GRACE COMMUNION INTERNATIONAL

Living and Sharing the Gospel

Weekly bulletin
June 27, 2021

Because of the Covid-19 pandemic, we will continue to have worship services online through the Zoom platform, until further notice. You are welcome to worship with us on Sunday at 10:30 a.m. If you need information about how to join with us for worship services, please contact Mr. Vautour, minister. The contact information is at the bottom of the bulletin.

If you have friends or acquaintances who want to join in the worship service, please do not hesitate to share with them the Zoom links to join with us in the worship our great God.

Please note that audio and video sermons and other materials are also available on our local website at www.gcinewbrunswick.org
THE OLIVET DISCOURSE -- SIGNS OF THE END – an excellent study of Matthew 24 and 25 has been posted on our local website. Other articles are also posted for your benefit and study.
Last article posted on our local website under Featured Articles: Study of Romans up to chapter 6 inclusively.

Offerings:

1. You can make your donation by cheque; Address: Grace Communion International- Canada, Suite 203A, 2121 Airport Dr., Saskatoon, SK 7SL 6W5.
2. You can call 1-306-653-2705 (GCI Canada main phone number) and make credit card donation.
3. E-transfers to khorwood@gcicanada.ca (her full name is Kathleen Horwood). There is no need for a password as the donations are deposited directly into the GCI banking account. In the subject or message line, write the name of your church and your member number. Most banks send an immediate confirmation of successful deposit. If you do not know your member number, please write to Mr. Vautour at the email address below.
4. You can also donate to our GCI Canada website at Grace Communion International - Canada (gcicanada.ca); click on Donate. In the donation box detail, and under **Fund**, make sure you click on General. In the message box, make sure that you identify your church and your church member number. If you don't know your church number, please contact Mr. Vautour.

Prayer Meeting: Our next prayer meeting will be on **Thursday, July 8th at 7:30 PM**. We plan to resume the monthly Bible study and prayer meeting in August.

To see specific prayer requests from the church, please go to www.gcinewbrunswick.org–under "Members Only" and type the password. If you do not know the password, please contact Mr. Vautour.

Let us pray according to God's will and as per his instructions**: "1 ¶ First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgiving be made for all people, 2 for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. 3 This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, 4 who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth." (1 Ti 2:1-4 ESV)**

- Canada is facing a large crisis as a result of the finding of hundreds (a number which will probably grow to be in the thousands) of unmarked graves of indigenous children. These unmarked graves are being found around residential schools.
- Pray for all the grieving parents, grandparents and families who are continuing to suffer as a result of these grim findings.
- This is creating a crisis of faith for many. Please pray that many will turn to God and place their faith and trust in Jesus Christ.
- Please pray that many from the diverse ethnicities living in Canada will learn to discern the difference between true Christianity and religion.

FOCUSED ON HOPE
GRACE COMMUNION INTERNATIONAL

You can now register online for the **2021 DENOMINATIONAL CELEBRATION (NOW VIRTUAL) AT** GCI Denominational Celebration: Register Now! – GCI Update Everyone is encouraged to attend. Dates: Friday July 23 to Sunday July 25.

Grandparenting and Cross-generational Ministry (From www.gci.org)

Sharing faith, hope and love with grandchildren and other young members.

By Bob Regazolli, Grandad and Pastor, Australia

One of the joys we experience in our local congregation is seeing the evidence of cross-generational care in children's and youth ministry. Parents and grandparents are actively involved in the various classes. Some grandparents bring their grandchildren to services. The children's parents don't attend, but when asked, they are glad for their children to attend church with their grandparents.

It is a blessing to see the children learning with their grandparents (by birth or by church adoption) about the life of Jesus as we celebrate the great events in his life as highlighted in the Christian calendar. Children delight in looking forward to Jesus' birth during the Advent season as adults make the story applicable to life. The Christmas season provides a foundational point from which to learn about Jesus' life and ministry, leading to a focus on why he died and how he rose from the dead. During the Easter season the children (and their teachers/mentors/grandparents) look forward to celebrating his ascension and the coming of the Holy Spirit in the Pentecost season. Then through Ordinary Time we focus on why there is a church, that Jesus will return and that we will live forever in the new heaven and the new earth. All of this learning in a cross-generational platform leads to the building of relationship.

Looking at some research conducted by the Barna organisation about where teens receive spiritual guidance and encouragement, it impressed upon me how influential the love and care of grandparents can be across the generations. https://www.barna.com/research/disciple-next-generation/

In the survey, teens were asked to identify which family members or extended household members shared their faith. The mother came out first in all categories, with a grandparent second in the following areas: encourages me to go to church, encourages me in other ways, talks with me about

God's forgiveness, teaches me about the Bible. In responding to the question about who teaches them about traditions, the grandparent was first.

