

ii) When did this event happen? Some have argued that it is a continuous process (Sanday & Headlam), but the aorist suggests a single event (so Barrett). Is this event Christ's death or is it the conversion or baptism of the believer? The answer to this latter question is that it is probably both: this 'death to sin' was accomplished by Christ in his death, paying the penalty of sin, and by his resurrection, defeating its power. All of this is appropriated by the believer through faith and baptism (viewed as a single act). The Christian has died to sin with Christ and in Christ: for such a person, continuance in sin, while not a moral impossibility, is a moral incongruity (a phrase used by Donald McLeod).

πως how?

ἐτι still, yet, moreover

ζαω live, be alive

Verse 3

ἢ ἀγνοεῖτε ὅτι ὅσοι ἐβαπτίσθημεν εἰς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν εἰς τὸν θάνατον αὐτοῦ ἐβαπτίσθημεν;

ἀγνοεω not know, fail to understand

ἐβαπτίσθημεν εἰς Χριστὸν 'Baptised *into union with* Christ.' "Some interpreters think that Paul uses the language here in a metaphorical way. *Baptizo*, the Greek verb, means basically 'immerse in' (see e.g., Mark 10:38-39 and parallels, and particularly 1 Cor. 10:2), so Paul may simply be saying, in a vivid way, that believers have been 'immersed' in Christ. Other interpreters think Paul may be referring to 'baptism in the Spirit.' But Paul usually uses the verb *baptizo* to refer to Christian water baptism (1 Cor. 1:13-17; 12:13 [though debated]; 15:29; Gal 3:27). Moreover, the noun 'baptised' (Gk. *baptisma*) in verse 4 almost always has this meaning.

"With the great majority of commentators, then, we think Paul here refers to water baptism as the point in time at which people become joined with Christ." Moo.

ὅσος, η, ον as much as, whoever; pl. as many as, all

θανατος, ου m death

To be baptised into Christ is to be united with him in his death (to sin).

Verse 4

συνετάφημεν οὖν αὐτῷ διὰ τοῦ βαπτίσματος εἰς τὸν θάνατον, ἵνα ὡς περ ἠγέρθη Χριστὸς ἐκ νεκρῶν διὰ τῆς δόξης τοῦ πατρὸς, οὕτως καὶ ἡμεῖς ἐν καινότητι ζωῆς περιπατήσωμεν.

συνετάφημεν Verb, aor pass dep indic, 1 pl
συνθαπτομαι be buried together with

"Paul makes use of the picture suggested by the practice of baptism by immersion." Barrett. This view is contested by Murray and Moo but acknowledged by Wright.

ὡς περ as, even as, just as

ἠγέρθη Verb, perf pass indic, 3 s ἐγειρω
raise

νεκρος, α, ον dead

δοξα, ης f glory

That Christ was raised 'through the glory of the Father' is to be linked with the goal of 'glory' or 'glorification' which God had planned for him and for us (cf. Rom 8:18,30).

οὕτως thus, in this way

καινοτης, ητος f newness; κ. ζωης new life

περιπατεω walk, walk about, live

"Baptism stands for our whole conversion experience. By it, we have been brought into union with Christ and the powerful events of his redemptive work. The effects of these events are therefore at work in us. That means we now have the ability to 'live a new life.'" Moo.

"The Messiah's resurrection means that those who are 'in the Messiah' now stand, and must walk, on resurrection ground." Wright. We are called to live the life of the age to come because we have already entered into the life of that age.

Verse 5

Εἰ γὰρ σύμφυτοι γεγονάμεν τῷ ὁμοιώματι τοῦ θανάτου αὐτοῦ, ἀλλὰ καὶ τῆς ἀναστάσεως ἐσόμεθα·

σύμφυτος, ον sharing in, united with, at one with

γεγονάμεν Verb, perf act indic, 1 pl γινομαι
ὁμοιωμα, τος n likeness

ἀναστασις, εως f resurrection, raising up

"The underlying thought is again the inseparable conjunction of Christ's death and resurrection, and the inference drawn from this conjunction is that if we are united with Christ in his death we must be also in his resurrection. Disjunction in our case is as impossible as disjunction in his." Murray.

