

# When in Rome: Just Keep Sinning?

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[ 0 : 00 ] All right, folks. Well, welcome here for this Sunday, May 31st, 2026. My name is Kent Dixon, as you know, and it's my joy to be the pastor here.

This morning, we're continuing in our sermon series, When in Rome, and we're making our way through the Book of Romans. You know that. We're uncovering some of these timeless truths it holds, and fortunately, it sounds like the things that we're uncovering together is resonating with people, and that's all I can hope for, is to be a conduit for what God wants to teach you.

So we're skipping ahead, actually. Are we skipping? Yeah, we are skipping ahead this morning again, and you're thinking, why is this guy shirking his duty of covering this entire book? Well, it's because we were reminded just two weeks ago that one of Paul's key messages in Romans is that righteousness cannot be earned by good works or religious effort.

Do you remember that? It only comes through what? Faith in Jesus. In chapters 4 and 5 of Romans, Paul emphasizes this point more and more. It's increasingly more of what he's talking about.

And he uses the examples in chapters 4 and 5 of Abraham and David and Adam. And all of these examples Paul shares point to the hope and grace and new life that we have in Christ.

[ 1 : 32 ] We can trust God's promises, and we can live in peace, his peace, rather than in our own anxiety. And so I definitely encourage you, as always, to do your homework.

Read through chapters 4 and 5 on your own. But those chapters emphasize what we have already explored a bit together. So that will just help you anchor some of those thoughts of Paul even more so in your mind.

So our passage for this morning is Romans 6, 1 to 23. It's a big chunk. Romans 6, 1 to 23 says, What shall we say then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase?

By no means, Paul says. We are those who have died to sin. How can we live in it any longer? Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.

[ 2 : 47 ] For if we've been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly also be united with him in a resurrection like his. For we know that our old self was crucified with him, so that the body ruled by sin might be done away with.

That we should no longer be slaves to sin. And maybe you remember that from a song we've sung in the past. Because anyone who has died has been set free from sin.

Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we also live with him. 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. But the life he lives, he lives to God. In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.

Therefore, do not let sin reign in your mortal body, so that you obey its evil desires. Do not offer any part of yourself to sin as an instrument of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life.

[ 4 : 02 ] And offer every part of yourself to him as an instrument of righteousness. For sin shall no longer be your master, because you are not under the law, but under grace.

What then? Shall we sin because we are not under the law, but under grace? By no means. Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to someone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one you obey?

Whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness. But thanks be to God, that though you used to be slaves to sin, you have now come to obey from

your heart the pattern of teaching that has now claimed your allegiance.

You have been set free from sin, and have become slaves to righteousness. I'm using an example from everyday life because of your human limitations.

Just as you used to offer yourselves as slaves to impurity, and to ever-increasing wickedness, so now offer yourselves as slaves to righteousness, leading to holiness.

[ 5 : 13 ] When you were slaves to sin, you were free from the control of righteousness. But what benefit did you reap at that time from the things that you are now ashamed of?

Those things result in death. But now that you have been set free from sin, and have become slaves of God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness.

And the result is eternal life. For, you know this line well, for the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Somebody say amen. Amen. Nice. Amen. Thank you. So, if you're fans of Disney, you may recognize Just Keep Sinning, Just Keep Swimming.

I don't know why this popped into my head, but if you know Finding Nemo, that's where the little thought came into my head. And I'm not saying, Just keep sinning, just keep sinning, so don't get the song going in your head.

[ 6 : 17 ] But I want to begin this morning by noting that Paul addresses the problem of sin in Romans. And you're maybe thinking, Well, duh, yeah, I knew that. So, in the first two and a half chapters, he demonstrates that all have sinned, right?

We've talked about that. As Romans 3.23 states, For all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God. And then in the next two and a half chapters, Paul spends time declaring how we can be justified through faith in Jesus Christ.

Remember all that? That all resonates? That all tracks? And then as Paul says in Romans 5.1-2, Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we can have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand.

And we boast in the hope of the glory of God. I love that. Then continuing in Romans 5.20-21, So Paul makes it clear over and over, and especially here, though, whenever sin increases, God's grace is always more than sufficient to cover it.

We're never showing up with a sin deficit of any kind. God's grace will cover it. So this is where the title of our sermon this morning comes from, Just Keep Sinning.

[ 8 : 12 ] So it really begins to come into focus there, I think. But we can definitely see, Paul's smart in this way, how he seems to anticipate this bizarre perspective, right?

If grace is always going to be better than my sin, why should I be worried? It's one perspective, I guess. So recognizing that God's amazing and fully sufficient grace and forgiveness, Paul recognized there, we read in Romans 6.1, You see that?

You can see that argument there? So if God's grace increases when we sin, shouldn't it make sense then for us to sin more so God's grace continues to increase?

Right? You see that really weird perspective? So as usual, Paul has very little time for selfish perspectives that seem to miss the point altogether. We're going to see that more as we unpack this together this morning.

