jesus' accomplishments, declares every believer legally righteous in spite of their past sins. At the same time God enables and expects believers to resist sin (1 Corinthians 13:10).
- Since God provides legal righteousness for believers apart from the Law, what is the present-day function of the Law for believers?
- God's Law is an expression of His holy character. It was given to Israel to train the people to recognize and reject sin as they strived to obey the clear do's and do not's of the Law.
- The Law was and is a tutor to teach people to recognize and reject sin.
- God's gift of legal righteousness apart from the Law does not free believers from their obligation to God to obey His moral Law.
- Believers are not under the Law in the sense that they are not bound by the requirement of perfect personal obedience to obtain legal righteousness.
- After being justified, a believer is forever legally righteous but, in mortal life, continues to have a sin nature and is not yet experientially righteous.
- Experiential righteousness (being holy and righteous as God is holy and righteous) is necessary to be able to live in the presence of God in eternity.
- For justified believers, experiential righteousness is obtained through the process of sanctification, a progressive lifelong process guided by the Holy Spirit.
- Sanctification leads ultimately to glorification (becoming like Christ in holiness and righteousness).
- Glorification happens at mortal death (or at Jesus' second coming). The Holy Spirit will complete making the believer holy and righteous like God.

- The critics of justification by faith alone had a second point which was, “If believers are under grace not Law, aren’t they free to sin?”
- Paul responds to that question in 6:15-23.

2. **Romans 6:15-23**: ¹⁵ *What then? Are we to sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means!* ¹⁶ *Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness?* ¹⁷ *But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed,* ¹⁸ *and, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness.* ¹⁹ *I am speaking in human terms, because of your natural limitations. For just as you once presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness leading to sanctification.* ²⁰ *For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness.* ²¹ *But what fruit were you getting at that time from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death.* ²² *But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the fruit you get leads to sanctification and its end, eternal life.* ²³ *For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

- Through God’s grace, believers are not bound by the requirement to achieve legal righteousness by perfect personal obedience of the Law.
- But does being under grace mean believers can ignore the Law?
- No! Under grace, believers must strive to obey the moral Law, but thank God, their personal perfect obedience is not required to obtain legal righteousness.
- Nor are they required to obey sections of the Law specific to Israel’s situation like dietary law, the regulation of sacrifices, regulation of the priesthood, etc.
- The moral Law is good and true, an expression of God’s character. Believers who violate the moral Law are to confess, repent, and seek forgiveness.
- That said, the question remains, does the fact they have been justified through grace mean a believer is free to deliberately sin without consequences?
- Paul says, “***By no means!***” To illustrate his answer, he uses the metaphor of the obedience required of even a voluntary slave.
- Voluntary slavery sounds contradictory but was not unusual in Paul’s world.

- Involuntary slaves were the most common kind. Often involuntary slaves were captives of war. Some were purchased from slavers who captured people to sell.
- Voluntary slaves were simply people in great need who voluntarily offered to be a slave for someone who would supply them food and shelter.
- Having become a slave, even voluntarily, meant mandatory obedience with no ownership in their work. Slaves must obey their master and own nothing.
- Paul refers to believers as bondservants or slaves to righteousness “in Christ.”
- He is referring to believers’ commitment to obey Christ as Master.
- Through grace by faith, when believers are freed from slavery to sin, they become as slaves to righteousness in Christ. Christ is Lord and Master.
- You cannot accept Christ as savior without accepting Him as Lord.
- All descendants of Adam are born as slaves to sin, but they don’t have to remain in that condition. They can be freed by believing in Christ.
- To free a slave or to transfer a slave to a new master, a redemption price must be paid. Freedom or transfer to a new master ends all obligations to the old master.
- Jesus paid the redemption price, is the new Master for believers, and God graciously receives those freed from slavery to sin into His own family.
- The process of obtaining complete freedom from sin includes Christ’s payment of the redemption price, regeneration (new spiritual life for the spiritually dead), the gift of saving faith, justification, sanctification, and glorification.
- A believer’s new Master, Jesus Christ, sends the Holy Spirit to indwell them to transform them into a likeness of their Master.
- Paul’s slave analogy is valuable but has limits. Paul recognizes those limits when he says he is “*speaking in human terms, because of your natural limitations.*” The key idea of the slave metaphor is that believers, freed from slavery to sin, commit to obedient righteousness in Christ.
- Life situations for both believers and unbelievers are subject to frequent change.
- Repeated sinning leads a “slave to sin” deeper and deeper into sinful reality and ultimately to death and separation from God.
- Repeated obedience by those “in Christ” leads to sanctification (being made holy) in a likeness of their Master.
- Slaves to sin are free from all constraints imposed by righteousness, but the personal cost of that freedom is overwhelming.

