Thursday Morning Bible Study

The Book of Romans Chapter 6

 In the last chapter, Paul has started the layout of the reason for Salvation and the illness of mankind which is sin. He has set the table so to speak, in teaching about what sin is, where sin came from and how sin is overcome through the atoning death of Jesus Christ on the cross as the final atoning sacrifice, as prescribed by the Law. He has taught us about justification, sanctification and redemption, and he taught us about grace.

 Dr J. Vernon McGee has a few paragraphs that deals with the subject of Justification and Sanctification from his Through the Bible series 'The Book of Romans, Chapter 6': "*There is a difference between justification and sanctification. These are two words from the Bible, my friend, you ought to cozy up to and get acquainted with. There is a difference between merely being saved from sin, and being made a type of folk we should be because we are separated unto God.*

 *Identification with Christ for justification is also the grounds of our sanctification. We are in Christ. These are two different subjects, but they are not mutually exclusive. Justification is the foundation on which all the superstructure of sanctification rests.*

 *Now let me put it like this: Justification is an act; sanctification is a work. Justification took place the moment you trusted Christ; you were declared righteous, the guilt was removed. Then God began a work in you that will continue throughout your life. I believe in instantaneous salvation, but sanctification is a lifelong process. In other words justification is the means, sanctification is the end. Justification is for us, sanctification is in us. Justification declares the sinner righteous, sanctification makes the sinner righteous. Justification removes guilt, sanctification removes the growth and power of sin."* (End of J Vernon McGee quote)

 Does this help to define Justification and sanctification? Now where Paul had said, "*where sin abounded, grace abounded more,*” it raised questions regarding whether the quantity of sin makes the quantity of grace even greater? Do you follow the question? If I sin more do I get more grace?

 A] Romans 6: 1 through 11; (read)

 1] "*What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound*?

 After his previous statements surrounding justification, Salvation and Grace, Paul turns a bit argumentative. He begins with, "*What shall we say then*, " assuming the reader remembers what was the last statement given in the last chapter. So what do you think? Because we have that grace which comes from God, and grace covers us, would it be alright to go on sinning knowing full well that those sins are forgiven by this grace? Think seriously about that question.

 2] "*Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?*

 Paul becomes quite adamant in his answer. When you are saved, you receive grace and this is a free gift and as we accepted Christ's death on the cross, we too died to our sin. Does that make sense? Can we die twice?

 Now when we died in our sin, God declared us righteous, did He not? Then how can we continue in that sin? He justified us. Man, that word keeps popping up, doesn’t it?

 3] "*Or do you not know that that as many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the Glory of God, even so we also should walk in the newness of life."*

 Now when one dies, it is customary to bury them, which denotes a finality of life. Every culture buries their dead, and it merely says, they will not come back up again. In many cultures, by the way, it seems they do bring them back up and place the bones in an ossuary (small box) because, I guess, of space limitations.

 Being baptized in Jesus also does not necessarily say a dunking in the water, but it does say that we are being identified with Christ, or are recognized as being a part of Christ. The baptism is the symbolic way of being buried with Him isn't it?

 Therefore, we put these two items together to say because we are identified as belonging to Jesus Christ, we, then, share in His death. So when Christ is raised from the dead, does that mean we rise with Him? Actually no, but it does mean that when we have accepted Christ, we then begin a new life in Him through the Holy Spirit. Hence, we walk in the newness of this life.

 4] "*For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall 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."*

 I am sure this is nothing like what these people, that Paul is writing to, thought they had any idea regarding what Christianity was really about. All they may have believed was that Jesus was the Son of God, and that He walked among them doing miracles, and taught from the Scriptures, and I am sure they knew that He died on a Roman Cross. But I feel that this salvation message is a new concept, and Paul is step by step explaining it to them----and, by the way to us.

 Paul tells them that; first, because Jesus died as the final atonement sacrifice, and we being united with Him, we die to our old self. This is a strange concept, but all it means is we are offering our once and for all sacrifice in the person of Jesus who was the Lamb that was slain. Then because of His resurrection we shall live with Him in His Kingdom. Now because He died for our sins, our old self, being renewed in His risen state, we then are freed from our guilt (justified) and we no longer are bound by that guilt.

 5] "*For he who died has been freed from sin. Now, if we died with Christ we believe 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 he, that is the old man as mentioned in the previous verse, who died, or was crucified with Christ is now free from sin. There is that justification. So believing in the atonement death on the cross we then believe in the resurrection, don't we? And believing in the resurrection we then believe that also, then, live again in Him. And we will have eternal bodies in Heaven.

