

Note: This lesson includes an astounding revelation about how Paul uses the word Death to describe our human experience. It is not a physical death we die in baptism. Rather, it is a death of the “self” (or of our personality) that literally dies in baptism and is literally resurrected in a new birth! Read on! WES

**TRINITY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
IHOP BIBLE STUDY**

8 Romans 6:1 – 14, “The Need for Christ’s Ethic” -- with commentary

The purpose of the Letter to the Romans is to develop a “Model for Living the Awakened/Transformed Life.” Today’s study is the 8th of 27 lessons.

According to our Study Chart we are studying the 1st section of “Know The Relationship of Sin and The Law.” This is the first of two sessions in this section.

Contextual Statement

According to the Roman’s Chart, this is a third section of our Romans’ chart. Here we’ll examine how Christ’s ethic enables us to appropriate the relationship of Sin and The Law.

Before you begin this session, think through how baptism plays apart in the experience of salvation. **Other words to ground: Sin, resurrection, righteousness, grace, glory, justification-sanctification-glorification.**

Note: Before the IHOP Bible Study started their session in this way. This was done to ground these words before we confront them in today’s lesson.

I. Grounding the following words using Gut Trip Analysis:

- 1) **Sin** = both the state and the acts that result in separation;
- 2) **Resurrection** = the experience of dying to old motivations and arising with a new perspective;
- 3) **Righteousness** = the act by which we are brought into a right relationship with our created essence. This word is related to Justification;
- 4) **Grace** = The gift that awakens us to our created essence. Paul uses this word to speak of moral power;
- 5) **Justification** = the act of being awakened;
- 6) **Sanctification** = the experience of living as awakened people. Often associated with holiness;
- 7) **Glorification** = the experience of being the awakened.

II. Identifying the role of Indicative Theology:

Next, we talked briefly about how that Gut Trip Analysis is related to **Indicative Theology**, or a system to explore the awakened life that is discovered within our everyday existence. In this way we use our ordinary human experience and learn to see through it to the spiritual dimension through the use of our ordinary human experiences. For example: **Sin** is the experience of separation. This is a human experience that clearly identifies what sin does. **Grace** is the experience of awakening to the reality that we are not victims but victors. In this way we use the Christ Jesus example as the lens through which we look to see through our human experiences.

This system asks different questions than more traditional theological systems, such as “mysticism” (a sudden revelation or special insight unique to a person), or “existentialism” (the dynamic in which our decision changes the outcome, or through which we are co-creators with God), or “spiritualism” (that claims there are powers and

principalities that can control or influence us, such as evil or the presence of the Holy Spirit.)

In Gut Trip Analysis, the Holy Spirit is experienced as freedom. When we are confronted with making a decision between right and wrong, or between right and right, or wrong and wrong, our choice is empowered by the Holy Spirit. "Holy," in this light, is experienced as fulfillment or an awakening experience.

III. Reading the attached sheets. The experience of "death" is defined.

The following summary was explored after reading this material. The astonishing conclusion is that the kind of death Paul associates with the Christians experience is clearly defined:

WS: This analysis of human sinfulness and death is very helpful. Gut Trip Analysis treats sin as both a state of being and hurtful acts. As a state of being we are fated to be male or female, our race, etc., and thus we live in separation of each other. As the result of doing sinful acts is the antithesis of At-One-Ment.

According to Paul, sin is located in the "personality" or the "self." Using Paul's analysis, "sinful acts" come out of our personal choices as reflections of our personalities. This supports the experienced based foundation of Indicative Theology.

What is helpful here is that Paul believes that the body (flesh) is not the location of sin! The body is THE WAY LIFE IS—it is amoral.

The importance of this helps us to understand the kind of "death" to which Paul refers. The death we experience in baptism is not the death of the body, but rather the death of our old "selves," i.e., our personalities are transformed. In this way, our death "in Christ" is a literal death of our old "selves."

Read the assignment

Note: Paul offers us guidelines on how to act as those who are the Awakened. To this end, he compares us with those who are still spiritually asleep.