- Sinners work at sin. In justice they receive the wages due sin which is ultimately death and separation from God.
 - Slaves to righteousness “in Christ” receive neither justice or wages. They receive something much better. They receive God’s grace in the form all the benefits of salvation leading to eternal life with God.
 - Paul says the transfer from slavery to sin (to which we were born) to a righteous life in Christ (to which we were born again) constitutes a binding moral commitment to righteousness.
 - He rejects accusations by critics that grace undermines ethical responsibility. If the critics were right, grace would promote reckless sinning. That is nonsense.
 - Freedom from slavery to sin is the result of inward conversion. Freedom from slavery to sin creates a radical discontinuity between pre-conversion life and post-conversion life. The outward sign of that inward conversion is Baptism.
 - A “new creature” who has been justified through grace by faith will not continue in regular sin. Their identity and nature have both changed.
 - Every believer should recognize that “Christ, their new Master, made a huge change in them.” It is in Christ we are justified and adopted into God’s family.
 - Paul, like Jesus, pictures people living two opposing types of lives.
 - Jesus portrayed the distinction between the two types of lives as the difference between a broad easy road that leads to destruction and a narrow more difficult road that leads to life (Matthew 7:13).
 - Paul identifies the two types of lives with two kinds of slavery. The involuntary slavery to sin and the voluntary-obedience slavery to Christ as Master and Lord.
 - In summary, bondage to sin receives sin’s just wages. The ultimate wages of sin are death and eternal separation from God.
 - Bondage to Christ opposes the fallen nature is made possible by God. “In Christ” you receive God’s gift of grace not His justice which your sins deserve.
 - The Holy Spirit leads believers through progressive holiness through sanctification to ultimate glorification and eternal life in the presence of God.
3. **Introduction to Chapter 7:** Paul wrote chapter 7 centuries ago. Since then, it has been interpreted in several distinctly different and inconsistent ways. Most differences are in the interpretation of 7:15-25. Taken out of context, some statements in these verses appear to contradict earlier statements by Paul. In

preparation for studying this chapter, we need to distinguish between justification and Fatherly forgiveness.

- Justification and Fatherly forgiveness are both aspects of divine forgiveness. Justification is the Father's judicial forgiveness as Judge. Justification frees a believer permanently from the penalty due sin.
- Justification eliminates judicial guilt for sin, but does not give experiential righteousness. Justified believers continue to have a sin nature and do sin.
- Justification does not nullify God's displeasure at a believer's sinning.
- Sins committed after justification are free from the eternal penalty due sin but nonetheless grieve the Father and have temporal consequences.
- When a believer sins, they are to confess the sin and repent. God will grant Fatherly forgiveness (which is the second aspect of divine forgiveness).
- Justification eliminates sin's eternal penalty. Fatherly forgiveness deals temporal issues of sin. Fatherly forgiveness may include chastening.
- Though free from the eternal penalty for sins, because of His love for humanity, God chastens sinning believers (Hebrews 12:5-11).
- Believers are instructed to seek forgiveness when they sin. Sin interferes with the transformation work of the Holy Spirit. The forgiveness sought is not pardon from an angry Judge, but mercy from a grieved Father.
- Here is the picture. God declares a believer justified, gives the believer a new nature, and sends the Holy Spirit to indwell and work to transform the justified believer into a moral likeness of Christ.
- Meanwhile believers continue to have a sin nature and do sin. Sinning hinders the work of the Holy Spirit.
- Fatherly forgiveness is ongoing and deals with here-and-now sins. Fatherly forgiveness enables believer's to continue in the process of sanctification.
- Justification provided a once for all time unshakeable, eternal, right-standing before the throne of divine judgment.
- Ultimately God will complete each believer's sanctification making them glorified which means made sinless and holy like Christ.

