

Identified With Christ Romans 6:8-14 (ESV) bible-sermons.org September 15, 2013

In the previous passage, Paul has explained to us that we were in the first Adam when he sinned (5:12). That is why we all have a sin nature from birth. That is why there is suffering and pain. Unbelievers often ask, "If God is love, then why is there so much suffering and pain in the world?" The answer is really rather simple. It's because we refuse to love God and our neighbor. We'd like to pin it on God, but the world of selfishness and the interconnectedness of the physical world and the heart of man is the real cause (Genesis 3:17).

Adam gave up the right to rule the world as God would have him rule it in peacefulness and harmony. He handed it over to Satan. That is why Jesus called Satan the prince of this world (John 12:31). We did it in Adam. We choose to do it in our own lives. Don't blame God. It was and is our disobedience that brought suffering and pain and continues to add to it even now.

Thankfully, there is a solution. In the second Adam, Christ Jesus, we can die to that old nature and be raised to a new life in Him (2Corinthians 5:17). Just as we were identified with Adam, we can choose to be identified with Jesus in His death, burial and resurrection! **What the first Adam got us into, the second Adam, Jesus, can get us out of.** We are freed from the bondage of sin (6:6). But more than that, we don't just return to the condition of Adam before the fall; we share in the second Adam's resurrected life! We have every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realm (Ephesians 1:3). We can reign in life (5:17).

In our verses for today, Paul is going to expand on the concept of our old nature being identified with Jesus in His death and our new nature identified with Him in His resurrection. The identification of mankind with Adam is not just an interesting idea or theological speculation. To the Apostle Paul and to all who believe in the Bible, it is a spiritual reality. There are only two kinds of people in the world, those in Adam and those in the second Adam. You are in sin or you are in grace through faith (Ephesians 2:8-9).

⁸ Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. When you read of a doctrine set forth by anyone in the New Testament, you can find its basis in the Old. Where did Paul get this idea of identifying with Jesus' sacrificial death? He knew of the identification of Israel and their sin with the atonement sacrifice and scapegoat (Leviticus 16:21). Interestingly enough, the Day of Atonement was celebrated yesterday. Just as they saw the judgment of their sin in the slaying of the goat and driving away the scapegoat, we now see the judgment of our sin in the reality

Commented [notes1]: Romans 5:12 (ESV)

¹² Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned.

Commented [notes2]: Genesis 3:17 (ESV)

¹⁷ And to Adam he said, "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, 'You shall not eat of it,' E cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life;

Commented [notes3]: John 12:31 (NIV)

³¹ Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out.

Commented [notes4]: 2 Corinthians 5:17 (ESV)

¹⁷ Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.

Commented [notes5]: Romans 6:6 (ESV)

⁶ We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin.

Commented [notes6]: Ephesians 1:3 (ESV)

³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places,

Commented [notes7]: Romans 5:17 (ESV)

¹⁷ For if, because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ.

Commented [notes8]: Ephesians 2:8-9 (ESV)

⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, ⁹ not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

Commented [notes9]: Leviticus 16:21 (ESV)

²¹ And Aaron shall lay both his hands on the head of the live goat, and confess over it all the iniquities of the people of Israel, and all their transgressions, all their sins. And he shall put them on the head of the goat and send it away into the wilderness by the hand of a man who is in readiness.

that cast that shadow, the cross of Jesus. The goats were just a shadow of what was to come in Christ Jesus (Hebrews 8:5).

The revelation of the Apostle Paul is that just as we were in Adam, we can be in Christ (5:19). We can die with Him to our first Adam nature. Our sins, including our sin nature, can be judged in Jesus on the cross. If we will believe and accept that work of Jesus on our behalf, then we can receive the second part of the verse. It tells us we have resurrected life with Jesus. We not only identify ourselves with Jesus in death but also in resurrection! That doesn't mean you are perfect, or can walk through walls, or ascend into heaven... at least not yet. However you are being transformed by living with Him, in Him, and He in you (John 14:23).