So today, I would suggest, many Christians live with a perspective on sin in general, or their own sin more specifically that's not that different from this perspective.

[ 9 : 38 ] Can you see that in yourself? Or have you ever thought about that? Recognizing God's all-sufficient grace and forgiveness, do we really then need to be all that concerned with overcoming or turning away from our sin?

Do you see the argument there? Is it really that important then, progress in this thought process, is it really that important then for us to confess our sin to God at all?

Knowing that the price has already been paid, perhaps we may even begin to reason to ourselves, if I sin, I can simply confess and be forgiven.

Do you see that? We get into that little hamster wheel of thought that says, I can sin and be forgiven so I don't really need to worry about sinning at all. Do you see it?

My concern with that perspective, Paul's concern with that perspective, is that it really doesn't suggest a heart that is grieved by what grieves God.

[10:47] And more than that, I think, that perspective seems to cheapen God's grace. Do you see that? Is that fair? It also, in my mind, seems to cheapen Jesus' sacrifice.

Right? If we're willing to just take those things for granted, that feels dangerous. But fortunately, when we study Romans 6 carefully, we come to see the whole perspective that we can just keep sinning is pretty ridiculous.

And we'll get there. So in this chapter, Paul gives four reasons why we shouldn't continue to sin. And we're going to unpack that. So stay with me. Once we've heard them, then I think, I hope, we'll all begin to agree that Paul saying, by no means.

You heard him say that over and over, right? He recognizes the perspective and says, by no means. So I'm hoping that by the end of this together, this morning, we'll agree with that perspective.

So, just keep sinning? No. The first reason Paul makes against continuing to sin is found in Romans 6, 6 verse 2.

[12:04] We died to sin. Paul makes that clear. So we were crucified with Christ in baptism. And he reviews that in Romans 6, 3 and 4.

Baptism is a burial into the death of Christ. Christ. It's where we were crucified with Christ. And scripture tells us that over and over.

And it's through our baptism, not that we're saved, but that we die to sin in our lives. That's so clear. And Paul states it really beautifully in Galatians 2 verse 20, where he says this.

You know this too. I have been crucified with Christ. And I, what? no longer live. But Christ lives in me.

The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me.

[13:07] So for anyone who's been baptized, having been crucified with Christ in that way, it really should impact how we live our lives.

does it? No. So much for that rhetorical question. So we can now walk in the newness of life, right? And Romans 6, 4 and 5 talks about this. Just as Christ rose from the grave, we also rise from baptism to walk in the newness of life that we receive in Christ.

And as 2 Corinthians 5, 17 declares, therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come. The old has gone.

The old has gone and the new is here. We're no longer slaves to sin. Romans 6, 6 and 7.

[14:07] The purpose of dying to sin in baptism is to be free from sin. So we're no longer bound to it in the way that we were.

And this is something that Paul digs into more deeply later in the book and we'll see that together as well. So we can now live with Christ. After his resurrection and ascension, Jesus now lives with God in newness of life.

And for those of us who've been baptized, because we died with Christ in that same way, we can also live newness of life. This idea of being alive in Christ, it leads us to Paul's second major point in response to this question, just keep sinning?

The second reason Paul makes against continuing to sin is found in Romans 6, 11. We're alive to God. Sin doesn't have to reign in us, friends.

While we were once dead in sin, scripture tells us, we can now choose to not let it reign in us through the power of the Holy Spirit. Romans 8, 12, and 13 says this.

[15:21] I'll be quoting a lot of other passages of Romans so I'm pre-spoiling things but it all weaves together in the end. Romans 8, 12, and 13 says, Therefore, brothers and sisters, we have an obligation, but it is not to the flesh to live according to it, for if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live.

We're no longer obligated to sin, is what Paul says there, no longer in debt to it, no longer controlled by it, or held captive by it.

We could choose to repent and we don't have to do it under our own strength. Do you see that?

We're no longer held captive to sin, thanks be to God, through the sacrifice of Christ, and then we don't have to continue to repent and confess under our own strength because we have the Holy Spirit within us.

So our bodies then can now be instruments of righteousness. Well, what does that mean? We can present ourselves to God as living sacrifices, and you've heard that before.

Willing and able to do His will sounds like words from a song that we sing sometimes, but as I said, it's according to the power at work within us through the Holy Spirit.

[16:44] The Holy Spirit who lives within a person the moment they believe and receive the gospel. And since the Holy Spirit is alive in us, 1 Corinthians 6, 19 and 20 reminds us, do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit who is in you whom you have received from God?

You are not your own, you were bought at a price. Therefore, honor God with your bodies. So God's grace also frees us from sin's power and control.

Being freed by God's grace means that sin no longer needs to be our master. It no longer needs to have control over us because in Christ we've been set free.

Period. But, here's the other side of this, this freedom isn't a license to sin. Did you hear that?

The freedom that we've been given is not a license to sin. Instead, it leads us to Paul's third point.

The third reason Paul makes against continuing to sin is found in Romans 6, 19.

