

Dr. Dave Mathewson, Hermeneutics, Lecture 29, Romans 6

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What I want to do in the last two sessions is to work through two New Testament texts to illustrate how these different methods can be applied to understanding the biblical text and I want you to follow along and attempt to identify. I'm not going to explicitly say now I'm doing historical or now I'm doing now I'm doing a lexical or word analysis or word study or now I'm looking at grammar. I want you to be able to identify what method is being applied but I so I'm not going to explicitly indicate what I'm doing, but as I work through the text applying the different methods I want you to be able to identify and be aware of what I am doing.

The first text that I want to look at comes from one of Paul's letters in the book of Romans. That's Romans chapter 6 1 through 11 that we've already talked about in relationship to a couple of things related to literary context, but I want to look at it in more detail as a text that I think is illustrative of the way the different interpretive approaches can be applied. So Romans chapter 6 1 through 11 and just to read this text since it's short and will only take a minute, but to read it to familiarize you with the content and what's going on.

What should we say then? Should we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means. We 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 all 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.

If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection. For we know that our old self was crucified with him so

that the body of sin might be done away with that we should no longer be slaves to sin. Because anyone who has died has been freed from sin.

Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we also will 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.

That death he died, he died to sin once for all, but the life he lives, he lives to God. Then verse 11, in this same way, count yourselves dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus. Now first of all, it's important to ask, why was Romans written? What are the historical circumstances surrounding the writing of the book of Romans? And how does that help us to understand the book in this text? First of all, when you look at the text of Romans itself, it seems to contain rather clear hints in the way of references to certain geographical locations as to why Paul wrote it and the circumstances that surrounded his writing it.

For example, in chapter 15 and verse 25, Romans chapter 15, and I'll actually read 23 and a few of these verses starting with verse 23, but now that there is no more place for me to work in these regions, and since I have been longing for many years to see you, I plan to do so when I go to Spain. I hope to visit you while passing through and to have you assist me on my journey there and after I have enjoyed your company for a while. Now, however, I am on my way to Jerusalem in the service of the saints there.

For Macedonia and Achaia were pleased to make contributions for the poor among the saints in Jerusalem. They were pleased to do it, and indeed they owe it to them. For if the Gentiles had shared in the Jews' spiritual blessings, they owe it to the Jews to share with them in their material blessings.

So Paul clearly indicates, Paul clearly indicates a number of things in these references in chapter 15, these geographical references. In one other section of the latter chapters of Romans, it seems to be clear that Paul is probably writing from the city of Corinth. But in these sections we've read, we can construct a scenario.

Number one, Paul clearly is on his way to Jerusalem. Paul is en route to Jerusalem with an offering that he has gathered from the churches of Achaia that he has gathered, and now he is taking those to Jerusalem. But also, these texts clearly indicate Paul's intention to eventually make his way back west to visit Rome, and even beyond that, to continue on to Spain.

So Paul clearly indicates that the Roman church is one that is an important one that he wants to visit, although apparently he hasn't yet, but that now he's taking up an offering after his ministry in the region of Achaia. Now he is going back to Jerusalem with an offering, but with the intention that he will make his way back to Spain, and that even beyond that, to go further west, or I'm sorry, into Rome, but beyond Rome, the churches in Rome to go even further west into Spain. Another important feature that it comes from extra-biblical information is that in AD 49, the Emperor Claudius, the Roman Emperor during this time, in AD 49 expelled the Jews from the city of Rome.

And there's mentions of that in a couple of, one in particular, historical writing that refers to Claudius, the Emperor Claudius, expelling all the Jews from Rome, and it was not until a few years later, AD 54, when that Claudius died, and the Jews were permitted to return, and it wasn't long after that, in about 55 to 57 AD, that the Book of Romans was written. So based on all of this evidence, is it possible then to suggest why Paul might have written this letter? Actually, most interpreters think that the Book of Romans has more than one purpose, and at least the following three purposes seem to emerge from the text and what we know about the historical

background. Number one is Paul seems to be paving his way to visit Rome, and ultimately to go further west to visit Spain.