 6] "*For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all, but the life that He lives, He lives to God. Likewise, you also reckon yourselves to be dead, indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord."*

 See how carefully Paul words this, this death Jesus died was for the sins of all man and is a one-time event. Now the life Jesus lives after the resurrection is forever and those who believe on His name will live forever with Him. Again, remember to whom Paul is writing to, and the reason.

 B] Romans 6: 12 through 14; (read)

 1] "*Therefore, do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts."*

 There is that 'therefore' again. The continuation of thought which is the conclusion of the matter. If we know and understand the nature of the atonement sacrifice of Christ Jesus, and we have accepted Jesus as Lord and Savior, we should not, in any way, continue with the old sin nature. Paul tells them and us, we have put away that old way and put on a new way. We are not to even entertain those old thoughts lest the lusts of the flesh overtake us.

 2] "*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.*

 Even with that 'justification' we are still mortal and carnal, and as stated above, we should not give in to that old nature but to the new. Now the 'members' mentioned, would be the various parts of the body, like the hands which can be open to slap or closed to punch, quick to take what is not theirs, and all this leads to the brain and the eyes that lead us into areas we don't belong.

 Dr. McGee gave this illustration about a little girl who had gone to bed and sometime during the night she fell out of bed, and when her mother went to see what was wrong, the little girl responded with, " I guess I was sleeping too close to where I got in to bed." Most of the time when we have finally come to the salvation of Christ, we fail to get away from the temptations that bedeviled us to begin with.

 3] "*For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace."*

 Let us be careful of this verse because it belongs to the last one. When I present myself as that righteous instrument to God, then how can sin have dominion over me? The old self would have been under the law but the new self being under grace should be apart from the law. Does that make sense? If I am truly presenting myself before God in my new self, how would the law have any part of who I now am? But just remember this, also. Being a carnal human, the Law has set, and that never changes, the table for what sin is.

 C] Romans 6: 15 through 19; (read)

 1] "*What then? Shall we sin because we are not under the law but under grace? Certainly not! Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that ones slave whom you obey whether of sin leading to death or of obedience leading to righteousness."*

 Under the Meyers commentary, I found an interesting paraphrase; "*What is then, the state of the case? Shall this Christian position of ours be misused for sinning?"* Paul keeps making the case for each doctrinal position he establishes.

 When I become a part of the family of God, my whole outlook should change, don't you think? What is a slave? (1) A person who is bound in servitude as chattel. (2) A person completely controlled by a dominating influence. (Webster's II dictionary) Therefore in our carnal nature we were slaves to sin based on these definitions, weren't we? So in our new circumstance we should be bound to a new and righteous way.

 2] "*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, and having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness."*

 Therefore, I was "completely controlled by the dominating influence of sin." But now that I have accepted Jesus Christ as my personal Lord and Savior (the new doctrine) I am now "completely controlled by the dominating influence of Grace". Paul is saying that God has given us a new chance at righteousness through His Grace because He did Love us.

 3] "*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, so now present your members as slaves of righteousness for holiness."*

 Paul says he is speaking to them using the everyday jargon to make plain the truths of doctrine., because if he spoke to them in the pastoral idiom that the Temple priests would, they would never catch on, and neither would we. Let's face it, there are many doctrinal statements that leave us dazed and confused aren't there? So basically he tells them, you were sinners but now because of Christ in your life, you need to clean up your act. How is that for everyday jargon?

 4] "*For when you were slaves of sin you were free in regard to righteousness."*

 There IS a responsibility to righteousness, you are no longer free to sin. Does this make sense? As a slave to sin, righteousness meant nothing to me, I was not accountable.

 5] "*What fruit did you have then, in the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death."*

 Think of this, every plant bears a fruit that it might perpetuate itself, every animal bears a 'fruit' in the form of the next generation. But none advance their kind into something more, do they? But the human animal does or they should. But as a sinner what 'fruit' do I bear? When the soil is poisoned the plant growing in it will not bear good fruit and eventually wither and die.

 So as a sinner was there anything good that came out of my life especially anything that I could be proud of? When my children were small they might bring their gifts or crafts they made to mom or me to show them off. But do I have anything I can show to my heavenly Father?

 6] "*But now having been set free from sin, and having become slaves to God, you have your fruit to holiness and the end, everlasting life. For the wages of sin is death but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."*

 So now as freed from sin in Christ, we bear a fruit that we can present to our Heavenly Father. Remember this, being a slave to God, really means we belong body and soul to God, doesn’t it? We are actually ‘bond-servants,’ as Jesus paid our debt, that we could never repay---got it? At the same time, we also are His children too.

 With this in mind, I also look at the worker whose fruit is from the labor of his hands and his wages are either from God or from Satan. If the work is of Satan, those wages result in death. But the work for God, those wages result in life eternal.