



# e - Votion



Dear Friends,

Today I am reading Romans 6:1b-11:

*How should we respond to all of this? Is it good to persist in a life of sin so that grace may multiply even more? Absolutely not! How can we die to a life where sin ruled over us and then invite sin back into our lives? Did someone forget to tell you that when we were initiated into Jesus the Anointed through baptism's ceremonial washing, we entered into his death? Therefore, we were buried with Him through this baptism into death so that just as God the Father in all his Glory, resurrected the Anointed One, we too, might walk confidently out of the grave into a new life. To put it another way: If we have been united with Him to share in a death like his, don't you understand that we will also share in his resurrection? We know this: whatever we used to be with our old sinful ways has been nailed to His cross. So our entire record of sin has been canceled, and we no longer have to bow down to sin's power. A dead man, you see, cannot be bound by sin. But if we have died with the Anointed One, we believe that we shall also live together with Him. So we stand firm in the conviction that death holds no power over God's anointed, because he was resurrected from the dead never to face death again. When He died, He died to whatever power sin had, once and for all, and now he lives completely to God. So here is how to picture yourself now that you have been initiated into Jesus the Anointed: you are dead to sin's power and influence, but you are alive to God's rule.*

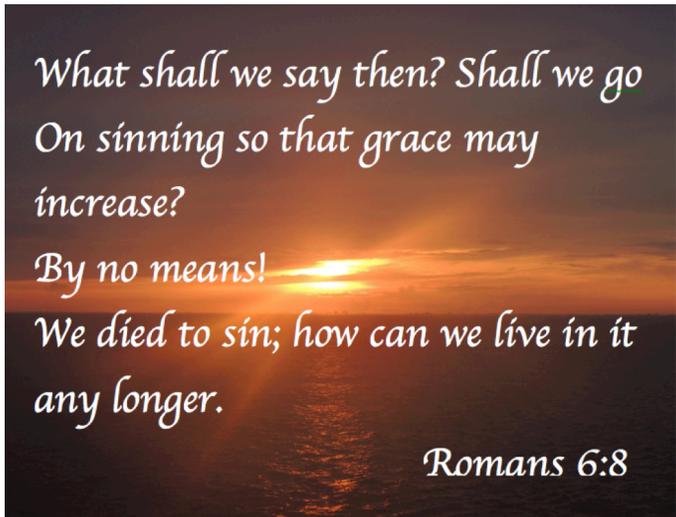
Does anyone remember the old song, "look what they've done to my song, Ma?" I looked it up on youtube and it took me back....The lyrics go like this:  
*Look what they've done to my song, Ma.  
Look what they've done to my song.  
It was the only thing I could do half right and its turning out all wrong, Ma.  
Look what they've done to my song.*

I wonder if that is how Paul felt in this scripture-- the responses to the good news of God's grace through Jesus Christ, has been switched out to a legal defense to justify doing anything and everything...

We are justified (made right with God, saved) by grace, not by works. We have been made right by the gift of God in Jesus Christ, and by that (God in Jesus Christ) we are moved from the kingdom of the damned to the kingdom of the redeemed ... so why don't we just go out and sin all over the place so we can experience MORE grace???

After all Paul--if our relationship with God is based on the promise of what God can do for us in Jesus Christ and isn't based on what WE do, and what WE accomplish, then it doesn't matter what we do, so we can do anything we want to???? The more we sin, the more grace we receive. All fun.. no responsibility. NO.....

Paul has to straighten this mess out. The promised grace of God in Jesus changes our relationship with God, but we too often forget that the grace of God changes us too. If we focus only on the grace of God to forgive everything we do that is evil, and we leave out the change in us, then we don't believe anyone can change. Whenever we hear the good news of the grace of God as FORGIVENESS and forgiveness only, and we don't see grace as healing of the sickness (sin) then that grace is "cheap grace." And when we hear only the forgiveness piece of grace, then it becomes a great opportunity to escape the consequences of our



*What shall we say then? Shall we go  
On sinning so that grace may  
increase?*

*By no means!*

*We died to sin; how can we live in it  
any longer.*

*Romans 6:8*

actions. We think that what WE do doesn't matter, because what matters is only what God did in Christ Jesus? "Look what they've done to your song, Paul..." The good news is used to remove us from the consequences of our actions, and as a message that what we do or don't do doesn't matter... we don't have any responsibility in the relationship...

NO....

its turning out all wrong...Its turning out all wrong if we think that we can sin more and more so that WE CAN MAKE GOD BE MORE GRACIOUS....

God's work in Jesus changes more than our relationship with God. We are missing the whole point of the work of God in Jesus if that is what we believe. Our relationship with God is changed but maybe even more significant is the change in us, and the changes in the people around us. God's action in Jesus promises to make us acceptable to God, and the acceptance brings us peace, and then even changes the things we want to do, and the things we don't want to do anymore. The legal analogy of our sins being forgiven is far less significant than the radical conversion of our hearts and the hungers in our soul that come about as a result of the changed relationship with God.

Can you imagine if you have just moved into a new Habitat for Humanity House? A house that you have worked on, but also a house that has been worked on and gifted to you by others. What a thrill to be able to be a part of such a wonderful thing! Would you EVER want to burn it down, just to re-experience the joy in a SECOND Habitat house???

NO!

You have not truly experienced the grace of God through Jesus Christ if you think this way. When God's promises come true for you in Jesus, the joy, the peace, the power bring to life new qualities, new joys, new realities of living that you don't even look back at that old song!!! :)

#### PRAYER REQUESTS:

Please pray for Jane Eddy,  
Sharon Cradic and her family,  
Betty Speer fell recently, doing ok.  
Belle Crowder fell leaving church Sunday, doing ok  
Edna Johnson  
others on our prayer list  
the kick off of the new worship service THE BRANCH, Sunday.  
Folks traveling.

#### CALENDAR AND ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Thursday June 19 7 pm Communications Pillar  
Tuesday June 24 Trustees  
Wednesday June 25 Grace Team

Do you know young people (we are all young!) who might be looking for a church/worship service? Invite them to either of our services? Witness to Christ is what we exist to do: make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world!

"Preach the gospel at all times and when necessary use words." St Francis of Assisi

Blessings,  
Jane Taylor  
First United Methodist Church  
Johnson City TN