**Sixth Sunday after Pentecost**

**Sermon**

**Text:** Romans 6:1-11

**Theme:** Be alive in Christ!

 Last Sunday we looked at Romans 5. God’s grace in Jesus Christ is the answer to human sin. However great Adam’s sin was, however greatly we sin as Adam’s children, God’s grace in Christ was greater–abundantly greater. The free gift of Salvation.

 Now that he said this, Paul begins to wonder about what his readers might think. “If sin needs grace, perhaps we should just keep on sinning so that God might go on showing us more grace.” Just think of it this way. Do you remember the story of the Prodigal Son? He demands his inheritance even before his father dies, takes the money and goes off and squanders it in sinful ways and when he is destitute, comes back to his father, asking to be his hired servant, but the father freely forgives him and welcomes him back even holding a big feast to celebrate. Now, imagine the Prodigal Son comes home from the far away country and discovering not only forgiveness but a feast. What if six months later he decides, “That worked so well, I’ll just ask for the money again, head for the far country, live it up and come back the second time. “The greater the sin, the greater the grace, make sense does it not? ”

 Paul has been outlining in his letter the greatness of God’s grace and the depth of his forgiveness and love. Now he raises this question. It may have been in the mind of some of his hearers. If we are honest with ourselves, we may have the same question. We may think the things we do wrong are not big deal, because, in the back of our minds, we know that God is going to forgive us. Isn’t that right? So, we may be tempted to say , “Well, I know I shouldn’t really be doing this. But God’s going to forgive me anyway, so it will be OK…” But that is not the case. God must punish sin. He is holy and perfect.

 And here, Paul names the elephant in the room. It is sin. It is right here in front of us all. We confessed it today! We know it to be true. It is so big and so evident as if an elephant would be standing right here in front of us today. **What shall we say, then? Shall we keep on sinning so that grace may increase?**

 Paul’s answer to this is in two parts. Part one is as rhetorical question. He is looking for the readers to answer in their own minds. “What shall we say about this?” Then he answers. **2Absolutely not! We died to sin. How can we go on living in it any longer?** I like the way the KJV translates it. “**God forbid!**” The point he is making is this. It can be summarized this way. You are dead to sin, so “**Be alive in Christ ”**

 We all have a problem. It is in our nature. We don’t want to take responsibility for our actions. Our sinful actions are not our fault. We delude ourselves and play the blame game. We blame others. We blame society. We even blame genetics.

 Paul is telling us today that his discussion is not going where we might hope. He is not giving us a free pass to go on sinning. Listen to what he says. **3Or don’t you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? 4We were therefore buried with him by this baptism into his death, so that just as he was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too would also walk in a new life. 5For if we have been united with him in the likeness of his death, we will certainly also be united with him in the likeness of his resurrection.**

Paul sayswe are forgiven. We have it in our Baptism. God’s Grace was pour on us. No, respond to this blessing! We should live a sanctified life in the power of the Holy Spirit . This does not mean that we should continue sinning so that we would continue receiving forgiveness. Deliberately sinning means that we change God's free grace into cheap grace. It like calling sending the IRS a letter and a check for $150 saying I could not sleep, because I did not declare all the money I owe. So here taken this payment. If I cannot sleep now, I will send you the rest.

Listen to this warning. If we deliberately keep on sinning. There is a problem. Deliberate means…I do what I want. I don’t care. **If we deliberately keep on sinning after we have received the knowledge of the truth, no sacrifice for sins is left, but only a fearful expectation of judgment and of raging fire that will consume the enemies of God. Anyone who rejected the law of Moses died without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. How much more severely do you think someone deserves to be punished who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, who has treated as an unholy thing the blood of the covenant that sanctified them, and who has insulted the Spirit of grace?**

We need to be delivered from sin, death, and everlasting condemnation. This is why we draw near with a true heart every Sunday and confess our sins to God our Father, beseeching Him in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ to grant us forgiveness. This is why we cry out in Matins and Vespers, "Make haste, O God, to deliver me. Make haste to help me, O Lord!" This is our cry of repentance. We ask God to deliver We beg Him to change us, to create in us clean hearts and renew a right spirit within us. We call upon Him to forgive us. Confessing our sins means we are living our Baptism. As Paul says in our text:

**5For if we have been united with him in the likeness of his death, we will certainly also be united with him in the likeness of his resurrection.**

**6We know that our old self was crucified with him, to make our sinful body powerless, so that we would not continue to serve sin. 7For the person who has died has been declared free from sin. 8And since we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. 9We know that since Christ has been raised from the dead, he will never die again. Death no longer has control over him. 10For the death he died, he died to sin once and for all, but the life he lives, he lives to God. 11In the same way also consider yourselves dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.**

Every time we confess our sins, we live in our Baptism. Think of it the way Martin Luther said it. Our old Adam (our sinful nature) in us should by daily contrition and repentance be drowned and die with all sins and evil desires, and that a new man should daily emerge and arise to live before God in righteousness and purity forever," as Dr. Luther tells us. "Where is this written?" we ask. The answer, Martin Luther says, lies within our text: "St. Paul writes in Romans chapter six: **'Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life'"**

To ask the great Lutheran question, what does this mean? It means we are free from the slavery of sin forever. This means that we are free of sin's hold on us. Yes, we feebly struggle, we may not always shine. We will stumble and fall, needing to come again and again and again to our baptism in repentance, but through it all we are alive…. because we bear the sign of the cross. The seal of this promise was done with the sign of the cross both upon our forehead and upon our heart to mark us as redeemed by Christ at our baptism—we also bear this seal upon ourselves as we live our lives of faith**. For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people.** **It teaches us to say “No” to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope—the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.** Titus 2:11-14 **Alive in Christ**! **Amen**