I have seen and read of a few saints that really get this truth. When you ask them where they get the strength to minister like they do in their old age, they just matter of fact respond that it is the life of Jesus in them. He is their strength. I've never heard it said in pride or in a condescending way. It's just the way it is. They live with the constant reality of Jesus in them being their life (6:4). They live with Him in His resurrected life.

I'd like to be there. I have to keep reminding myself that He lives in me and that I'm just to let myself be His instrument. There are those moments when I realize it is true. What joy and peace those times bring! Paul is promising us in this verse that if we have died with Him we also live with Him. Don't be discouraged or give up. Persevere until your experience is that of newness of life moment by moment (Colossians 3:10). Don't fall for some new set of dos and don'ts. Life is meant to be an exciting adventure in grace led continually by the Holy Spirit.

⁹ We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. ¹⁰ For the death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God. Did you ever consider that Jesus could not have been killed if He had not taken our sins upon Him? The wages of sin is death (6:23). Death is the curse that accompanies sin, and Jesus never sinned (1Peter 2:22). He never needs to bear our sin again, because it was a one-time act for all people throughout time (Hebrews 7:27). Don't read the passage as saying "once and for all", though that is true. He died one time for the sin of all mankind. He conquered death and rose from the grave. He never needs to do that again. He will never need to bear our sins again (Hebrews 6:4-6). It is finished!

Now Jesus' life is lived to God. The resurrected life is done dealing with sin and is now only to be in the Father, loving Him, serving Him, rejoicing in Him, worshiping Him, and enjoying Him forever. And here is Paul's application of that truth. *¹¹ So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.* Since we are raised with Christ, we should, no, we *must*, consider ourselves dead to sin and alive to God in

Commented [notes10]: Hebrews 8:5 (ESV)

⁵ They serve a copy and shadow of the heavenly things. For when Moses was about to erect the tent, he was instructed by God, saying, "See that you make everything according to the pattern that was shown you on the mountain."

Commented [notes11]: Romans 5:19 (ESV)

¹⁹ For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous.

Commented [notes12]: John 14:23 (ESV)

²³ Jesus answered him, "If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.

Commented [notes13]: Romans 6:4 (ESV)

⁴ We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.

Commented [notes14]: Colossians 3:10 (ESV)

¹⁰ and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator.

Commented [notes15]: Romans 6:23 (ESV)

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

Commented [notes16]: 1 Peter 2:22 (ESV)

²² He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth.

Commented [notes17]: Hebrews 7:27 (ESV)

²⁷ He has no need, like those high priests, to offer sacrifices daily, first for his own sins and then for those of the people, since he did this once for all when he offered up himself.

Commented [notes18]: Hebrews 6:4-6 (ESV)

⁴ For it is impossible, in the case of those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, and have shared in the Holy Spirit,

⁵ and have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the age to come,

⁶ and then have fallen away, to restore them again to repentance, since they are crucifying once again the Son of God to their own harm and holding him up to contempt.

Christ Jesus. Consider (*logizomai*) is in the present imperative. Paul is telling us to always think or reason this way. Now if it was something that was a sudden supernatural change, we would not have to consider it. But because we often find our old nature is trying to bang the nails out of its coffin (Galatians 5:17), we must constantly remind ourselves that we are dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus. In Jesus we have the power to refuse the old nature's demands. We might have to sit on his coffin sometimes to keep him from busting out, but in Christ Jesus we can do that if we choose to. That is reigning in life, or as he said earlier in this chapter, walking in newness of life.

As we mature spiritually it becomes easier, but we must never let our guard down. It's the brothers that thought they arrived that came crashing down in humiliation (1Corinthians 10:12). Never underestimate the power of the flesh, but also realize the "much more" power of Christ in you is always greater (5:17). We must choose to which we will yield. Just as a side note, Paul is telling us we are alive to God in this chapter, that we have life in Christ in the next chapter, and life in the Spirit in chapter eight.