- Glorification occurs at mortal death or when Christ comes again. A believer's life thus consists of 3 segments.

4. The Three Segments of a Believer's Life:

- First segment is the interval between physical birth and justification.
- Second segment is the interval between justification and glorification.
- Third and final segment is the interval after glorification.
- The penalty due sins in both the first and second segments is eliminated by our righteous Judge's pardon when He declares believers legally righteous based on their faith in Jesus' salvation work.
- In the third segment following glorification, believers are sinless and holy like Christ.
- The remaining segment is the second. What is a believer's moral life like in the second segment between justification and glorification?
- When believers are justified and receive a new nature, their sin nature's grip on them is loosened but not eliminated.
- A believer's emotional and intellectual faculties, as well as their spiritual heart, are anguished by sins committed in the second life segment.
- That anguish is cleansed by the Father's forgiveness when believers confesses and repent.
- The indwelling Holy Spirit works spiritually within each believer to transform them into a moral likeness of Christ.
- Everyone's sin nature is inclined toward sin and its continued presence in believers causes them to remain susceptible to sin.
- The new redeemed nature is inclined toward righteousness and makes it possible for a believer to not sin. The new nature produces desires which conflict with those of the sin nature.
- Scripture tells us that sin originates within ourselves – in our heart. **Mark 7:21-22: “For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, ²² coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, foolishness.”**

- Temptation is triggered our own desires. **James 11:13-15:** *“Let no one say when he is tempted, “I am being tempted by God,” for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one. ¹⁴ But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. ¹⁵ Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death.”*
- Between justification and glorification every believer’s life is characterized by continuing struggles between competing desires for righteousness or sin.
- At first thought it seems that becoming more like Christ would cause a person to become less aware of sin.
- But on second thought, it is clear that the more holy a person becomes the more truly awful any sin appears to them. Think about Isaiah in Isaiah 6 when he is confronted by our Holy God.
- In God’s holy presence, Isaiah realizes how sinful he truly is and says, *“woe is me!”*
- In Job 40, even though God said Job was blameless, Job says *“I am vile!”*
- Think how vile sin is to our holy God! Increasing sanctification causes a believer to experience both a decrease in the frequency of sin and a heightened sensitivity to sin.
- Consider the question, who is most aware of the burden of sin – the justified or the unjustified?
- John MacArthur said think of it this way. A burden of hundreds of pounds placed on a dead person cannot be felt.
- Likewise, no matter how heavy the burden of sin, it cannot be felt by an unregenerated person, because they are spiritually dead.
- Thus, the regenerated, justified believer will be disturbed by sin’s impact, but the unregenerated will not. Awareness of the eternal significance of their sin is a good sign a person has been regenerated.
- A believer’s sensitivity to the reality and offensiveness of sin begins when they are regenerated and grows more intense as sanctification progresses. Ultimately believers detest the evil in their heart and yearn for sinlessness.

- Ephesians 4:30 says that, when believers are involved in sin, the Holy Spirit is grieved. That is obviously bad.
- 1 Cor. 9:27 says that believers involved in sin live powerless lives. That is obviously bad.
- The long and short of it is that sin is an enduring problem in a believer's life. A battle against sin must be waged throughout mortal life, but there is comfort in knowing it is a battle Christ has already won for each believer.
- Believers, then, live in tension between two extremes – the new and the old – the holy and the sinful.
- In this life, they are people of flesh and blood living in a fallen world subject to the conditions of mortal life.
- Physically, believers are Adam's progeny, but spiritually they are "in Christ" sharing in Christ's death, burial, and resurrection.
- Believers are new creations but the remaining remnant of their old sin nature is in constant conflict with their new nature.
- May God bless our study with understanding.

5. **What is Next:** Chapter 7.