The future here indicates that "While we do indeed now enjoy new life, our 'being raised with Christ' [or at least its fullness] awaits his Parousia." Moo. Cf. Phil 3:20,21. Wright, however, argues that "We must ... take the second half of v. 5 as indicating present status and behaviour, not simply the future resurrection."

Verse 6

τοῦτο γινώσκοντες ὅτι ὁ παλαιὸς ἡμῶν
ἄνθρωπος συνεσταυρώθη, ἵνα καταργηθῇ τὸ
σῶμα τῆς ἁμαρτίας, τοῦ μηκέτι δουλεύειν
ἡμᾶς τῇ ἁμαρτίᾳ,

παλαιος, α, ον old, former

Barrett considers the 'old man' is Adam, or rather ourselves in union with Adam, and that the 'new man' is Christ, or rather ourselves in union with Christ (cf. Eph 4:22-25).

See also Donald MacLeod, "Paul's Use of the Term Old Man," *Banner of Truth Magazine*. Moo comments, "What I suggest is that 'old self' is a relational and corporate concept. It does not refer to a part of us or to a nature within us. Rather, it is Paul's way of describing our sinful condition as children of Adam. What is crucified, then, is that relationship. Our tie to Adam is dissolved; he and the sin and death he represents no longer dictate terms to us.

Moreover, if the 'old self' is Adam as corporate head of the human race, then the 'new self' is Christ, corporate head of the church...

Progress in the Christian life will come as we learn to live out the new relationship God has put us in. We belong to a new corporate structure or regime, dominated by Christ and not by Adam. That new relationship provides, in principle, for all the power we need to stop sinning and to live to God's glory." Wright similarly comments, "In baptism the whole person leaves the Adam-world for good, leaves it by death, a final one-way journey."

συσταυροομαι be crucified together (with someone else)

Cf. Gal 2:19.

καταργηθῇ Verb, aor pass subj, 3 s καταργεω
render ineffective, cancel, do away
with

σῶμα, τος n body

τὸ σῶμα τῆς ἁμαρτίας means not simply 'sinful body' but body sold under sin, characterised by sin.

μηκετι no longer

Wright comments, "We are still within the world of 5:21, the world of the two realms, sin and grace. Paul underlines the location of Christians on that map, emphasising which of the two countries they now live in and (more to the point) which of the two overlords now rightfully claims their allegiance."

Moo writes, "Since sin's power over us has been broken, we should reflect that new freedom in the way we live. Sin should no longer characterise us."

Verse 7

ὁ γὰρ ἀποθανὼν δεδικαίωται ἀπὸ τῆς
ἁμαρτίας.

ἀποθανων Verb, aor act ptc, m nom s

ἀποθνησκω die

δεδικαίωται Verb, perf pass indic, 3 s

δικαιοω justify

Christ's death paid the penalty of sin. We who have died in him are therefore justified from sin. Some think that Paul is here quoting a common proverb but Cranfield and Wright consider this unlikely. Wright comments, "We may compare Gal 2:19-20: 'I through the law died to the law.' Why, then, 'justified,' rather than 'freed'? The answer must be that, unlike most of his recent readers, Paul is able to keep the lawcourt metaphor still running in his mind even while expounding baptism and the Christian's solidarity in Christ. The Christian's freedom from sin comes through God's judicial decision. And this judicial decision is embodied in baptism."

Verse 8

εἰ δὲ ἀπεθάνομεν σὺν Χριστῷ, πιστεύομεν ὅτι
καὶ συζήσομεν αὐτῷ·

ἀποθνησκω die, face death, be mortal

συζαω live with, live together

The future tense looks to the Parousia but also encompasses the present life of the Christian which is a life co-lived with the risen Christ.

