

Breaking the Power of Cancelled Sin Identity Matters: Uncovering the Real Me

Romans Series
PBC 2025

Text: Romans 6:1-11

What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound?² By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it?³ Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?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.⁵ For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his.

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.⁷ For one who has died has been set free from sin.⁸ Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him.

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.

¹¹ So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

Introduction

As we come to this section of Romans, we are beginning a small but important series titled “Breaking the Power of Cancelled Sin.”

The heart of this series centers on three undeniable realities that apply to every one of us who has been justified by faith in the finished work Jesus accomplished when he took our place on the cross and made a permanent atonement for our sins by dying in our stead!

1. We have been born again into a new creation and made new in Christ, with His righteousness imputed to us. This means we are no longer under the Law's condemnation and have been rescued from the power

of death. Death has lost its sting, and the grave has lost its victory over us because of our identification and association with Christ.

2. We have been joined to Christ in such a way that what happened to Him happened to us, and what was granted or promised to Him has also been given to us! We have been rescued and delivered from the kingdom of darkness and given permanent standing in the realm of grace, with ongoing access to the One who sits on the throne of that realm – the sovereign, wise, just, and loving God who created, rules, and will one day restore all of creation!
3. Though we are no longer under the dominion of sin and we abhor its wicked nature and detest its destructive practices, we continue to struggle with the practice of certain sins in our lives to the point that some of them still hold us in bondage in this life.

And the question we all want to know is this: How do I break the power of canceled sin that it seems to continue to have over me in this life?

Paul's answer to that question is in these three chapters – the single most concentrated place in our Bible where God gives instruction on our sanctification – how to win the war against ongoing sin in our lives!

Last week, we surveyed the contours of these chapters to get the lay of the land before we set out to hike the trail. This morning, there is one more thing we need to do to make sure we have everything we need to navigate this section of Romans well: we need to understand who we are and what has happened to us.

We met ourselves in Romans 1:18-3:20 and discovered some very difficult truths about our identity as guilty sinners, hostile to God and disobedient to His moral and ethical will for our lives. But something amazing happened in Romans 3:21-5:11 – we were justified. In other words, the me who shows up in Romans 3:21-5:11 is not the same me who stood

before the judgment bar of God in Romans 1:18-3:20, condemned to death by the Law and under God's wrath.

How God delivered me from condemnation and from death when He justified me with an imputed righteousness obtained through faith is the story told in Romans 5:12-21!

Put differently, by the time I reach the end of chapter 5, my whole identity has changed! The Old Me has died, and a New Me has been reborn in its place. And if we are going to make sense of what Paul talks about in Romans 6-8, we need to know who we really are and what our new identity means for the battle we are in against sin!

Perhaps the best way to think about this is to view our lives as a story that God is writing in two parts – “The Story of Me: A Biography told in two Volumes.”

I. Volume One: The Old Me (Who I was before Christ)

Romans 6:6 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.

There are five important questions we must answer about our “old self”:

A. Where was my location? (Romans 5:14, 17, 21)

We lived in a fallen realm that is:

- Under the curse of God (Romans 8:20);
- Under the power and influence of the Devil, the god of this world (Eph. 2:2; 2 Cor. 4:4).
- Ruled by three ruling authorities: sin, death, and the Law (Rom. 5)
- Aligned as a system hostile to God (world), operating and being driven by a wisdom from below (with a worldly worldview and a corrupt operating system). (Ephesians 2:1-3)

- Driven by the insatiable lust of the eyes, lust of the flesh, and pride of life (1 John 2:16).