That is, he appears to want to secure Rome as a basis and as support for his further missionary activity. So he writes to secure Rome as a base for what he wants to do in the future, his ongoing missionary activity of preaching the gospel. But second, because of this, perhaps, because of number one, Paul seems then to attempt to explain in some detail the gospel that he is going to preach.

Perhaps, perhaps he needs to explain it because of some of the misunderstanding that has taken place, and some of the opposition from his opponents, especially Jews. And now Paul, in securing Rome as a base, now explains in some detail the gospel that he preaches. And so we find in Romans one of the more, one of the clearest and most detailed expositions of Paul's teaching.

And then third is Paul writes to unite Jew and Gentile, perhaps related to this expulsion of Jews under Claudius. And now they return and find the church is predominantly Gentile, and so the struggle that might have ensued in integrating them back in might have caused a breach in the relationship between Jew and Gentile. And so Paul writes also to unite the Jewish and Gentile Christians.

So at least those three purposes seem to lie behind the book of Romans. But let's look at chapter 6. As part of this argument, this detailed explanation of Paul's gospel, in Romans chapter 6, the first thing we want to do is put it within its context. Romans chapter 6, obviously, follows from chapter 5. But what is significant about that is chapter 5 verses 1 through 11, in particular, begin a section where Paul begins to examine the results of the justification that he has argued for in the first four chapters.

In the first four chapters, he's argued for justification solely by faith that is now available to Jew and Gentiles. Now, they can both be justified and declared God's people, declared righteous, based on faith in Jesus Christ, apart from works of the law. But now the results of that justification by faith are seen particularly in chapters 5 through 8. That is, the hope that they now have, the hope that they now have through justification by faith, means that, first of all, this hope is based on, and this justification results in, freedom from God's wrath, chapter 5 verses 1 through 11.

It also means freedom from the power of sin. In chapter 6, it means freedom from the law. In chapter 7, and ultimately, their hope means freedom from death, and their justification results in freedom from death.

So these chapters demonstrate that the hope that comes from justification is based in the freedom that God's people have from God's wrath, from judgment, from sin, the power of sin reigning over them, from death and the law as well. But 6, 1 through 11, more specifically, seems to flow naturally from chapter 5, the second half of chapter 5, and verses 12 through 21, in two ways. Number one, we've already seen that chapter 6, 1 through 11, the text we just read a moment ago, is a response to a possible objection from something that was said in chapter 5 and verse 20, where Paul said, "...the law was added so that trespasses might increase, but where sin increased, grace increased all the more." And so chapter 6, verse 1, begins with a question, if grace abounds where sin increases, should we go on sinning more so that grace can increase all the more? The more I sin, the more grace is going to increase and abound.

So on the one hand, Paul's responding to a possible objection based on something he said back in chapter 5 by raising a question. Now, this is what is known as, this occurs in the form of what is known as a diatribe, that is, by introducing an imaginary opponent, Paul enters into kind of a dialogue with this imaginary opponent who

raises questions, possible objections. There's been a lot of interesting study as to what is entailed in this.

Many have traced this back to a typical Greco-Roman technique of teaching in the classroom, so it was just a way of instruction, it was just a way of the teacher raising possible objections to his argument to further his argument in his teaching. It may or may not necessarily represent what anyone has actually said, it may be the author's, just the author's own way rhetorically of advancing his argument in his teaching. So Paul seems to be relying on a fairly common form known as, that scholars have identified as a diatribe that may have had its roots in philosophical schools and their teaching.

So clearly Paul is anticipating, in diatribal fashion, anticipating possible objections and responding to them as a way of advancing his argument. It's difficult to tell though whether these objections, these questions he raises, are Paul's own way of simply advancing his argument and anticipating possible objections, or whether these questions raise real objections that his opponents, or Judaizers, for example, themselves have raised. That's a possibility.

