

Text: 2 Samuel 12, Romans 6

Title: Grace Abounding

Truth: God's grace enables us to live for Him, no longer ruled by sin.

Date/Location: Sunday October 3, 2021 at FBC

Introduction

After our last two messages, on the blessedness of the Christian life and how God magnanimously expresses grace and mercy toward us, people wonder about the implications. Can I just sin without worrying about the consequences? Some use that idea as a criticism of salvation by faith alone. "There has to be more to it than that; otherwise, people would just keep on sinning!" And others use the ideas as an excuse for their sin. I cannot tell you how many times I have heard, "God will forgive me!" when the person is doing or contemplating some sin. Humans are master excuse-makers and will imagine almost anything to justify their sin, even presuming upon the grace of God to "allow" themselves to get away with sin.

Romans 6 asks the same question: if God's grace is so rich, why not sin more so that God can show even more grace? That seems reasonable, no, if we can do more of what we want to do, and God can do more of what He does? We ended last time by tackling this idea briefly.

The short answer is this: no, because that is ridiculous. A longer answer is this: because God's grace is so rich that it can train you to *not sin in the first place*. It can make you pure and make you to see the abundant riches of a holy life--and that is what God's intention is! And *that* brings us full circle back to Titus which taught us that the grace of God that brings salvation has taught us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts and to live soberly and righteously and godly in this evil age.

I. Seven Reasons Not to Sin by Presuming on God's Grace, 2

Samuel 12

The scenario is this: someone says in their heart, "David sinned, but God forgave him. Therefore, if I sin, God will forgive me. I will go

ahead and sin because that is what I want to do, *and* I will get the benefits of forgiveness.” What is wrong with that idea?

- A. That is not a repentant attitude. Imagine your guilt after you sin and how you do not want to do that again. You have had that feeling, I hope. So that same attitude should prevail in your heart against sin *before* you commit it. Believers are “repenters”—both after *and* before doing wrong.
- B. “God will forgive me” shows that you are not content with the lot God has assigned you. God has *given* you what He has given, and you ought to be thankful, not looking for something else. 2 Samuel 12:8.
- C. You despise the commandments of the Lord by this attitude, 2 Samuel 12:9. Instead, you should reverse the directives of Christ. Yet you say, “I am going to divorce my spouse. God will forgive me.” What about the commands to love your wife as Christ loved the church (Eph. 5:25)? Have you worked hard at that? Wives, how about the commands to submit to and respect your husband and love your husband and children (Eph. 5:22, 33; Titus 2:4). You are spending more time contemplating how to divorce, which God hates, than how to love and respect and live together, as God commands!
- D. You could get someone killed. An innocent person might die. “God will forgive me” does not bring back a man or woman (maybe yourself) or a child. A child died because of what David did (2 Samuel 12:14). Uriah died as well (). David should have died as an adulterer and murderer. Because He was king, God was merciful and not ready to dispose of him yet. I do not understand why God permitted or assigned this outcome for the child. But I trust God’s wisdom and righteousness on the matter.

If you commit adultery, for example, a jealous and defrauded husband sometimes goes too far. Other times, a love triangle goes sideways. David killed a man to cover what he did (2 Samuel 12:9).

- E. The consequences last longer and run deeper than you can presently imagine. David had no end of trouble in his home and nation because of what he did (2 Samuel 12:10-11 predicted this).

This does not mean the situation is hopeless; but once you wake up to the reality that you have sinned, you need to repent. David had strife in his own home after this; rebellion in the kingdom; an adult son who ultimately died, etc. Read 2 Samuel chapters 12 through 24 for the history. If you are awake to the reality of sin in the first place and knowingly dive in headfirst, it is doubtful to me that you really understand or have experienced the grace of God. Maybe you have, but *maybe you have not*. My job is not to coddle you into thinking you are fine; my job is to challenge you to make sure you are in the faith.

- F. You treat God with contempt and outsiders take notice. David treated God with contempt, and outsiders blasphemed God because of what David did (2 Samuel 12:14, Masoretic Hebrew text). This is translated in two ways: either “you have given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme” or “you have treated the LORD with utter contempt.” I take it basically in the second sense—that David had treated the LORD as an enemy! Regardless, both statements are true. For example, see Romans 2:24. This whole matter has given people a built-in excuse to dishonor God, and it is terrible.
- G. You will hurt others. David certainly hurt other people because of what he did. Bathsheba was complicit at some level, but she was damaged too. Her offspring died. Her husband died. She had to bear emotional scars for the rest of her life. David’s other wives (should have been only one) were cheated as well. The people of the nation, to whom David owed loyalty, were discouraged by his actions. People forever after for centuries have been depressed by what he did, and some emboldened to excuse their sin.

Yet, we recall Psalm 32 and 51. Do not forget those passages—I just preached two entire sermons on them to help you when you sin and turn back to the Lord. God is gracious! But that doesn’t change the fact that we are often un-gracious, have bad attitudes, desire things that are wrong, and do things that are an affront to God’s holiness.