B. What was my Situation? (Romans 5:1-21)

- Born into Adam's family – united to him by birth
- Afflicted with Adam's sinful nature; guilty of Adam's Sinful activity
- Under Adam's Condemnation
- Bound by Sin's Power and enslavement
- Destined for Death in this life and wrath in the life to come

C. What was my Condition?

- Dead in Trespass and Sin (Eph. 2:1)
- Blind to the Gospel (2 Cor. 4:4)
- Hostile to God (Rom. 5:10; 8:7; Col. 1:21)
- Bereft of Hope and without help (Eph 2:12)
- Marked by Mortality (Rom. 5:12)

D. What was my Constitution?

- ***Old Man / Old Self*** – my identity before salvation (Rom. 6:6) had an internal nature that was totally depraved and sinful (Rom. 7:18).
- ***Sin Nature*** – Sin rules and demands to be obeyed (Rom. 6); it dwells in me and is identified as the flesh (Rom 7:17-18, 25; 8:3-8). This sin nature had external impulses toward the world and internal desires that are contrary to the law of God (Rom 1:28-32), and it used my body to fulfill them (Rom 6:12-13; 19).
- ***Mortal Body*** over which Sin reigned and made to obey its lusts (Romans 6:12-13; 7:24; 1 John 2:16))

E. What was my vocation?

- Sold Under Sin – under its Dominion (Rom. 3:9; 7:14)!
- Slaving for Sin – using my body as a tool/weapon for sinning (Rom 6:6, 17, 20)!

The Old Me was all about me! If God was in the picture, he was there to serve me. My life was marked by one of three things: Hedonism, Self-Righteous Moralism, or Religious Legalism.

II. Volume Two: The New Me (Who I am after Christ)

2 Cor 5:17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new (a whole new kind) has come.

A. What is my new Location? Where was I reborn? (Rom 5:2, 20-21)

- A new realm ruled by Grace and Life (Rom 5:20-21).
- A new kingdom governed by Christ, marked by righteousness, flavored by peace (Rom 5:1, 17, 21)
- The curse has been lifted (*"the old has passed away;"* 2 Cor 5:17)
- The Law of God (Word of God) has been given life-giving power (Psalm 19:7; 119:93; Mt. 4:4; John 6:63).

B. What is my new Situation?

- Dead to the authority of Sin (Rom 6:2, 7, 14)
- Dead to the condemnation of the Law (Rom 7:4)
- Rescued from the power of Death (Rom 6:8-10)
- Love by God (Rom 5:5)
- Reconciled to God (Romans 5:10-11)

C. What is my new Condition?

- United to Christ (Rom 5:5)
- Justified by Christ (Rom 5:1; 16)
- Safe from God's Wrath (Rom 5:9-10)
- Confident in the hope of future glory (Rom 5:2)
- Joyful and triumphant in this present, temporal life of suffering (Rom 5:3)
- Alive to God (Rom 6:11)

D. What is my new Constitution?

- New Man that is being strengthened and glorified day by day (2 Cor 3:18; 4:16).
- New Nature created after God in righteousness (Eph. 4:24).

- Mortal Body that is destined for immortality and that should be presented to God as a living sacrifice that is entirely dedicated and completely acceptable to God (Rom 12:1-3).

E. What is my new Vocation?

- Using my body to serve God as an instrument of righteousness (Rom 6:12-14).
- Using my life as an ambassador-priest to bring an acceptable offering to God – Gentiles who have become obedient to the gospel (Rom 15:15-16; 2 Cor 5:18-21).

My New Nature is all about Him! God is at the center of my life, and I live to serve Him in all my ways for all my days. My life is marked by loving sonship, joyful service, and living sacrifice!

III. The Explanation: What, how, when, and why did this happen to me?

How did I go from my “Old Man/Self” to my “New Man/Self”?

A. What Happened

- I was reborn from above by water and the Spirit (John 3:3-5; Ezek. 36:25) into the family of the Second Adam (Rom 5:17-19).
- I was taken out of the old realm and placed into the new realm (Rom 5:2).
- I was ***enlivened*** so that I am alive forever (Eph 2:4; Rom 5:21), and ***enlightened*** so that I know and embrace the truth about God through His Word (2 Cor 4:6).
- I am no longer a debtor (obligated) to the flesh; but given freedom and adoption by the Spirit (Rom 8:12).