But what I want to simply focus on is how this question functions to move Paul's argument forward and relate chapter 6 to chapter 5. So that the first way that chapter 6 relates to chapter 5 is this question-answer format, the question that is a question that raises a hypothetical or possible objection to something Paul has just said. The second way that this relates is, I think in chapter 6, and we'll see this in just a moment, the Adam-Christ contrast that we found in chapter 5 still continues into chapter 6. That is, in chapter 5 we find this contrast between Adam and what he did and accomplished in plunging humanity into sin and death, and now also in chapter 5, what Jesus Christ does through his death on the cross, through his act of obedience, in contrast to Adam's act of disobedience, his sin, now in his act of

obedience, Christ now brings righteousness and life. So Adam and Christ are portrayed as two heads of humanity.

Adam of the old humanity, dominated and ruled by sin and death, and now Jesus Christ forming and establishing a new humanity, characterized and ruled by life and righteousness. So two humanity, two spheres with their respective heads, Adam and Jesus Christ. This will seem to continue to influence what we find in Romans chapter 6. Another way of connecting the two is, chapter 6 might also serve function to demonstrate that, in contrast to what could be possibly deduced from 520, if where sin increases, grace increases all the more, should we continue to sin? Now Paul says, no, justification, rather than freeing one to do what one wants, justification has inescapable moral consequences, and chapter 6 is a clear reminder that no one cannot go on sinning.

If where sin increases, grace increases all the more, is not a justification for continuing to sin. So chapter 6 will show that justification and the hope of God's people in chapter 5 has moral consequences. So to look more closely at chapter 6, 1 through 11 itself, we've already seen that it develops according to a question-answer format.

Chapter 1, or I'm sorry, chapter 6, verse 1 raises a question that we saw is based on a potential misunderstanding of 520, or a possible objection to Paul's argument in 520, followed by the answer to that question. So the whole text operates according to this question-answer format. The question in verse 1, and then 2 through 11 constitutes the answer to that question.

Again, the question being, if therefore, should we go on sinning so that grace might increase? That's the answer. The question is in two forms. What should we say then, is the first question, and then more specifically, the question is, should we go on

sinning so that grace might increase? That's the rest of the text of Romans 6, 1 through 11, specifically 2 through 11, is a response to that question.

Now, the response itself is in at least, is in two parts. Number one is the initial answer to that question in verse 2 is that well-known, by no means, and it's interesting to explore a number of translations to see how they handle this. By no means, or may it never be, or the old King James Version, I think, said, God forbid.

This is, the first response is simply kind of a an all-out just interjection. By no means, no way, this should never happen. God forbid that this would be the case, that if where grace increases, should we sin more so that grace can increase? God forbid that that would ever be the case.

That can never happen. This is a kind of the initial outburst to the question. By no means.

But Paul goes on, the second part of the response to the question is, Paul goes on in more detail to describe why is this absurd? Why should this not be the case? And the, I think the key is, the main part of the response is found in the second half of verse 2. We have died to sin. How can we live in it any longer? That is the second part of the question. Again, the first is the outburst, God forbid, and now to give it more content, the reason that God forbid is, we've died to sin.

So how can we live in it any longer? There's, there's something inconsistent about God's people who have died to sin, than living in sin. There's a contradiction there, an inconsistency. But this, this part of the, to further look at 6, 1 through 11, this part of the response, we've died to sin, how can we live in it any longer? That now will get further explained and unpacked in the rest of verses 3 through 11.

In other words, what does it mean that we have died to sin? How have we died to sin in a way that makes it absurd that we would continue to live in it? So the rest of this, starting with verse 3, Paul is going to begin to explain how is it we've died to sin. Because obviously, he's, he's addressing, he's addressing readers that are still alive. Why would he write this letter to people that are actually dead? So, so now he's going to explain what, in what way have the readers died to sin that makes it so absurd that, and, and contradictory that they would continue to live in it.