¹² Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions. The key words here are "let" and "reign". Your mortal body has passions in the first Adam nature that can control you like a master controls a slave. It will make you to do things that are risky to the point of self-destruction. James tells us that once desire has conceived it gives birth to sin and sin when it grows up brings forth death (James 1:15). That is the inevitable life of the unredeemed. That death takes all kinds of forms, broken relations, addictions, alienation, depression, and more, but ultimately it is separation from God who is our life (Ephesians 4:18). But if you are in Christ, you have the power to refuse to allow it to reign. **You can choose to let Christ reign in you instead.**

Let me give you a G rated illustration that happened to me the day before I wrote the sermon. I had to make a trip to Cottonwood on my free day. I saw an older man on the side of the road trying to get a spare tire out of his trunk. I remembered the verse that if we someone in need and don't have compassion, how can we say the love of God is in us (1John 3:17)? My soul argued with my spirit about my time, and then I gave in and reluctantly turned around. My selfishness wanted to ignore the person in need. When I got back to the spot, what appeared to be a professional had already arrived and was putting on the spare tire. It wasn't about me helping him. It was about whether or not I was willing to give my time to the LORD and those in need (James 1:27).

Later in the evening someone really needed help. I remembered the lesson from earlier in the day and though I wasn't happy about giving my evening away (it shouldn't be my evening but the Lord's), the Lord blessed me with a huge answer to prayer. I didn't let

Commented [notes19]: Galatians 5:17 (ESV)
¹⁷ For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do.

Commented [notes20]: 1 Corinthians 10:12 (ESV)
¹² Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall.

Commented [notes21]: Romans 5:17 (ESV)
¹⁷ For if, because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ.

Commented [notes22]: James 1:15 (ESV)
¹⁵ Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death.

Commented [notes23]: Ephesians 4:18 (ESV)
¹⁸ They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart.

Commented [notes24]: 1 John 3:17 (ESV)
¹⁷ But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him?

Commented [notes25]: James 1:27 (ESV)
²⁷ Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world.

sin reign in my mortal body, well, at least not fully. I'm sharing a victory and a failure. It was a victory in that I eventually obeyed. It was a failure in that I had a selfish attitude that my time was my own and didn't instantly obey. You see, our attitude should also to be under the reign of the Spirit of God within us (Philippians 2:5).

¹³ Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness. Paul will say the same thing again later in the chapter because it is such an important point. Our members include all that makes up our being, our senses, our limbs, our mouth, our mind, our attitude, our desires, and everything else that makes us who we are.

Paul is saying this in a way that should grab our attention. Don't offer any part of that which God has given you as a tool of unrighteousness. Don't let your mind dwell on thoughts that are evil. Don't allow your lips to utter gossip or slander. Don't let your feet take you where you should not go. Don't let your eyes feast on what is not for you. But no one can come up with a long enough list of don'ts. **If we are led by the Spirit we won't allow any part of us to be a tool for what is unrighteous.** Putting it that way puts all the questionable actions out of bounds.

You may not be sure if something is allowable or not, but we can usually give an answer if someone asks if a thing is righteous or not. That sets the bar pretty high! Does it glorify God? Is it wholesome? Is it the leading of the flesh or the Spirit?

If we are to consider ourselves as dead to sin and alive to God, then the questionable activities or thoughts need to be set aside. I'm free to do them, but, Paul says, "I will not be enslaved by them (1Corinthians 6:12)." Instead give your mind and lips and attitude and strength to God as instruments of righteousness! Think on what is good and lovely and praise worthy (Philippians 4:8). Consider all your time as on loan to you from God, so that when He asks for some of it you'll have a good attitude about surrendering it. Use your speech to edify and share the Word along with testimonies of the goodness of God. Recognize those special gifts God has given you and let them be used to their fullest potential for His glory.

Paul says we should present ourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life. Have you ever consciously done that? Have you considered this new life your new chance to do things as you should have done them? We hear stories of people that have miraculously survived a close call with death and their lives were transformed because they saw their life as being on overtime. There is no reason that you can't feel the same since you died with Christ and have been raised with Him.

