

"Shall We Continue In Sin ..."

"... *that grace may abound?*" This question is posed by Paul after he had shown *"that where sin abounded, grace did abound more exceedingly; that as sin reigned in death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life through Jesus Christ"* (Rom. 6:1; 5:20-21).

There is little doubt that the magnitude of God's grace in forgiveness is demonstrated more vividly in the greater the sin. Paul argued the same when he spake of himself as the *"chief of sinners,"* then adding, *"... howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me as chief might Jesus Christ show forth all his longsuffering for an ensample of them that shall thereafter believe on him unto eternal life"* (1 Tim. 1:16).

Still, though the greatness of the sin which when forgiveness through the grace of God shows the abundance of God's grace and mercy, it does not give reason for men to continue in sin so that God's glory and grace might be magnified. To the contrary, the forgiven sinner should have appreciation for God's unspeakable gift and regard those sins with deep sorrow, all the while realizing that while God's grace is magnified when He pardons sin; the transformed sinner, having renounced sin and who seeks to live soberly, righteousness and godly in this present world is the only way the forgiven sinner can honor and glorify God.

So, having asked, *"Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?"* is as though Paul is caused to shudder. *"God forbid"* he wrote (Rom. 6:2)! *"We who died to sin, how shall we any longer live therein?"* Paul's question is a good one. How can we manifest appreciation and love for Christ's sacrificing by persisting in those things which made that sacrifice necessary? Could continuing in sin be construed in any way as thankfulness for Christ's death for us? Surely, to ask must be to answer!

Now Paul poses another question. *"Or are ye ignorant that all we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him through baptism into death that like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life"* (Rom. 6:3f). How any could read these verses and concluded that *"baptism is not essential to salvation"* escapes me. He had asked how could one who was dead to sin live any longer therein. He explained how these had become dead to sin: they had been baptized into Christ's death. We are baptized with Christ THROUGH baptism into death. Baptism is the door to death, the death of Christ and our own death to sins. Baptism alone does not save, but mark it well, baptism saves! The sinner must die three ways: He must die to the love of sin; he must die to the guilt of sin, and he must die to the practice of sin. He dies to the love and practice of sin through his own actions and deeds: he dies to the guilt of sin as God has ordained: buried with him through baptism into death.

In these verses three questions are asked by the apostle. It is to be assumed that Paul was certain the needy already knew the answers to the questions he posed. Surely all should know that the question, *"Shall we continue in sin that grace might abound?"* must be answered: "No." Surely we understand that his question, *"we who died to sin, how shall we any longer live therein"* must be answered "we cannot." Surely all should know that His question, *"Or are ye ignorant that all we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?"* can only be answered, "We are not ignorant. We do know!" Arising from the watery grave of baptism we must walk in newness of life. We cannot continue in sin if we walk in newness of life! NEXT: "Reckon Yourselves To Be Dead Unto Sin."

Jim McDonald