And then verse 11 will be the summary exhortation that refutes the objection verse 1. Should we then continue to live in sin so that grace might increase? Verse 11 overturns that in a summary command. No, instead consider yourselves dead to sin, but alive to God. As we said, the fact that we have died to sin in verse 2, then calls for further explanation in the rest of the text.

But I want to start by examining what does it mean that, what does Paul mean by saying we've died? Should we understand this in perhaps lighter terms, as far as it simply means we don't respond to sin, or that sin has no effect on us, or something like that. I think, I think Paul uses death in its, the strongest sense of the term, and I think he uses it in the sense of physical death. That is, as we saw in chapter 5 verse 12 through 21, as this contrast between Adam and Christ that I said, said still continues to influence this section, chapter 6, 1 through 11.

In 5, 12 through 21, we saw that Paul, Paul operates with two ages, or two eras, or two humanities, that have their respective head. The, the old age, the old era, the old humanity with Adam as its head, dominated by sin and death, and then a new age, a new era, a new humanity, that has been created and inaugurated in the person of Jesus Christ. And I think Paul's operating with the understanding the only way to, to be released from, or to transition from the old era to the new era, is through death.

The only way to escape the power and influence of the old era and old age under Adam, is to physically die. So one must die to be released from the power and authority of the old age, under Adam. The other thing to notice here is how Paul uses the word sin.

He uses the word sin sing, as a singular. Notice he does not say, you have died to your sins, but he says you've died to sin, singular. That is because I think Paul conceives of sin as a power which rules over us and controls us, as part of that old era and old age under Adam.

So the only way that I can be released from or escape the power of the present evil, of the present age, the present era, or under Adam, dominated by sin, the only way I can escape the control and domination and rule of sin, is to physically die. But that still raises the question, in what way can we say we have physically died? In what way can we say we've experienced a death that has ended the reign and rule of the present age under Adam, and the rule and domination of sin over us? Chapters, verses 3 and 4 explain that. We have in fact died, that is, we have in fact experienced that death that releases us from the power of the present age.

We have in fact actually died and experienced that physical death, that era-ending death, by being joined to someone who has in fact actually died, and that is the person of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ's death has brought to an end the old era, and by virtue of being joined to Jesus Christ, we also share in that death that brings to an end the old era, and brings to an end the rule and reign of death, and releases us from that power. But you'll notice that for Paul, he moves beyond only discussing Jesus' death, which brings to an end the old era, but he discusses the fact that Jesus' resurrection though is necessary to inaugurate a new era.

So we've also, according to Paul, we've also then been joined to Christ, not just in his death, to his death, but we've also been joined to his resurrection. We've been united to Christ and his death, so that we've been released from the power of sin and the old era under the headship of Adam, but through being joined to Christ's resurrection, we also now participate in a new era, the new age that Christ has inaugurated, that's characterized by life and righteousness, as we saw in 5, 12, through 21. The further link in this is to ask, how is it that we have been joined to Christ? Paul links that with baptism.

He says it's through baptism. Baptism is the means that joins us to Christ, and links us to Christ, and his death, his burial, and his resurrection. Therefore, it's important to understand what Paul means by baptism here.

Many have interpreted this to mean a spiritual baptism. That is, Paul is referring to being baptized or immersed in the Holy Spirit, such as one finds in a text like 1 Corinthians 12, and especially many students of the New Testament have been attracted to this explanation of baptism here in Romans 6, in order to avoid contradicting what Paul has said elsewhere, that we're justified solely by faith, and not by works of the law. He's argued for that in chapters 1 through 4. So now, would it not be inconsistent for Paul to usher in another work, baptism, as the means by which we are saved and united to Christ? So some have therefore concluded that this must refer to spiritual baptism.

However, I think there's still much to be said for identifying this as physical water baptism, as the early, as the rite of the early church, that in a sense initiated them into the church and into the people of God. For example, usually, usually when baptism is used metaphorically, it often has a qualifier such as a baptism in the Spirit or something like that. So that probably baptism here is utilized in its physical sense as water baptism, as the, again, the rite of the early church.