Verse 9

εἰδότες ὅτι Χριστὸς ἐγερθεὶς ἐκ νεκρῶν οὐκέτι
ἀποθνήσκει, θάνατος αὐτοῦ οὐκέτι κυριεύει·

εἰδότες Verb, perf act ptc, m nom pl οἶδα

ἐγειρω raise

νεκρος, α, ον dead

οὐκετι adv no longer, no more

"Jesus' resurrection was not a mere resuscitation, like those of Jairus's daughter, the widow's son at Nain, or Lazarus (Mark 5:21-34 and par.; Luke 7:11-17; John 11:1-44)... What happened at Easter involved the *transformation*, not merely the revival or resuscitation, of Jesus' body, so that it entered upon a new mode of physical existence, which Paul saw as the beginning and sign of the renewal of all creation (see particularly 1 Cor 15:50-57; Phil 3:20-21)." Wright.

θανατος, ου m see v.3

κυριεω have power over, rule over

He has conquered death and broken its reign.

Verse 10

ὁ γὰρ ἀπέθανεν, τῇ ἀμαρτία ἀπέθανεν ἐφάπαξ·
ὁ δὲ ζῆ, ζῆ τῷ θεῷ.

ἀπέθανεν Verb, aor act indic, 3s ἀποθνήσκω

In what sense did Christ die to sin? Many see it as a reference to Christ's atoning work but Moo, drawing the parallelism with v.2, argues that it is a reference to sin's *power*.

ἐφάπαξ adv. once for all time, at one time

Wright says, "Paul's meaning is that the Messiah came under the rule, the sovereignty, of sin and death; not that he himself sinned, but he came, as Paul says in 8:3, 'in the likeness of sinful flesh.' 'To die to sin' meant, for the Messiah, that he died under its weight, but that in doing so he came out from its domain. And this happened ἐφάπαξ (*ephapax*), once and for all. There is no room here for the idea that the Messiah, or more especially his people, still live with a foot in both camps, or with one foot in the grave and the other by the empty tomb. Jesus, the Messiah, died once and once only, and was thereafter finished with death."

ζῆ Verb, pres act indic, 3s ζαω live

Verse 11

οὕτως καὶ ὑμεῖς λογιζέσθε ἑαυτοὺς εἶναι
νεκροὺς μὲν τῇ ἀμαρτία ζῶντας δὲ τῷ θεῷ ἐν
Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ.

οὕτως thus, in this way
λογίζομαι reckon, count

Implies the existence of the thing being 'reckoned'; the indicative leads to an imperative. "Only by constantly (the Greek verb is in the present tense) looking at ourselves as people who really have died to sin and been made alive to Christ will we be able to live out the new status God has given us." Moo. Wright comments, "The 'reckoning' in question is to take place in the believing thought-processes of the Christian."

εἶναι Verb, pres infin εἶμι

Omitted by p⁴⁶ A D G

ζῶντας Verb, aor act ptc, m acc pl ζαω

What is true of Christ (v.10) is true of the Christian as one 'in him'. Hence any continuing in sin is contrary to the essence of the Christian – it is a 'moral incongruity'.

Some MSS ad τῷ κυρίῳ ἡμῶν after ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ. Metzger suggests this longer reading is a liturgical expansion, derived perhaps from 2:3.

6:1-11 Concluding Summary

Wright concludes this section as follows: "The point is this: on the map of 5:21, the Christian belongs in the second half, the kingdom of grace and righteousness, not in the first half, the kingdom of sin and death. Paul is well aware that sin remains powerful and attractive for the most well-trained Christian, and that physical death awaits all except those for whom the Lord's return comes first (see 1 Cor 9:26-7; 15:51-52). He is speaking of a different level of reality. If someone challenged him and said that sin and death were just as powerful to them as they had been before their coming to faith, he would reply that they had not yet considered the seriousness of their baptism; just as if someone claimed that, now they had been baptised, evil had no attraction whatever for them, he would no doubt reply that they had not yet considered the seriousness of sin. From his whole corpus of writings, we know that Paul was a realist, about himself, about his fellow Christians, about suffering, pain, depression, fear and death itself. These were not enemies he took lightly. But his entire argument in this chapter so far, which anticipates that of 8:31-39, is that the Christian, facing these enemies, stands already on resurrection ground. This is ultimately a truth about the Christian's Lord, the Messiah, but because of baptism it becomes a truth about the Christian himself or herself. 'Reckon yourselves,' calculate yourselves, count yourselves, 'dead to sin and alive to God in the Messiah, Jesus.' This is the full answer to the question of v.1."