Not all grandparents are able to include their grandchildren in children's church. But they can teach in other environments. We know what is most significant is having a loving and open relationship with grandchildren. We also understand what is to be passed on. We have been blessed by God so that we can share his blessings with others. Let's look at some of the ways in which grandparents bless their grandchildren.

Pray for them: The most important role we all share in cross-generational care is praying for one another. One of our pastors was relating how he asked each child in his congregation to write their goals for the new school year on a piece of paper. With the parent's consent to include the child's name, these were distributed amongst adults, so each child was prayed for. But prayer for a particular child was only the beginning. Relationships were formed as the adults showed a genuine interest in "their child" throughout the year. This might include phone calls and messages throughout the week. Whether the little ones are able to attend church or not, God hears our prayers for them.

Mentor them: Mentoring relationships are beneficial for all concerned. The children, in developing relationships with the older generation, can benefit from their wisdom and experience. Likewise, older generations benefit from the life and enthusiasm of younger ones, as they learn from them. Younger people are generally much faster in picking up new technologies, and the world they are growing up in is vastly different from that of our childhood and youth. The listening adult is important for them.

Believe in them: In another survey by the Barna group, it was found that only one in three of the young adults surveyed said that they felt *"deeply cared for by those around me, or that "someone believes in me."* Having a relationship with grandparents (real or adopted) whose lives reflect faith, hope and love can mean much to a young person who may be struggling with the challenges of life in the 21st century.

As parents and grandparents, let's take every opportunity to tell our family members and the church youth we have adopted how much we love them. Let's make sure our conversations are positive and uplifting. Let the younger generation see that we are people of hope. Bless the children with expressions of love and encouragement, with gifts, and the loving kindness which is typical of many grandparents.

Be there for them: Pay attention to birthdays, holidays, and school events. Show up if possible. When opportunity arises, make the most of family traditions and take time to enjoy meals together. As we celebrate the Christmas and Easter seasons, especially with family meals and activities associated with those days, we are helping families instil these seasons as part of the cycle of life.

Have fun: Enjoy music together, especially with the pre-school-age children. Good music adds much to their development and growth. Sing along with the videos and join in with the actions. Where children can be exposed to Christian songs, those words will remain with them throughout life. How many of us remember "*Jesus loves me this I know"?* The children in our Congolese congregation all know the words to the songs sung in their mother tongue.

Grandparents — with the parent's blessing — often have a wonderful opportunity to invite their grandchildren to participate in the life of the church. Children's church provides such a valuable opportunity for them to build lasting friendships and learn from the Word of God in fun and creative ways. In a society where most are biblically illiterate, there is a great need to help our children learn about God and his unconditional love. Grandparents are often the ones who can fill these needs, doing so with great love and wisdom and bathed in much prayer. As a grandparent, I really appreciate the Psalm which expresses such care for the next generations:

“We will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord, his power, and the wonders he has done” (Psalm 78:4).

Romans 6:1-11 (series on Romans continued)
Slaves to Righteousness

In Romans 5, Paul says that Christ saved us even while we were sinners. We are saved by grace, not by keeping the law. He ends that chapter by saying, **“Where sin increased, grace increased all the more” (Romans 5:20)**. God’s grace is always larger than our sin.

In chapter 6, Paul deals with a possible objection: **“What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase?” (Romans 6:1).** If grace is so easy, should we bother to change our ways? Whenever the gospel is clearly presented, this question comes up. If all our sins are so easily forgiven, why worry about sin? Should we continue to sin?

“By no means!” Paul exclaims. We should avoid sin, even though our salvation does not depend on our success in quitting sin. Obedience has a different purpose. If faith in Christ led to automatic victory over all sin, then the question would not come up. But sin continues to be a reality we must deal with in our lives — a reality we must resist.

Death of the sinful self

In **verse 2**, Paul says: “**We died to sin. How can we live in it any longer?”** If we want to escape death, then we should also want to escape the cause of death — sin. But more importantly, when we believe in Christ, we become new people. In the language of Romans 5, we are no longer people of Adam, but now we are people of Christ Jesus. We are to live in him, to live in that mode rather than the way that Adam did it.

Paul explains this in **verse 3: “Don’t you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?”** We are baptized not just into the name of Christ — we are baptized into him and united with him. When we are identified with Adam, we get the death that Adam brought. When we are identified with Christ, we get the righteousness and life that he brought. When he died, we died, and when he was buried we were buried, and when he rose we also rose. We were with him, because he represented all of us.