But why does Paul emphasize baptism? Probably the way to understand this is Paul would have conceived of the salvation experience and process as consisting of a number of elements that all are bundled up together. That is, faith and conversion and the gift of and receiving of the Holy Spirit and water baptism would have been seen as a unified experience. So that therefore, baptism would function as a way, as something that stands for the entire conversion experience, kind of using a kind of a figure of a speech or a use of language called metonymy, where a part stands for the whole.

So Paul could refer to the baptism experience, the physical rite of baptism, as standing for the entire process of conversion. Standing for the process, the entire process of faith and conversion and receiving the Holy Spirit, water baptism then would be simply the means of referring to that entire experience. So Paul can say through water baptism, assuming faith and conversion, et cetera, through water baptism, then one is joined to Christ, his death and his resurrection.

So by doing that then, by being joined to Jesus' death and resurrection, we then are released from the old age, the old era, and the reign and domination of sin and death under Adam. But by being joined to his resurrection, then we also are inaugurated or we also participate in the new era of salvation that Christ inaugurates through his resurrection, characterized by life. Therefore, for Paul, his point so far is that it's inconsistent for Christians then to continue to live in sin.

This very question, should we go on sinning so that grace may increase, is absurd by virtue of the fact that we have died to sin through being joined to Christ through baptism, being joined to Christ's death and resurrection. We've died to sin because we have experienced a death that brings to an end the reign of the old era in sin by virtue of being joined to someone who has actually died, the person of Jesus Christ.

But more than that, not only have we been released from the age and the domination of sin under Adam, but now through being joined to Christ's resurrection, we also participate in the new era, a new age, and have the hope of participating ultimately in the end in Christ's resurrection.

Verses 5 through 10 then go on to explain in more detail and unpack this even further. What does it mean to be united to Jesus in his death and resurrection? Verses 5 through 10 explain this further. And here, notice that Paul uses, first of all, he uses slavery language in verse 6, what that part of being, dying to sin and being released from this present age is we're no longer slaves to sin.

We're no longer under its rule. Again, Paul conceives of sin as not just individual acts of sin, although that's part of it, but that is merely the result of sin being a power and a master that controls and dominates us. A part of dying to sin by virtue of being joined to Christ in verse 6 is now we are freed, we're no longer slaves from sin.

We're free from its tyranny. That seems to be Paul's main point, that by being joined to Christ in his death, we've died to sin, therefore freeing us from the reign and the tyranny of sin over our lives. But notice the two other ways he describes sin's domination over us.

Number one, he uses the language of old self in verse 6. He says, for we know that our old self has been crucified. Again, we should probably understand this language in light of chapter 5, 12 through 21. The old self is not some ontological part of me, my being, or some separate part of me, or some impulse that resides in some specific place in my body, but probably the old self refers to my entire being, my entirety of myself, physically and spiritually, as under the influence of Adam, as part of the old era under Adam that is controlled, under which we are controlled and dominated and ruled by sin.

That old self, who I was in Adam, my entire self, ruled by sin under the old era, has now been crucified and put to death. I think Paul's language of crucified is intentional because, again, the way that that has been crucified is that we have been joined to Jesus' own crucifixion, his own death and crucifixion is in some way ours as well. By virtue of being joined to Christ, we participate in that, so he can say, my old self, not some separate part of me that gets obliterated, but who I am under the old era, under Adam, dominated and controlled by sin, has now been crucified by virtue of us being joined to Christ and sharing in his death.

But furthermore, notice also he uses the language of the body of sin, so that the body of sin might be destroyed or done away with. Again, I think body of sin is not referring just, therefore, my sinful physical body, that there's something sinful about the physical body that Paul finds repulsive as opposed to the spiritual part of me. But again, instead, body of sin probably is to be understood in a similar way to my old self, that is, my entire self as under the rulership and tyranny of sin, under Adam as part of the old era, that has now been destroyed and done away with, again, by being joined to the death of Jesus Christ.