I. Vs. 4b, When we live "through the glory of the Father," Paul tells us to observe the following:

WS: This phrase is powerful when picked apart. "Glory" means the gift that awakens us to fulfill our intended purpose. The glory of the Father is the gift that awakens us to Perfect At-One-Ment, since only God can be perfect and fully awake. Also, this is the meaning of **eternal life** since only God is eternal. Consequently, as we experience human life lived in humane ways, it can be said that we are living "through the glory of the Father."

A. Read and summarize vss. 1 – 4: regarding sin and our baptism. (Especially important!)

WS: Sin exists as separation. Grace exists as the gift of awakenment. Paul makes the point that we our "selves" die a literal death in baptism. This is not a physical death for us, but an experience within us. In the same way we experience a resurrection of a new "self."

B. Read and summarize vss. 5 – 7: regarding our experience of death and resurrection.

WS: Vs. 6b – Body of sin: the old self in a state (or act) of separation. However, when we live our lives through the resurrection of Jesus Christ then we are no longer slaves to our old “selves.”

C. Read and summarize vss. 8 – 10: regarding what it means to experience living in Christ.

WS: Again, as we live our lives through the resurrection of Jesus Christ then Death is no longer a master of our “selves,” we are free from death.

II. Vss. 11 – 14, Paul provides specific guidelines of what we can and can not do. Why are these guidelines true?

A. Vss. 11 – 13: What not to do. (Remember, you are answering why these guidelines are true to your experience.)

WS:

Vs. 11 – Dead to sin, alive in Christ. How is this true to my human experience? Whenever I make decisions to live humanely with my wife, then my experience is being dead to separation and alive in At-One-Ment.

Vs. 12 – Sin not reign in my mortal body so that you obey its evil doers. How is this true in my human experience? Here the “evil doers” in my life are those independent relationships that tempt me from humane living; i.e., political positions that restrict others such as wedding rights of homosexuals.

Vs. 13 – Do not offer parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness. How is this true in my human experience? An “instrument of wickedness” would be anything that leads me from humane existence, and/or anything that intentionally increases the separation between myself and my neighbor, or between myself and my-self, and/or between myself and God as Perfect At-One-Ment. An example of this is the use of pornography would be the offering of my eyes.

B. **Vss. 14:** What to do. (Remember, you are answering why these guidelines are true to your experience.) **Sin shall not be your master, because you are not under law, but under grace.** How is this true in my human experience? While my state of being is a clear demonstration of living as a sinner, by awakening to the Christ event in my life, my state of being no longer defines me. I am defined by my relationship to Jesus Christ. The meaning of my life is no longer defined by The Law, rather my life is lived as a daily gift of living my present existence in The Present (that is why it is called a Gift!).

Alright folks, talk to me!

Cc: See attached material

B. Freedom From Sin and Death (5:12 – 6:14)

5:12-31, *The New Humanity.* The new relationship of peace with God is also a new type of life for believers as they live in relation to one another and their nonbelieving fellow men (*sic.*). They have been initiated into a great liberation, vis. from the power of sin, and this also means liberation from death. This is God free **gift** (vs. 15), but it can be

described as sharing the life of Christ (cf. **saved by**, lit “in,” **his life**, vs. 10.) Christians are pioneers of a new humanity “in Christ.”

This is worked out in terms of a contrast between **Adam** and Christ. Adam is the representative figure of old humanity, unable to attain righteousness because [he is] limited by sin and doomed to die. Christ is the dominant figure of the new humanity, the creator of the possibility of overcoming sin, of becoming righteous and continuing to **reign in life** (vs. 17) **eternal life** (vs. 21), **i.e. life of a quality which is not affected by death. (ed. my emphasis.)**

This is Paul’s doctrine of Christ as the 2nd Adam. Though it occurs only here and in 1 Cor. 15:45-57, it presents his main thought about how Christ is effective for man’s redemption; **i.e. it is the theory of atonement to which he attaches the greatest value.** It does not rest on the sacrificial analogy, but it recognizes the need of mankind as dominated by sin and mortality. It affirms that Christ introduces positive energies which are beyond the corrupting influence of sin and death. What Adam failed to achieve is achieved by Christ and made available to all who attach themselves to him, i.e. by faith.