We don’t tend to think of many people being “in” one person, but this is the way Paul is describing our salvation. All humanity was “in Adam” (**1 Corinthians 15:22**); now we are in Christ. And because we are united with Christ, his death counts as ours.

Paul draws this conclusion in **verse 4**: **“We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death…”** Baptism pictures not only a sharing in Jesus’ death, but also a sharing in his burial. But why is that significant for the question about sin?

Paul explains the purpose in the last part of verse **4: “…in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.”** In the same way that we died with Christ, we also rise with Christ into a new life, and this implies that we should live in a different way than we used to.

Although baptism symbolizes this burial and new life, Paul’s point does not depend on symbolism — it depends on our union with Jesus Christ. Not only does baptism unite us with Jesus in his death and burial, it also unites us with his resurrection and his life. The old self is dead, and yet we live — we have a new life, and that means a new approach to life.

Paul explains more in **verse 5: “For if we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection.”** Our union with Christ brings not only justification, the benefit of sharing in his death — it also brings the benefit of eternal life, of

sharing in his resurrection. This affects the way we live. We are to live in a way that reflects our future life with Christ.

Paul seems to be saying something like this: Why would anyone want to be joined to sin on the one hand, and joined to Christ on the other? Why would anyone want to live forever with righteousness, if they want to live in sin right now?

"For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with" (verse 6). Our old self was a descendant of Adam, a body under the power of sin, and that died on the cross. Our former identification with Adam is dead; we are no longer his, but we belong to Christ.

Here's why we were killed: **"...that we should no longer be slaves to sin — because anyone who has died has been freed from sin" (verses 6-7).** In the death of Christ, pictured in our baptism, our former selves were given the penalty of sin — death. Since the penalty has been paid, sin has no authority over us.

Paul is introducing new metaphors: slavery and freedom. Sin is not just something we do — it is a power that works against us, a power that enslaves us, a power we must be freed from. When we die with Christ, we are liberated from this evil slavemaster. We do not go on serving it, but we live a new way of life. We do not do it perfectly, but this is what the Christian life is for.

Alive to God

Paul now starts to emphasize life. **"If we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him" (verse 8).** We will live with him in the resurrection, but the question in this chapter is about life right now. So what is Paul's point?

"For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him. The death he died, he died to sin once for all" (verses 9-10). Jesus was not brought back to mortal life, as Lazarus was. Rather, Jesus was raised to immortal, imperishable life. Death had mastery over him for a short time, just as sin once had mastery over us. But Jesus has been freed from that power, and as we are united with Christ, we are freed from those powers, too.

Paul mentions the example of Jesus in the last part of **verse 10: "but the life he lives, he lives to God."** So we are to model our lives after Christ: **"In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus" (verse 11)**. This is the choice set before us. We can serve sin, or we can serve God.

When sin offers us something tempting, we are to answer: No, that's the old way, and I am supposed to die to that. That is not the kind of life that I want. If we believe we will live with Christ in the future, we should also believe that he has overcome the power of sin and death, and he liberates us from these powers in this life. We still sin, but it does not have the final authority in our lives. It cannot force us to sin. We are no longer slaves of sin.

This is not automatic, or Paul wouldn't have to tell us to do it. We must remind ourselves of who we are: children of the Savior, not children of the sinner. Just as Christ died to sin, we are to resist sin day by day, and this is the new life we are to live.

But the Christian life is not simply a matter of refusing sin, of playing dead. We are supposed to be alive — alive to God, because we are in Christ Jesus. Our desire to live for him should be very much alive!

Romans 6:12-23

"Therefore," Paul writes in verse 12, **"do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires."** Christians should not continue in sin. We do sin, but we can be confident that

God does not count our sins against us. Our salvation is not in jeopardy, but we are still commanded to obey God and to quit sinning.

There is a battle going on for our bodies. The old slavemaster, sin, has been defeated by Christ, but sin continues to attack us nevertheless. It tries to rule us, but we are not supposed to let it. Sin will take over as much as we allow, so we must resist it — not let it rule in our mortal bodies. Paul says: Don't give up. Fight against it. (If you really like sin, you are not going to enjoy eternal life with Jesus. You will experience it as eternal frustration instead.)

"Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness" (verse 13). There's a battle going on for control of your body. Will you let sin have its way, or will you let God have his way? You have been brought from death to life, so let God win, Paul says.

How do we do that? By giving him our bodies as tools or weapons he can use for righteousness. We shouldn't let sin use our body parts as tools to make us more wicked. Instead, we need to let God use our bodies as weapons of righteousness, as people who work for his kingdom.