So, so strong is our connection with Jesus Christ's death, that Paul can use this language of who I was in Adam under the old era, ruled by sin, has been crucified, has been destroyed, has been completely done away with. So that verse 7 seems to articulate the primary principle that lies behind this, when Paul says, anyone who has died has been freed from sin. And that's Paul's whole argument.

It requires a death. The only way to be freed from the tyranny of sin in the old age is to die. And again, that's exactly what Paul is convinced has happened to Christians by virtue of being joined through baptism as part of, as a kind of the part that stands for the whole conversion experience.

Through baptism, we've been joined to Jesus' death, which brings to an end the rule of sin and the old age in the life of God's people. So then verses 9 and 10 simply go on, and once again, notice how in 9 and 10, Christ's death is described in a way that picks up some of the language of verse 2. Back in verse 2, when Paul says, we've died to sin, how can we live in it any longer? And in verses 9 and 10, Paul wants to make sure that that's the very experience that Christ participated in. Or that's the very way to understand Christ's death.

So in verses 9 and 10, he says, for we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again. Death no longer has mastery over him, it no longer rules over him. In the same way that verse 6, sin no longer and death no longer rule over us.

The death he died, he died to sin once for all. Which reflects verse 2, we have died to sin, but the life he lives, he lives to God. So the way Christ's death to sin is described in verses 9 and 10, is a reflection of the way it is described, the way our death to sin is described back in verse 2. So Paul, he wants to make clear that, again, there's an inconsistency about God's people continuing in sin, because in fact, they've died to sin.

That is, they have died to the tyranny and the power of sin. Sin no longer rules over them, because they have died. Releasing them from the era, the present era and age under Adam, and the rule and tyranny of sin.

But the way that they have died, the death they have experienced, is by being united to someone else's death. That is, the death of Jesus Christ, that brings to an end the old era. But again, Paul is clear that, more than just being united to Jesus' death, we have also been united to Jesus' resurrection.

And so therefore, we have been raised to live a new life. So it's not just being released from the power of sin, but it is participating in a new life, by virtue of being joined to Christ's resurrection. Notice some of this language, though.

For example, in verse 9, 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. But to back up verse 8, that precedes that, he says, If we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. Notice the future tense.

Grammatically, we will live with him. Interpreters of this text debate, should we take that as a strict future? That is, as a reference to the second coming. We will live with him in the future, in the second coming.

Or is this more logical? If this is true, then this will also be true as well. So that the sharing in Christ's resurrection could be present as well. No matter which way one takes it, both are clear in the context.

It's clear that we already participate in Christ's resurrection through baptism. Even though the ultimate experience of that resurrection, and the ultimate release from the tyranny of sin, does not come until the future, at the new creation, or the second coming of Christ. In this case, we still await, ultimately, the second coming of Christ.

Although again, even then, Paul has already emphasized our ability to walk or live in new life. Back in verse 4 of Romans chapter 6. So all of this is meant to argue, to this point, that the perspective articulated in the question in verse 1 is absurd. There is a

contradiction, an inconsistency, about Christians, or about the perspective of Christian sinning, so that grace may increase, because God's people have died to sin.

By virtue of being united to Christ through baptism in his death, God's people have died to sin, so that there's an inconsistency of claiming to be united with Christ, yet to go on sinning. So Paul says that's an absurdity, because we've already experienced that death that breaks the power of sin in the old era, that releases us from that. And we've also been raised to participate in a new era, in a new life, by virtue of being joined to Jesus' death, and burial, and his resurrection.

So death is necessary to bring to an end our existence in the old era. The only way to break the power of death or sin over us is to die. And Paul is convinced that that has indeed taken place by virtue of being joined, although he doesn't explain exactly how we have been joined to Jesus Christ.