This argument presupposes our ability to think corporately. Adam and Christ are both historic figures, but for Paul they are corporate entities and not isolated individuals. Adam stands for the whole of mankind, understood as in Gen. 3, yielding to temptation and involved in its consequences. Abram similarly in ch. 4 stands for Israel depending on the great promise of her God. Christ is the conqueror of sin and death, not for his own release from earthly life, but vicariously for those who are to be incorporated in his body, the church, the new Israel.

This kind of thinking was natural enough for the ancient Hebrew; it is not so easy for the modern mind. The tendency now to absorb the individual into larger units like the state or the industrial corporation, dangerous as it may be to personal freedom, may make biblical modes of thought less strange. (*Interpreter’s One-Volume Commentary*, Nashville: Abingdon Press. 1971. pp. 778.)

36:1-14, New Life in Christ. The Christian is sure of salvation (ch. 3) but he (*sic.*) has to develop in moral stature. Grace does not mean license (vss. 1, 14), but moral power (vs. 11). Moral obligation continues and should be gladly faced in the **newness of life** (vs. 4) on which the Christian embarks.

6: 2 – 4. Paul is still writing in terms of clear contrasts, not now between Christ and Adam, nor even new life and the old life dominated by sin and death from which he has been emancipated. The clean break from that old life is emphasized. It is compared to **death**, and this strong emphasis is part of the interpretation of **baptism** as a sharing of Christ’s burial. This is no mere initiatory ceremony, but points back to the passion and **resurrection** of Christ, which were the means under God of effecting the new life of freedom from sin. Entering up out of the water is like Christ’s coming out of the tomb. It may have been Paul who first thought of the comparison, though this not certain, but it was a customary emphasis of his as we see from its recurrence in Col 2:12.

6: 5 – 11. The pre-Christian part of life is finished, even if not forgotten; Paul goes so far as to say it is **crucified** (vs. 6a), because he is sure that the continuing life of the believer is dependent utterly on Christ, to such a degree that it can be thought of as a sharing of Christ’s risen life after crucifixion (vss. 5, 8). Here is the basis of the idea of the church as the body of Christ, and of believing existence as incorporation into Christ. This is the new solidarity in, or with, Christ; contrasted with the old solidarity in Adam. It is expressed in the word **united** (vs. 5), lit. “grown together,” found only here in the NT.

Sinful body (vs. 6) does not mean body as opposed to soul or spirit. **Paul can use the word “body” in the sense of “personality” or “self”** (NEB). The lit. Greek

here is “body of sin,” the genitive [*possessive*] “of sin” being descriptive, as in the similar phrases “body of humiliation” and “body of glory” in Phil. 3:21. The body or whole person is in the grip of sin, as explained in 3: 12 – 21. “Sinful flesh,” lit. “flesh of sin,” in 8:3 is **not** an accurate parallel because there is implied that the flesh, i.e. **the physical part of man, is the location of sin (cf. 7:1 18a). (ed. My emphasis.)**

That the sinful self is to be **destroyed**, lit. “reduced to inactivity,” would seem to mean nothing less than the inability to sin any more. But sinlessness probably goes beyond Paul’s intention here. He does not say Christians *cannot* sin, as is said in 1 John 3: 6 – 9. He has too shrewd a sense of the realities of experience to dogmatize on this point. He knows that the imperatives of vss. 12 – 13 are in place (cf 8: 12 – 13). The moral struggle is still actual for the redeemed man, though the scales are not hopelessly weighted against him, so that defeat is inevitable. . . “ (*Interpreter’s One-Volume Commentary*, Nashville: Abingdon Press. 1971. pp. 779.)