



TALKS FOR GROWING CHRISTIANS TRANSCRIPT

The Believer's Spiritual Position in Christ Romans 6:1-11

"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.

⁵ For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, ⁶ 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. ⁷ For he who has died has been freed from sin. ⁸ Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, ⁹ knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him. ¹⁰ For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God. ¹¹ Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Background Notes

Paul's letter to the Romans contains both the good news and the bad news. The bad news is that everyone in the world is guilty before God. God is infinitely holy and righteous, and no one comes close to attaining God's standards of perfection. You may be a good person, you may be a morally upright person, you may even be a religious person, but that will not get you to heaven. Romans 2:23 says, *"for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God..."* And God must judge sin, so it looks like all hope is lost.

But Romans also contains God's good news. The Lord Jesus Christ, God Himself, came to this earth and took upon Himself the penalty for our sins when He died on the cross of Calvary. We know that this true because the Lord Jesus arose from the dead and is living today. This is the gospel, God's good news. All we have to do is believe it, and God saves us. This is what it means to become a true Christian.

In Romans 5 we saw that when we believe the gospel, we are not only forgiven for all of our sins, we are also justified -- that is, we are declared righteous by God. This is not our righteousness, because we don't have any righteousness. When God declares us righteous, it is the righteousness of Christ that is imputed to us. Our sin is put on His account. Now in Romans 6 we find that in God's sight believers are not only justified, but we are also identified with Christ in His death, in His burial, in His resurrection. This is our spiritual position in Christ. If you're not a Christian, you don't have this position. Your position is that you're alienated from God -- but this can be your position if you receive Christ as Savior.

Doctrinal / Teaching Points

1. As to position, a believer has died with Christ.

When you read in Romans about God's wonderful plan of salvation and God's overwhelming grace and justification by faith alone, it sounds too good to be true. In fact, you might reason that if we're saved by God's grace alone -- not by works, and not by trying to keep God's law -- then we might as well go out and sin all we want. Why, we could even cause more of God's grace to abound if we continue to sin! Sounds logical, right? Well, guess what? Paul anticipated that question in verse 1: "*What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?*" And what's the answer? It's verse 2: "*Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?*"

Now what does that mean, "we who died to sin"? This has to do with our spiritual position in Christ. When you become a Christian, God not only forgives you for all of your sins and declares you righteous, but He sees you in Christ -- that is, He sees you as identified with Christ. Look at verse 3: "*Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?*" "Baptized" means to be "immersed" or "plunged into." When you become a Christian, you are baptized or immersed into Christ! Galatians 3:27 says, "*For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.*" From that point on, from the moment that you put your faith in Christ, your spiritual position is "in Christ." God sees you identified with Christ in the saving work of Christ.

The Lord Jesus Christ died on the cross not only as our substitute, but also as our representative. When Jesus Christ died, you died. When Jesus Christ was buried, you were buried. When Jesus Christ was raised, you were raised. That's your spiritual position. In fact, that's what Christian water baptism symbolizes. Look at the beginning of verse 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.*" Water baptism, you see, symbolizes us being "baptized into Christ." So if anyone ever asks you whether the baptism of Romans 6 is about our spiritual baptism into Christ, or about water baptism, what is the answer? The answer is **both!** Water baptism symbolizes our spiritual baptism into Christ. God now sees us in Christ -- that is, identified with Christ in His death, in His burial, and in His resurrection. As Jesus Christ died to sin, so believers have died to sin -- that's our spiritual position. As to position, a believer has died with Christ.

2. As to position, a believer has been raised with Christ.

As we've seen, water baptism not only symbolizes our death and burial with Christ, it also pictures our resurrection with Christ. Verses 4-5: "*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.* ⁵ *For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection...*" When our Lord Jesus rose from the grave on Resurrection Sunday morning, we were raised with Him -- not literally, but positionally. That's the way God sees the believer. That's our spiritual position. As to position, a believer has been raised with Christ.

Practical Application

Take some time for R&R.

What do we mean by R&R? Normally we mean "rest and relaxation," but in the context of Romans 6, we mean **realize** and **reckon**. These are the two steps that we must take if the great truths of Romans 6 are to be ours in a practical way.

Before we take these steps, of course, we must become Christians. You must receive Christ before you can realize and reckon your position in Christ. But after you have become a Christian, you must take some time for R&R. Some Christians never do this! You can't appreciate and enjoy your position in Christ unless you first **realize** it. If you don't know or realize your spiritual position in Christ, you'll never grow in Christ, so that is step one.

But then you must go further than just to realize your position in Christ. You must also **reckon** it to be true. Reckon means to count it as being true, and act on the truth of it. Look at verse 11: "*Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.*" If we realize these truths and then act on these truths, we will be helped in living life as a Christian.

Here's an illustration: Suppose I'm very poor and I'm living in a small hut somewhere because that's all I can afford, but then I get a letter informing me that a rich uncle has died and left me a big house and a big bank account! Now suppose I do nothing and continue to live as a poor man in the small hut. The truth that I am actually a rich man doesn't change – I **am** a rich man -- but I'm not acting on that truth! When I realize and reckon the truth that I'm a rich man, my lifestyle will change.

In the same way, we can have victory over sin in our lives if we realize and reckon, or act on, the truth of Romans 6. Look at verses 6-7. What does that mean, the "old man has been crucified with Christ"? Let me make it personal. Before I became a Christian, I was the "old man" Dave Reid. But the "old" Dave Reid was crucified with Christ. Now if I died with Christ, then I'm freed from sin and the power of sin because **dead people don't sin!** Dead people are **no longer under the power of sin!** So my spiritual position before God is that I have died with Christ. In reality, I still have a sinful nature or the flesh (I'll have it until I get my resurrected body), and therefore I'm not sinless -- I'll still sin, but when I realize and reckon my identification with Christ in His death, I should sin less. The power of indwelling sin in my life (v6) is done away with – not annihilated, but rendered powerless.

And not only that, I've been raised with Christ. Verse 8: "*Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him...*" We can walk in "newness of life" (v4) because we really do have new life in Christ -- new in quality, not just in time. That's why we use the phrase "born again" -- we have new divine life, and this new life is empowered by the Holy Spirit. So we're not just playing imaginary games here! There really is freedom from the power of sin when we practice R&R -- when we practice realizing and reckoning our position in Christ.

Let me ask you this question: Are you sick of sin in your life? Well first, if you're not a Christian, trust Christ as your Savior and you'll be free from the penalty of sin. But now as a Christian, take some time for R&R to realize and reckon your position in Christ goes a long way in giving you victory over the power of sin in your life. Take some time for R&R.