"For sin shall not be your master, because you are not under law, but under grace" (verse 14). If we were under the authority of the law, then we would be condemned as sinners, and sin would have the final say in our lives. We would die. But we are not under the law, and not under its penalty. Death has been conquered, the power of sin has been broken, and the captives of sin have been set free!

Since we are under grace, sin is not our master. Going back to sin makes no more sense than running back to our old slavemaster, or for a prisoner who has been pardoned running back to his old jail cell. In grace and in salvation, sin is what we are getting away *from*.

If it weren't for grace, we would be condemned whether we tried to do right or not. If there were no grace, we might as well continue in sin, because our efforts wouldn't make any difference. So grace gives us the freedom to escape from sin and to live for righteousness. It makes no sense to seek salvation at the same time as seeking sin.

Slaves of righteousness

"What then?" Paul asks in **verse 15**. **"Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means!"** Paul is dealing with the same question, this time from a different angle. God does not want us to sin. We are supposed to obey God.

Paul then develops the analogy of slavery a bit further to make his point: **"Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to someone to obey him as slaves, you are slaves to the one whom you obey — whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness?" (verse 16).**

If you choose sin, you are enslaving yourself to a master who will beat you, make your life miserable, and work you to death. What's our choice? We are not completely independent — we are slaves of one power or the other. We have no choice about that, but we do have a choice about who will be our master. We can choose sin, or we can choose God. Why not choose to be a slave of obedience, a slave of doing right? The rewards are much better, not only in the next life but in this one, too.

The Romans had already made the right choice: "**But thanks be to God that, though you used to be slaves to sin, you wholeheartedly obeyed the form of teaching to which you were entrusted. You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness" (verses 17-18).** Obedience is a normal result of faith (**1:5**).

Why was Paul using the analogy of slavery? **"I put this in human terms because you are weak in your natural selves. Just as you used to offer the parts of your body in slavery to impurity and to ever-increasing wickedness, so now offer them in slavery to righteousness leading to holiness" (6:19).**

The Romans were weak — all Christians are, in their natural selves. The Romans were slaves of righteousness, and yet they needed to be exhorted to continue. We fight against sin as long as we live in our mortal bodies. It is an enemy that should be resisted. If we don't resist, it gets worse and worse — ever-increasing wickedness.

We want to be enslaved to doing good. That is because we are already saved, not because we are trying to earn our salvation. We do good works because they are good, because our Savior wants us to do good. When we do that, it gets better and better — righteousness leading to holiness.

"When you were slaves to sin, you were free from the control of righteousness" (verse 20). Each slavery has a form of freedom. When we sin, it might look like we are free from outside control, but we are really in slavery. **"What benefit did you reap at that time from the things you are now ashamed of? Those things result in death!" (verse 21).** Sin produces death, and we do not want to serve that kind of master. What looked like liberty, actually brought bondage.

"But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves to God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life" (verse 22). Now, we are no longer under sin's authority. We are freed from one power, but we are also under obligation: We are slaves to God. However, his benefits are infinitely better: holiness and eternal life.

The word *slavery* is an analogy — it is not a complete description of our relationship to God. Far more often, Scripture describes our relationship as one of dearly loved children, or as inheritors of great wealth. The word *slavery* is useful only insofar as it emphasizes our responsibility to obey.

In what sense is eternal life the "result" of obeying God? Paul would vigorously deny that our obedience causes our salvation — he clearly says that salvation is a gift, based on faith rather than works, on grace rather than payment. Here, Paul is simply making a contrast: obedience leads to holiness instead of shame, and to eternal life instead of death.

Why should we deny sin and obey God? **"For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (verse 23).** If we serve sin, we get wages — something we deserve: shame and death. But if we serve God, we get eternal life as a gift, something we didn't deserve. Choose life, Paul says. Let righteousness rule! Be alive in Christ, not dead in your sins.

Things to think about in Romans 6

Does the abundance of grace encourage sin? Does it give me any motivation to fight sin? (verse 1)
In what way is my life different now than before Christ? (verse 4)
Do I feel freed from sin? Do I have habits that enslave me? (verse 14)
In what way did Jesus die to sin? (verse 10). How can I count myself dead? (verse 11)
In what way am I "under" grace? (verse 14)
What sins enslave people today? Are there "respectable" sins?
Do I feel enslaved to righteousness? (verse 18)
Author: Michael Morrison, 2001, 2014

GCI principal website and Moncton Websites—*a) www.gci.org , b)* **www.gcinewbrunswick.org** *, c) www.gcicanada.ca;*
For a wealth of helpful articles about God, grace, and his plan for salvation, who we are, etc., please see the GCI.org website. Contact Information: Pastor's contact information: email— evautour47@outlook.com