[18:02] We are to be slaves of righteousness. So the reality is we are slaves, we become slaves to whatever we obey.

Grace and forgiveness aren't an excuse, aren't justification or some kind of free pass for us to keep sinning. We're either slaves to sin or slaves of righteousness.

People are committed to living godly lives that point others to Jesus. That's what it means to be a slave to righteousness. Committed to living a godly life.

Does that mean you won't make mistakes? No. Does that mean you won't scream at someone in traffic? No. Does it mean you don't do one of these? Ugh, when you're standing in a line at the pharmacy?

No. But you can keep returning to God and saying, help me to do better, help me to behave better. If we continue in sin, we simply become slaves to sin again.

[19:07] Living as people who may declare God with our words, but whose actions speak of a different agenda, a different allegiance. So for Christians to continue in sin makes things worse.

We read in 2 Peter 2 verses 20 and 22, it says, if they have escaped the corruption of the world by knowing our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and are again entangled in it and are overcome, they are worse off at the end than they were at the beginning.

It would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness than to have known it and then turn their backs on the sacred command that was passed on to them.

Of them, the Proverbs are true. Forgive me that this is before lunch. A dog returns to its vomit and a sow that is washed returns to her wallowing in the mud.

to have known and received God's grace. That's what we're hearing here. Only to return to selfish and sinful choices. It's not a very good look, is it?

[20:21] But the reality is, also think about it this way, what does it do to your witness? If you say you believe something and your actions speak the opposite, what does that say to people?

We became slaves of righteousness. That's our reality. So you may think, well, I don't want to be a slave to anything. That feels wrong.

That's, you know, not democratic, all those things. But we were slaves of sin, right? When we heard and received the truth of the gospel of Christ, we have been set free from that bondage, set free from sin.

And not just from the condemnation of sin, I may just have to talk louder, not just from the condemnation of sin, since Jesus paid the price for that, but also sin's power and control over our lives.

Sin has no power over you unless you allow it to have some. And we're to serve righteousness now.

[21:27] We're called now as followers of Christ to serve righteousness like we once served sin. And what does that mean? Well, previously we offered ourselves up to the temporary pleasures and indulgences of sin.

But now we've been freed to offer ourselves up to produce holiness in ourselves, to encourage it to others, all those things.

We're called to seek holiness with all that we have and all that we are, just as our God is holy. What does God say to us? Be holy because I am holy.

So now we come to Paul's fourth and final point. Paul makes this reason, another reason against not continuing to sin.

It's found in Romans 6.23 and we recognize, we talked about it, that the wages of sin is what? Dead. Nailed it. So the fruit of slavery to sin is death.

[ 22 : 36 ] That's the ultimate result. So that's in verses 20 and 21. The ultimate destiny and end for anyone who chooses to continue to sin and be enslaved to sin is death.

Eternal separation from God. That's it. Isaiah 59 verses 1 and 2 says, Surely the arm of the Lord is not too short to save, nor his ear too dull to hear.

But your iniquities have separated you from your God. Your sins have hidden his face from you so that he will not hear. So we recognize that choosing to live in sin now separates us from God right now.

fast forward to the end of the story. Revelation 21 verse 8 says, But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexual, immoral, those who practice magic arts, the adulterers, and all liars, they will be consigned to the fiery lake of burning sulfur.

This is the second death. But so we recognize there that not only are we at risk, if we live in sin, we're at risk now for separation from God, but ultimately, continuing on that path results in the same end.

[ 24 : 03 ] We recognize that dying in sin, literally dying in sin, will separate us from God for eternity. Full stop, right? That's the end of the story.

So the grace of God offers eternal life. through God's grace, we've been set free from sin in baptism. When we died to sin, we're crucified with Christ and we became a new creation.

By God's grace, we can now be slaves to God in seeking righteousness through continuing obedience to him and through the strength of the spirit.

And then also by his grace, we can bear the fruit of holiness. grace, which in turn leads to eternal life. Not only that, but bearing the fruit of holiness gives you a great example to others, a great statement, a great message to others about how your life has been changed by Christ.

So, just keep sinning. Anyone? Anyone? Thanks to somebody who said no. God bless you. So, if we understand what Paul has written in this chapter, then we will cry out with him, certainly not, as the New King James Version translates it, to any suggestion that we're somehow free to just keep sinning, as we've explored this morning.

[ 25 : 31 ] Here's some other ways it's translated by commentators and scripture translations. It is not to be thought of, not at all, that be far from us, which as I read it felt like it was a pirate, that be far from us.

Of course not, another commentator says. May it never be, the NASB says. Far be it, never, by no means, certainly not, heaven forbid, God forbid.

May we also continue to develop the same response to taking sin lightly. Have you been set free from sin?

Have you recognized sinful temptations and tendencies in your own life? Have you brought them to God in prayer? Folks, I believe that only by shedding a light on our sin can we be truly freed from it as God intends.

Let the grace of God deliver you, from the guilt and power of sin as you respond to the gospel of Jesus Christ. Amen.

[ 26 : 44 ] Amen.