B. How it Happened

- I died to Sin and Death through the Law – I was put to death (Gal 2:19; Rom 6:2, 5-11; Rom 7:4* - “put to death/made to die”).
- I rose again and am alive to God (Gal 2:20-21; Rom 6:8-11).

- I was permanently united to Christ (union with Christ) so that what happened to Him happened to me and what He won was also won for me (Gal 2:20-21; Rom 6:5)!

C. When it Happened (Rom 6:1-11)

- At His death (Rom 6:3, 5-6)
- At His resurrection (Rom 6:4, 5-11)
- When I repented and believed and was justified from sin (Rom 6:7).
- When the Spirit Baptized me into Christ (Rom 6:3; 1 Cor 12:13).

D. Why it Happened

- To walk in a new kind of life (Rom 6:4)
- To defeat the rule of sin over my body (Rom 6:6 – to bring to the power of sin to nothing).
- As the firstfruits of God and His kingdom.

IV. The Complication: Why do I still struggle?

Romans 7:18–20 *For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out. ¹⁹ For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing. ²⁰ Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me.*

Romans 8:5–8 *For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. ⁶ For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. ⁷ For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. ⁸ Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.*

Galatians 5:16–24 *But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. 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. ¹⁸ But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. ¹⁹ Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, ²⁰ idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, ²¹ envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. ²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. ²⁴ And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.*

- My Flesh uses my body
- To fulfill the strong desires
- That it gets from its sinful tastes (lust of the flesh), its sinful desires (lust of the eyes), and its prideful arrogance (pride of life)
- To do impurity, unrighteousness, and lawlessness
- The fruit of which I used to revel in, but of which I am **now deeply ashamed** (Rom 6:20-21).

V. The Implications: What does this all mean for me, and how does it help me win the ongoing war against sin?

A. I must really understand and comprehend what Paul means when he claims that:

- I am no longer sold under sin, so sin has no more dominion over me (Rom 6:14 – indicative voice stating a fact).
- I have paid the Law’s penalty (in Christ) so the Law no longer condemns me – but neither can it help me (Romans 6:14; 7:4-6).
- I am a living part of a new creation order created in righteousness, and my inner man now has completely new desires, tastes, and values (2 Cor. 5:17).
- I have an inner power that strengthens me to obey, that uses my conscience to warn me, and graciously convicts me so that I repent and don’t remain in the bondage to the power of sins that were cancelled at the cross (Romans 8:1-11).

B. I must really believe and be convinced of these things.

C. And I must truly act on them and apply them every day in the battle going on in my body against my flesh, sin, the world, and the devil!

And the way that I act on them is what I choose to do with my body when my flesh calls on it to fulfill a sinful desire! I will either respond to my flesh and present my body to my old master (who has no

authority over me) for sinning, OR I will respond to the Spirit and present my body for righteousness. ***In other words, I now serve (slave) after righteousness with my body!***

Conclusion

How does God bring this kind of sanctification about in me so that it happens not just theoretically and theologically but practically and personally?

Paul's answer is:

1. You need to understand certain things accurately and thoroughly
2. You need to believe those things with an unshakeable conviction
3. You need to apply those things to your life with an unwavering and unflinching commitment

A. You must engage in the struggle all day, every day!

Romans 6:17-19 But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed,¹⁸ and, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness.¹⁹ I am speaking in human terms, because of your natural limitations. For just as you once presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness leading to sanctification.

B. You must rest in the Spirit's presence and depend on His power!

Romans 8:9-11 You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him.¹⁰ But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness.¹¹ If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you.

Ben Franklin's Epitaph

*The Body of
B. Franklin, Printer,
Like the Cover of an old Book,
Its Contents torn out,
And Stript of its Lettering & Gilding,
Lies here, Food for Worms.*

*But the Work shall not be lost,
For it will as he believ'd
appear once more
In a new and more elegant Edition
Corrected and improved
By the Author*