He still is, in fact, convinced that Jesus' historical death in some way has become ours. By being united with Christ, we participate in that, so that his death is the death we experience that brings to an end the old era and its domination over us. But in the same way, we've also been united with his resurrection, that ushers us into new life, causes us to participate in the new era of life, but more than that, gives us hope for future resurrection, and ultimately overcoming the power of sin.

But the text then ends in verse 11. In verse 11, in undoing this hypothetical objection, in the form of this absurd question in 6.1, Paul now ends by overturning that with an ethical exhortation in the form of a command. Notice it begins with, in this way, that is, based on what the author has just said in verses 9 and 10.

That is, in this same way. In what way? According to verse 10, in the same way that Christ died a death to sin, so that death no longer has mastery over him, in the same

way, and now he lives life to God, in the same way, Paul says, count yourselves dead to sin, in the same way that Christ has died to sin, in the same way count yourselves dead to sin, but in the same way, in verse 10, that God lives, that Jesus lives, in the life he lives, he lives to God, in the same way, consider yourselves alive to God, in Christ Jesus. Again, it's through being united with Christ in his death and resurrection, that Paul can say that this is all true.

Interestingly, that word consider is a term that suggests to, not only to consider, but to judge, to consider it the case. But again, this is not simply a fiction. It's not the idea of consider something to be such, even though it really isn't.

Or think of it this way, even though it may not be the case. But instead, this is a judgment or a consideration that is not a fiction, but it is a reality, it is to consider something true and valid, because Paul says, indeed, it is a reality, we can consider ourselves dead to sin and alive to God, not as a fiction, but as a reality, because, in fact, we have, indeed, been joined to the reality of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. So this considering or judging, in verse 11, is a reality, is to be seen in light of the reality of Christ's own death and resurrection that now becomes ours by virtue of being united to Christ, and participating in some way in his death and his resurrection.

What I want you to note is it's intriguing that Paul ends this with a command, because this seems rather, in some sense, this seems to create a tension in the text. Because note how Paul has used rather strong, unqualified language up until this point. Starting with verse 2, he says, We've died to sin, how can we live it any longer? He uses terms such as, in verse 6, We know that our old self was crucified.

Again, using a language referring to Christ's crucifixion. And then he says, So that the body of sin might be done away with. The language is probably even stronger than that, might be destroyed.

And then verse 7, Anyone who has died has been freed from sin. So you have this strong, unqualified language. We've died to sin.

The body of sin has been destroyed. The old self has been crucified. Because of death, we've been freed from sin.

Sin is a power that exercises rule and tyranny over people. Now we have, Paul uses rather strong language. We've died.

We've been crucified. The body of sin's been destroyed. We've been free from sin.

So how is it that Paul ends this section with a command or an imperative? This seems to create a tension in the text. If we've really died to sin, if the body of sin has been destroyed, if the old self has been crucified, if through death we've been freed from sin, why does Paul have to now tell us to not let, why does he have to tell us to consider ourselves dead to sin and alive to God? Why do we need to be told that and commanded that if that is in fact a reality? What I think we find here in the text is part of the tension we find throughout the New Testament between what is already true by virtue of being joined to Christ, but what is not yet completed or consummated because the end has not come. What Christian theologians identify as the second coming of Christ.

Because the ultimate end time resurrection and new creation have not yet taken place, it's only been inaugurated in initial partial form. It's already present, but it has not yet arrived in its fullness and perfection. It's because of that tension, the tension

between what is already true, what has already been begun and inaugurated and what has not yet been completed and consummated.

Christians live in the tension between those two. It's that tension that is reflected in Paul's language. So the already is, because we've already been joined to Christ, the already means Paul can use absolute language.

Yes, we've already died to sin. The body of sin has been destroyed. The old self has been crucified.

We've already died to sin and so we've been freed from it. That is true already because we've been united with Christ. But because of the not yet, because the perfection, the final resurrection and the new creation have not yet arrived, we still then need the imperative.

We need to consider that true in continuing to live in between that tension, between what is already true, but what has not yet been completed and perfected. In between that time, what is required of God's people is a process of considering and reckoning that we've died to sin by virtue of being joined with Christ and we now live to God. Other terminology that New Testament students often use is the tension between the indicative and the imperative.