Verses 12-14

These verses form a bridge between one half of the chapter and the other.

Verse 12

Μὴ οὖν βασιλευέτω ἡ ἀμαρτία ἐν τῷ θνητῷ
ὕμῶν σώματι εἰς τὸ ὑπακούειν ταῖς ἐπιθυμίαις
αὐτοῦ,

βασιλευω rule, reign

θνητος, η, ον mortal

σωμα, τος η see v.6.

ὑπακουω obey, be subject to

ἐπιθυμια, ας f desire, longing

Some MSS read αὐτῇ instead of ταῖς ἐπιθυμίαις αὐτοῦ. The TR has a conflate reading.

"The victory over sin that God has won for us in Christ is a victory that must be appropriated. Putting away those sins that plague us will be no automatic process, something that will happen without our cooperation. No, Paul insists, a determination of our own will is called for to turn what has happened in principle into actuality." Moo.

Wright comments, "If it is asked, as well it might be, what chance sin has got to rule, if the Christian has died to it, Paul's implicit answer here has to do with the sphere over which sin, though no longer enthroned, can exercise powerful attraction: the 'mortal body.' The Christian still possesses a body – that is, a whole person – which will die and, in terms of ethics, must be 'put to death' (8:13), since it still has desires which must not be obeyed. This 'mortal body' is not far from what Paul means by 'the flesh,' ... it is one is one of his ways of indicating the continuing ambiguity of the life of the Christian, an ambiguity that in no way takes back the trenchant and definitive statements made in vv. 2-11."

Verse 13

μηδὲ παριστάνετε τὰ μέλη ὑμῶν ὄπλα ἀδικίας τῆ ἁμαρτία, ἀλλὰ παραστήσατε ἑαυτοὺς τῷ θεῷ ὡσεὶ ἐκ νεκρῶν ζῶντας καὶ τὰ μέλη ὑμῶν ὄπλα δικαιοσύνης τῷ θεῷ.

μηδε nor, and not

παριστημι and παριστανω present

As a servant presenting himself to a master for his use.

μέλη Noun, nom/acc pl μελος, ους n

member, bodily part

ὄπλον, ου n weapon, tool

ἀδικια, ας f wrongdoing, evil, sin

ὡσει like, as

ὡσει can mean 'as if', i.e. pretending to be something that you really are not, but here it bears its other sense, 'as if (because that is what you really are)'.

νεκρος, α, ον see v.9

ζῶντας see v.11

δικαιοσυνη, ης f righteousness

The point is that you belong to God to serve him and not to serve sin – hence yield service to the one who is your Lord.

Verse 14

ἁμαρτία γὰρ ὑμῶν οὐ κυριεύσει, οὐ γὰρ ἐστε ὑπὸ νόμον ἀλλὰ ὑπὸ χάριν.

κυριευω see v.9

Note the future tense. In the future it is certain because it is already accomplished 'in Christ'; in the present it is therefore to be actualised.

οὐ γὰρ ἐστε ὑπὸ νόμον ἀλλὰ ὑπὸ χάριν.

Murray thinks that it is primarily the impotence of the law that is here in view. You are no longer subject to the broken power of the law whose dominion brought death. You live under Christ's reign of grace which gives life, cf. Jn 1:17.