Have you said, "Here is all of me. LORD, You gave me the freedom to do as I will with my person, and I will to give it to You for Your use as You see fit (Isaiah 6:8). Help me

Commented [notes26]: Philippians 2:5 (ESV)

⁵ Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus,

Commented [notes27]: 1 Corinthians 6:12 (ESV)

¹² "All things are lawful for me," but not all things are helpful. "All things are lawful for me," but I will not be enslaved by anything.

Commented [notes28]: Philippians 4:8 (ESV)

⁸ Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.

Commented [notes29]: Isaiah 6:8 (ESV)

⁸ And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" Then I said, "Here am I! Send me."

to think on Your word and Your will. Help my attitude to always be joyful and ready to serve at a moments notice. Help me to surrender my time to be disciplined as You see fit. Have Your way in me at all times. I am Yours!" Present yourself as a present to God. Scary? Yes indeed, but Paul says it is our reasonable act of worship (Romans 12:1). After all, everything we have comes from Him. If you are like me, you've wasted enough time living as you please. Why not give it to God and see where He leads? Let the adventure begin. Have the faith of Abraham that obeys not knowing where you are going (Hebrews 11:8).

¹⁴ For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace. Sin once had dominion over your life. It was a hard taskmaster, constantly demanding more. And the satisfaction we got from that life was short lived and empty. In fact, it often left us with a hangover in more ways than one.

But now you have died to the Law. It was nailed to the cross (Colossians 2:14). We are no longer living by a list of does and don'ts but in the intimate fellowship of Christ in us. Instead of being directed by letters written in stone, we are led by a heart of flesh that has fellowship with the Holy Spirit (Ezekiel 11:19). Instead of the drudgery of religion, it is the joy of relationship. Instead of the everyday predictable, it is the adventure of grace that will take us we know not where (John 3:8).

It all begins when we identify with Christ in His death. Have you accepted Christ taking the punishment you deserved? That is the reason we love Him so. We see the love that paid the ultimate price (John 15:13). The more we see of our own sinful nature, the more we appreciate what He did for us.

Then you identify with Him in His resurrection and walk in newness of life. Sin no longer has the power to make you do what your body once demanded. You can say no! You can refuse to let your mind and actions be controlled by that old nature. Instead the adventure of doing as He leads, directed by His Spirit, moment by moment can be the new normal.

As you walk with Him and feast on His word, you grow spiritually day by day until that perfect day when you see Him face to face. Living in Christ each day is the only path to real fruitfulness for His kingdom. You'll be surprised at some of the unpredictable places and opportunities He brings your way. After all, He has prepared good works in advance for you to do (Ephesians 2:10). How will you know them when you see them if you aren't living in Him? Let's get going on this grandest of adventures, living in Christ and Christ Jesus living in you.

Questions

- 1 Why is there suffering in the world?
- 2 How do we die with Christ?

Commented [notes30]: Romans 12:1 (ESV)
¹ I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.

Commented [notes31]: Hebrews 11:8 (ESV)
⁸ By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going.

Commented [notes32]: Colossians 2:14 (ESV)
¹⁴ by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross.

Commented [notes33]: Ezekiel 11:19 (ESV)
¹⁹ And I will give them one heart, and a new spirit I will put within them. I will remove the heart of stone from their flesh and give them a heart of flesh,

Commented [notes34]: John 3:8 (ESV)
⁸ The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit."

Commented [notes35]: John 15:13 (ESV)
¹³ Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends.

Commented [notes36]: Ephesians 2:10 (ESV)
¹⁰ For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

- 3 Will Jesus ever die again?
- 4 How do we experience new life?
- 5 How did sin reign over you?
- 6 Have you presented your members to God?
- 7 Have you heard Isaiah 6:8?
- 8 Who are you serving?
- 9 What is new life like?
- 10 Why is it an adventure?