The indicative are statements of what is already true by virtue of being joined to Christ. So the indicative is you've died to sin. Why live in it any longer? The indicative is the old self has been crucified.

Again, using very strong language. Again, the indicative is the body of sin has been destroyed. In verse 7, the further indicative, because anyone who has died to sin, anyone who has died has been freed from sin.

So first verses 2 through 10 are basically the indicative, simply statements that are true by virtue of being joined with Christ. The imperative then comes in verse 11 that balances the already with what is not yet the case. Also, the indicative grounds or makes possible the imperative.

It's impossible to consider myself dead to sin and alive to God if that is in fact not true. The imperative has no teeth. It lacks force if it is not grounded in the indicative.

That is the reality of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ that we've been joined with. So that's, again, the indicative is why Paul can make these rather strong statements. You've died to sin.

The body of sin has been destroyed. The old self has been crucified. But this tension between what is already and what is still to be realized creates the need for the imperative.

So Paul can end in verse 11. Therefore, you need to consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God. A command to live out life in this tension between the already and not yet, but an imperative, a command that is valid and necessary and is doable because it's grounded in the reality of Jesus' own death and resurrection that we have been joined to.

Notice how chapter 6, 1 through 11 relates to what comes after it. Verse 12, and you'll notice too, this is where English translations are interesting. You'll notice that a number of English translations break the verses up a little bit differently in 6, 1 through 11.

The NIV text that I'm looking at, the original NIV, begins a new paragraph at verse 11. It sort of separates verse 11 off from verses 1 through 10, probably because verse 11,

again, is imperative. It is a command for the readers to appropriate what is true in their own lives based on the reality of verses 1 through 10.

But notice verse 11 begins with a therefore, which often is a strong way of linking something back to what has previously been said, and often is used to introduce a new thought so that probably verse 11 should go with 1 through 10 as the conclusion to 1 through 10. But then verses 11, or I'm sorry, verses 12 to the end of chapter 6 seem to work out in more detail and spell out in more detail the command of verse 12, 11. So 11 is sort of a general imperative.

Consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God. But what does that look like? What does that entail? A chapter 6, 12, verses 12 and following to the end of the chapter spell out in more detail what that involves. So verse 12 begins, therefore, based, that is, based on verses 1 through 10, or 1 through 11, especially verse 11, therefore, because you have died to Christ, been united with Christ, and died to sin through Christ, and been raised by identification with Christ to live a new life, therefore, do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desire.

So now, again, based on the indicative, verses 1 through 10, here's the imperative. Do not let sin reign in your mortal bodies. Verse 13, do not offer the parts of your body to sin as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness, for sin shall not be your master, because you are no longer under law but under grace.

So the rest of this chapter continues to unpack and spell out in more detail what is involved in the concluding command of 1 through 11. So what I've tried to do in looking at this text is apply the different methods, looking at the passage in terms of the vocabulary and meaning, looking at making a few grammatical comments,

looking at its theological content and the theological themes, relating it to its broader context, and the ultimate context of Romans 1 through 6, but also how it grows out of what comes before it, and how it merges into and prepares for what comes after it. So hopefully as we work through the text, you were able to identify the different methods at work, historical criticism, context, word study, grammatical analysis, theological analysis, etc., etc., to see how that works.

One of the things we didn't talk about explicitly was the Old Testament in the New. Obviously that lies under the surface based on the comparison between Christ and Adam from chapter 5. Now that runs over into and continues to inform chapter 6, 1 through 11. But I'll stop there with the text.

Again, hopefully you get a clearer idea of how the different methods can be implemented in understanding this text. What I want to do in the next session then is look at another text, a very different text with different literary features, different needs and raises different questions, and that is a passage from the Book of Revelation. We'll look at that in terms of the different interpretive methodologies and how that might affect the way we interpret that text.