Wright, however, argues that Paul's point here is consistent with his previous statement concerning the law in 3:21, 28; 4:15 and 5:20. "in the present context Paul's point is plain: those who belong to Christ, who have died and been raised in baptism, do not live in the Adam solidarity, and hence do not live under the law. This is exactly what we find in Gal 2:19: 'I through the law died to the law, that I might live to God.' The implication is striking. When we set the theological explanation of 6:14b alongside 6:14a, Paul is saying that, if one did live under the law, sin *would* indeed have dominion. That will take all of chap. 7 to explain."

Verses 15-23

The focus moves from freedom (vv. 1-14) to slavery. Once 'slaves to sin' (vv. 17,20), Christians are now 'slaves to righteousness' (v. 18), 'slaves to God' (v.22).

Verse 15

Τί οὖν; ἁμαρτήσωμεν ὅτι οὐκ ἐσμὲν ὑπὸ νόμον ἀλλὰ ὑπὸ χάριν; μὴ γένοιτο·

"The questions that open the two main sections in Romans 6 reveal the common theme Paul pursues: 'Shall we go on sinning that grace may increase?' (v.1); 'Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace?' (v.15). As the former question is sparked by what Paul said in 5:20 about the power of grace, so the question in 6:15 is stimulated by what he has just said at the end of verse 14. Proclaiming that believers have been transferred from the regime of the Mosaic law to the regime of grace may lead some Christians to think that sin does not matter. Indeed, the danger that believers will 'presume on grace' and not pursue a life of obedience to the Lord is an ever present danger in the Christian church." Moo.

Wright adds, "This question, like that of 6:1, is not confined to committing actual acts of sin. As the parallel with Gal 2:17 demonstrates, part of the point is that to come out from the sphere of Torah, for a Jew, meant that one was joining the 'sinners,' the ἁμαρτωλοὶ (*hamartoloi*), the lesser breeds without the law."

τι οὖν what then?

ἀμαρτανῶ sin, commit sin
γένοιτο see 6:2

Verse 16

οὐκ οἴδατε ὅτι ᾧ παριστάνετε ἑαυτοὺς δούλους
εἰς ὑπακοήν, δοῦλοί ἐστε ᾧ ὑπακούετε, ἦτοι
ἀμαρτίας εἰς θάνατον ἢ ὑπακοῆς εἰς
δικαιοσύνην;

παριστημι and παριστανῶ see v.13
δουλος, ου m slave, servant
ὑπακοη, ης f obedience
ὑπακουω obey, be subject to
ἦτοι or; ἦτοι ... ἢ either ... or
θανατος see v.3

εἰς θάνατον is omitted by a few MSS – it
would seem an accidental omission.

δικαιοσύνη see v.14

δικαιοσύνη would appear here not to have a
forensic sense but "in keeping with Old
Testament and Jewish usage, ... a moral sense:
conduct pleasing to God." Moo.

Paul highlights the illogicality of the idea that
the Christian's freedom from sin and death
relieves him/her from obligation to God.

Verse 17

χάρις δὲ τῷ θεῷ ὅτι ἦτε δοῦλοι τῆς ἀμαρτίας
ὑπηκούσατε δὲ ἐκ καρδίας εἰς ὃν παρεδόθητε
τύπον διδασχῆς,

χαρις, ιτος f grace, thanks
παρεδόθητε Verb, aor pass indic, 2 pl
παραδιδωμι hand over, pass on
τυπος, ου m pattern, example, type
διδασχη, ης f teaching, what is taught

Paul is "contrasting the Christian pattern of
teaching with the Jewish pattern (see 2:20)."
Moo. There is the suggestion here that the
early Christian kerygma included a body of
ethical instruction.

Verse 18

ἐλευθερωθέντες δὲ ἀπὸ τῆς ἀμαρτίας
ἐδουλώθητε τῇ δικαιοσύνῃ·

ἐλευθερωθέντες Verb, aor pass ptc, m nom pl
ἐλευθερωω free, set free
ἐδουλώθητε Verb, aor pass indic, 2 pl
δουλωω enslave, make (someone) a
slave

"We have been made 'slaves' of that moral
conduct God expects of his people." Moo. Yet
this slavery is true freedom.
Wright considers 'righteousness' here a
periphrasis for 'God'.

