

# Paul's Letter to the ROMANS

## UNIT FIVE The Christian and Sin

### Dead to Sin and Alive to God (6:1-11)

- Does 6:1 suggest that the more we sin the more grace is demonstrated?
- The idea that faith brings no obligation to seek righteousness underlies the complacency of many Christians.
- Paul denies this, and then asks "How can we who died to sin still live in it?"
- How has the Christian "died to sin?"
- Baptised into Christ's death (6:1-5)
  - Christian baptism involves a personal commitment to Christ that brings the believer into a new relationship of obligation.
  - Paul goes further and describes it as a baptism 'into his death'.
  - Was Paul thinking of immersion in water as symbolic burial?
  - Baptism does declare that the person concerned has died – in what sense?

- **Crucified with Christ (6:6)**
  - When Paul speaks of the crucifixion of our 'old self' (v6), he means that something has happened to the person we once were.
  - It is the sad fact of Christian experience that 'the flesh' still dogs us.
  - Paul is talking about our old life, which stands condemned in God's sight.
  - It is this 'old self' which is said to have been nailed to the cross with Christ.
  - Paul is speaking in legal terms, declaring that God graciously regards our old life as dead.
  - Because God sees our old way of life as 'dead and gone', so should we.
  - This death means that the sinful body can be destroyed – God declares us free from the penalty of sin.
  - With this assurance of God's grace, we are free to serve him in grateful obedience.
  
- **Justified from sin (6:7-II)**
  - In verse 7 Paul equates the idea of dying with Christ with justification by faith.
  - Christians are not free from sinning in this life, but God's justification is the basis of a new freedom to resist the rule of sin.
  - Verse 8 says that 'if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him.
  - Paul has already taught that we were joined to Christ's death and resurrection so that we might 'walk in newness of life'.
  - Now he explains that we live this life as an anticipation of the resurrection life that we hope for.
  - Because we live by the promise of the resurrection body on the last day, we should also live the new life under Christ's rule now.

- Death no longer has any hold on Christ because the death he died was a death 'to sin once for all'.
- In dying he paid the penalty for sin so that sinners might receive acquittal and life.
- Such death means that his new life is forever beyond the reach of death.
- We will also be 'alive to God', and ought to live as if we are right now.

## The Dominion of Sin (6:12-14)

- Paul continues his argument with military examples – 'whose army should we be serving in?'
- Christians must not let sin reign over their lives, they must yield to God as their rightful ruler.
- Paul sees sin as a power which will usurp God's will for his people unless it is checked.
- The way to resist sin is to place yourself at God's disposal, not at sin's disposal.
- The reason for this is that we have been brought 'from death to life' – we are in an already victorious army!
- Sin will not be your lord if Christ has taken possession of you by grace – Christians need not be slaves of sin.

## Slaves of God (6:15-23)

- This section also asks 'are we to sin because we are not under law but under grace?'
- Again, Paul emphatically denies that we should, and says that we are slaves to whatever power we yield ourselves.
- There are two choices – serving sin, which leads to death, and obeying God, which leads to righteousness.
- Everyone is a slave to sin until they become obedient to the gospel.
- To be under God's grace is to be committed to a way of life created by the gospel.
- When a person transfers from the service of sin to the service of righteousness, they are freed from the old master and bound to the new one.
- Paul apologises for using the language of slavery.
- In reality the service of our gracious God could never be called slavery.
- We are called slaves to righteousness – a 'slavery' that leads to life.
- Paul uses this language to make a point may otherwise be missed.
- Once they yielded themselves to impurity, now they are to yield to righteousness.
- No-one can be the slave of sin and the slave of righteousness at the same time.
- Slavery to sin results in 'things of which you are now ashamed' and leads to death.
- Slavery to God results in sanctification and leads to eternal life.
- Sin is like a powerful slave owner who pays an allowance – God pays no wages but gives the greatest gift of all.