But there is more to the entire equation than thinking of the cost, consequences, and wrong attitudes about sin. Grace does not only abound after sin is done. It abounds before sin is born!

II. God's Grace is the Power to Overcome Sin, Romans 6

A. The Christian has died to sin, 6:1-2. The attraction of things of this world has become dead to the believer, and we dead to it (Gal. 6:14). When we are in our right minds, so to speak, we recognize that the allures here are not really allures anymore for us. God's grace killed our sin-life; thus, we cannot continue in sin to make grace abound. Grace has abounded in another way, not the way of merely continue to be merciful toward our sin.

Some illustrations: We have moved to a new address and the old landlord does not get our rent. We have become citizens of a new country and are not living the way we did in our old country. We *were* married to sin, but now that we have "died" and thus our marriage with sin is over and we do not owe it anything. We had one master, but now we have changed and gotten another one, so we do not owe obedience to the first one.

B. The Christian has been united to Jesus Christ in death and resurrection, 6:3-4. The important idea of baptism—here Spirit baptism—is that we are identified with and brought into solidarity with Jesus in His death and in His resurrection. Christians were dead *in* sin; now we are dead *to* sin (above) and alive to God. Therefore, we live a new life. This life was provided by grace; thus, we cannot sin that grace may abound.

C. The Christian's old person has died, 6:5-6a. Christian doctrine teaches that I was an old man; now I am a new man. By "old man" is not meant a person who is of old age; what is meant is a person who is qualitatively old, our previous selves before becoming Christians. In that existence, we were in Adam, subject to sin and death. That version of us has been *crucified*.

I believe it is not only correct, but also helpful, for us to think of our old person in this finished way. Do not think, "my old self is dying, and it has to die every day and I have to crucify it all the time." Rather, think properly, "my old self is DEAD and GONE and

crucified with Christ.” Granted, I have remnants of the sin nature hanging on for dear life, but my old self is done, gone, finished. I am a new creature. The old has passed and the new has come (2 Cor. 5:17).

- D. Therefore sin’s dominion is broken, and the Christian is no longer a slave of sin, 6:6b-7. What a glorious freedom, provided by God’s grace. His grace abounds to free us from sin, not just to forgive us of more sin!
- E. The Christian considers himself to be dead to sin, 6:7-11. The way you *think* about the things of God affects how you live for God. I touched on this above about how we think of our old selves. But here, we think about our relationship to sin, and Paul tells us to “reckon ourselves to be dead indeed to sin.” We are truly disconnected from sin and its dominion, mastery, and power. We do not think it to make it true; we think it because it *is* true. And that right thinking helps us overcome the temptations to go backwards when those tests come. When you face a temptation, remember this fact: you are dead to it. You in your Christian self are not responsive to that allurements. You are free from it. You belong to another. Think of yourself as disconnected from what you were connected to before.
- F. The Christian engages the never-ending battle against sin, 6:12-13a. We are not told to take a passive approach to sin, as if we can just “let our new selves flow...” Not at all. Rather, we are commanded to not let sin reign in us. We have the power to not let it reign, but sometimes we get lazy and do let it rule us for a time. Kill sin in your life (Col. 3:5). This is an active fight, one that is won only with great effort—Spirit-led, Bible-informed effort—but effort, nonetheless. God’s grace enables that so that sin should not abound.
- G. The Christian uses his body as an instrument for good, 6:13b. One great way to avoid doing wrong is to spend your time doing good. Walk away from sin and instead choose something better. Think of yourself as offering your body as a tool for God to use. God has ordained good works for you (Eph. 2:10), and to do that, you must engage mind and body in the pursuit of good.

H. The Christian is guided by the rule of grace, 6:14. This is the only way one could fulfill the righteousness required by the Law anyway. Sin thus does not have a dominating rule over you. The Christian philosophy is not, “We shall continue in sin that grace may abound.” Rather, it is “We shall continue in righteousness, that grace may abound even more.”

I. The Christian is a servant of righteousness, not of sin, 6:15-23. Ironically, while we are not under law, but under grace, yet it is only God’s grace that can make us righteous like the Law demanded in the first place. We are told to “present” ourselves to God for righteousness (6:13) and that is reiterated in the last 9 verses of the chapter. Christ is our master now, not sin, not Satan, not the world. With the same vigor that you used to give yourself over to sin, now you are to give yourself over to right. The fruit of life before was death, but now it is life.

Conclusion

This leads Paul write the well-known verse 23:

Romans 6:23 – For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

We do not continue in sin that grace may abound, because grace abounds by removing us from the realm of sin and death. Grace puts us in an entirely new sphere of existence so we can serve God.

You may feel sometimes that sin abounds. Grace abounds much more. Ponder Romans 5:20-21 in this connection.

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