Verse 19

ἀνθρώπινον λέγω διὰ τὴν ἀσθένειαν τῆς
σαρκὸς ὑμῶν· ὥσπερ γὰρ παρεστήσατε τὰ
μέλη ὑμῶν δοῦλα τῇ ἀκαθαρσίᾳ καὶ τῇ ἀνομίᾳ
εἰς τὴν ἀνομίαν, οὕτως νῦν παραστήσατε τὰ
μέλη ὑμῶν δοῦλα τῇ δικαιοσύνῃ εἰς ἀγιασμόν.

ἀνθρωπινος, η, ον human, characteristic of
mankind

Murray thinks that Paul uses this phrase to
soften his reference to the Christian life as
'slavery'. So also Moo, "What he suggests,
therefore, is that the limitations of our human
understanding make it necessary for him to use
imprecise, but still appropriate analogies."

ἀσθενεια, ας f weakness

σαρξ, σαρκος f flesh, human nature

ὥσπερ as, just as

παριστημι and παριστανῶ see v.13

μέλη Noun, nom/acc pl μελος see v.13

ἀκαθαρσια, ας f impurity, immorality

ἀνομια, ας f wickedness, lawlessness, sin

καὶ τῇ ἀνομίᾳ εἰς τὴν ἀνομίαν perhaps 'from
one degree of lawlessness to another.'

οὕτως thus, in this way

"One thinks of the single-minded pursuit with
which some people seek fame, money, or
power. Our pursuit of righteousness and
holiness should be just as dedicated." Moo.
Under the heading "What God gives versus
what we do", Moo provides an excellent
discussion of the relationship between
indicative and imperative and the need for a
balanced appreciation of both for an adequate
understanding of the nature of the Christian
life.

ἀγιασμος, ου m sanctification, holiness

Either the *state* of holiness or the *process* of
sanctification. Murray thinks the former. The
condition necessary for a person to approach
the presence of God, cf. v.11, 'alive unto God.'

Verse 20

Ὅτε γὰρ δοῦλοι ἦτε τῆς ἀμαρτίας, ἐλεύθεροι
ἦτε τῇ δικαιοσύνῃ.

ὅτε conj when, at which time

ἐλευθερος, α, ον free, free person

"Non-Christians often pride themselves on
being free, in contrast to Christians, who in
their estimation have lost their human
autonomy by bowing the knee to Christ. Paul
notes that non-Christians do, indeed, have a
freedom – the freedom not to be able to live
righteous lives. Genuine autonomy is not an
option. If one is not serving God, then, whether
knowingly or not, one is serving sin." Moo.

Verse 21

τίνα οὖν καρπὸν εἶχετε τότε ἐφ' οἷς νῦν
ἐπαισχύνεσθε; τὸ γὰρ τέλος ἐκείνων θάνατος;

καρπος, ου m fruit, harvest, outcome
εἶχετε Verb, imperf act indic, 2 pl έχω
τοτε then, at that time
ἐπαισχυνομαι be ashamed

"The thought is the mirror of that in 5:5a: hope does not make us ashamed, because it truly leads to life; sin produces shame, because it leads to death. Here 'shame' is not simply associated with the feelings of disgrace or humiliation that belong to the deeds of sin themselves, but with the fact that conduct of that type leads to the human disintegration of death (cf. 1:32)." Wright.

τελος, ους n end, conclusion,
ἐκεινος, η, ο that, those

The punctuation of this verse is a matter of controversy. Most older versions have no punctuation after τοτε and a question mark after ἐπαισχυνεσθε. This is reflected in AV and NIV and is supported by Murray. An alternative favoured by Nestle and incorporated in several modern editions of the Greek text, is to place the question mark after τοτε and a minor punctuation after ἐπαισχυνεσθε. This is reflected in NEB and NJB. Moo comments, "The NIV suggests that Paul asks a rhetorical question implying the answer 'none.' But it is preferable to follow here the punctuation adopted in, for instance, the NJB: 'What did you gain from living like that? Experiences of which you are now ashamed, for that sort of behaviour ends in death.' The verse then matches the structure of verse 22 almost exactly:

Before we were Christians (v. 21):

Status – slaves of sin, free from righteousness

Result – fruit bringing shame

Outcome – death.

Now that we are Christians (v. 22):

Status – free from sin, slaves to God

Result – fruit bringing sanctification

Outcome – life."

Verse 22

νῦν δέ, ἐλευθερωθέντες ἀπὸ τῆς ἁμαρτίας
δουλωθέντες δὲ τῷ θεῷ, ἔχετε τὸν καρπὸν
ὑμῶν εἰς ἁγιασμόν, τὸ δὲ τέλος ζωῆν αἰώνιον.

νῦν (originally an emphatic form of νῦν)
now

ἐλευθερωθέντες see v.18

ἁμαρτια, ας f sin

δουλωθέντες Verb, aor pass ptc, m nom pl

δουλω see v.18

ἁγιασμος see v.19

ζωη, ης f life

αἰωνιος, ον eternal, everlasting

Verse 23

τὰ γὰρ ὀψώνια τῆς ἁμαρτίας θάνατος, τὸ δὲ
χάρισμα τοῦ θεοῦ ζωὴ αἰώνιος ἐν Χριστῷ
Ἰησοῦ τῷ κυρίῳ ἡμῶν.

ὀψωνιον, ου n pay, wages, compensation
χαρισμα, τος n gift (from God)

"Remuneration is the principle by which we become heirs of death; unmerited favour is that by which we receive eternal life." Murray.

Chapter 6 – Postscript

It is helpful here to quote at some length from Wright's reflections on Romans 6:

"Being a Christian means living from within a particular story. It is the subversive story of God and the world, focused on Israel and thence on the Messiah, and reaching its climax in the Messiah's death and resurrection. No Christian can ever tell this story to frequently, or know it too well, because it is the story that shaped him or her in baptism and must continue to shape thought, life, and prayer thereafter. Otherwise one will be living a lie, allowing sin to continue exercising a sovereignty to which it has no more right...

"This chapter shines a bright spotlight on the dangerous half-truth, currently fashionable, that 'God accepts us as we are.' Indeed, the question of 6:1 could be read as raising exactly this question: Will 'God's acceptance' do as a complete grounding of Christian ethics? Emphatically not. Grace reaches where humans are, and accepts them as they are, because anything else would result in nobody's being saved. Justification is by grace alone, through faith alone. But grace is always *transformative*. God accepts us where we are, but God does not intend to leave us where we are. That would be precisely to 'continue in sin, that grace may abound.' Unless we are simply to write Romans 6 out of the canon, the radical inclusivity of the gospel must be matched by the radical exclusivity of Christian holiness. There is no such thing as continuing to let sin reign in one's mortal body, and it will require serious moral effort to combat this tendency. The idea that Christian holiness is to be attained by every person simply doing what comes naturally would actually be funny were it not so prevalent. True freedom is not simply the random, directionless life, but the genuine humanness that reflects the image of God. This is found under the lordship of Christ. And this lordship makes demands that are as testing and difficult as they are actually liberating.

"The pattern, the motive and the moral power to live in true freedom (in other words, in 'slavery' to God) are found in that weaving of our life story together with the death and resurrection of the Messiah that happens in baptism. We are all too aware that thousands, perhaps millions, of the baptised seem to have abandoned the practice of the Christian faith and life; but we are nevertheless called to allow the dying and rising of Christ in which we have shared to have its force and way in our own lives. If Jesus and his dying and rising are simply a great example, we remain without hope; who seriously thinks that they can live up to that ideal in their own strength? But if the fact of the messianic events has become part of our own story through the event of baptism, and the prayer and faith that accompany it, and above all the gift of the Holy Spirit of which Paul will shortly say more – then we will indeed be able to make our own the victory of grace, to present our members, and our whole selves, as instruments of God's ongoing purposes."