

## Dr. David Mathewson, Hermeneutics, Session 29, Interpretive Process Applied to Romans 6 Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide, and 5) FAQs

### **1. Abstract of Mathewson, Hermeneutics, Session 29, Interpretive Process Applied to Romans 6, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL**

**Dr. Mathewson's lecture** analyzes Romans 6:1-11, exploring its historical context within Paul's missionary journeys and the expulsion of Jews from Rome. He examines the passage's structure as a question-and-answer diatribe, highlighting the Adam-Christ contrast and the interplay between justification by faith and its moral consequences. The lecture further investigates Paul's use of "death to sin" and "resurrection to life," linking them to baptism and the tension between the "already" and "not yet" of Christian experience. Finally, it discusses the passage's literary features and the application of various hermeneutical methods.

**2. 16 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Mathewson, Hermeneutics, Session 29 – Double click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link there (Introduction & Languages → Introductory Series → Hermeneutics).**



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### 3. Briefing Document

Okay, here is a detailed briefing document analyzing the provided source, focusing on the main themes and important ideas.

#### **Briefing Document: Analysis of Romans 6:1-11**

##### **Overview:**

This lecture focuses on applying various hermeneutical methods to understand Romans 6:1-11. Dr. Mathewson emphasizes the importance of considering historical context, literary context, grammatical analysis, word studies, and theological themes to arrive at a comprehensive understanding of the passage. The core question the lecture seeks to answer is: How can we understand Paul's teaching on being "dead to sin" and "alive to God" in the context of Romans 6?

##### **Key Themes and Ideas:**

##### **1. Methodological Approach:**

- The lecture is intentionally structured to demonstrate the application of different interpretive methods without explicitly naming them. This is designed to allow the audience to identify the methods being employed. This includes historical criticism, literary context analysis, grammatical analysis, lexical (word) studies, and theological analysis.

##### **1. Historical Context of Romans:**

- **Purpose of Writing:** Romans was written for multiple reasons, including securing Rome as a base for Paul's missionary activities, explaining the gospel in detail, and uniting Jewish and Gentile Christians.
- **Geographical References:** Paul's references to his travel plans to Jerusalem, Rome, and Spain, as well as his collection for the poor in Jerusalem, place the letter within a specific historical context. Paul was writing from Corinth, en route to Jerusalem (15:25), while planning to visit Rome and then Spain (15:23-24).
- **Expulsion of Jews:** The expulsion of Jews from Rome by Emperor Claudius in AD 49, and their subsequent return after his death in AD 54, is crucial to understanding the dynamics within the Roman church, and why Paul would feel the need to write to unite Jew and Gentile. The Book of Romans was likely written between 55-57 AD.

## 1. Literary Context of Romans 6:

- **Flow from Chapters 1-5:** Romans 6 builds upon Paul's argument in the preceding chapters on justification by faith (chapters 1-4), and its implications (chapters 5-8). Justification leads to freedom from God's wrath, sin, law, and death.
- **Connection to 5:20:** Chapter 6 is a response to a possible objection arising from Romans 5:20, "...where sin increased, grace increased all the more." The objection asks, "Should we go on sinning so that grace may increase?" (6:1).
- **Diatribes:** Paul uses a diatribe, a rhetorical technique involving an imaginary opponent raising questions and objections, to advance his argument (a common Greco-Roman teaching method).
- **Adam-Christ Contrast:** The Adam-Christ contrast from chapter 5 is crucial here. Adam represents the old humanity dominated by sin and death, while Christ initiates the new humanity characterized by righteousness and life.

## 1. Analysis of Romans 6:1-11:

- **Question-Answer Format:** The passage follows a question-answer format. Verse 1 poses the question (should we continue in sin?), and verses 2-11 provide the response.
- **Initial Response (6:2):** Paul's initial response is an emphatic "By no means!" (or "God forbid"), indicating the absurdity of continuing in sin after having died to it. The core statement is: "We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer?" (6:2b).
- **Explanation of "Died to Sin" (6:3-10):**
  - Paul uses death in its strongest sense, relating it to physical death. To move from the old era under Adam to the new era under Christ, death is necessary.
  - "Sin" is treated as a singular power that controls and dominates individuals under the old era of Adam.
  - This death to sin is realized through union with Christ's death.
  - Paul connects this union with Christ to baptism. This is most likely a reference to physical water baptism, not just a spiritual baptism, seen as the rite that initiated people into the early church and a part of the entire conversion experience.
  - Through baptism, Christians are united with Christ's death, burial, and resurrection, breaking the power of sin and participating in the new era of life.

- Paul uses language of slavery ("no longer slaves to sin", 6:6), "old self" (crucified with Christ, 6:6), and "body of sin" (destroyed, 6:6) to emphasize sin's domination and our freedom from it.
- **The Significance of Christ's Death:** Paul emphasizes that Christ's death was a "death to sin once for all" (6:10).
- **Union with Christ:** The core of Paul's argument is that Christians are united to Christ in both his death and resurrection, resulting in both liberation from sin and the ability to live a new life.
- **Ethical Exhortation (6:11):** Paul concludes with a command: "In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus." The "count yourselves" carries the sense of a considered judgment that reflects a reality.

#### 1. **Tension Between the "Already" and the "Not Yet":**

- **The Indicative and the Imperative:** Paul's strong statements (indicatives) about being dead to sin ("we died to sin," "the old self was crucified") are balanced by a command (imperative) to "count yourselves dead to sin." This tension reflects the Christian experience between what is true already (being united with Christ) and what is not yet completed (ultimate resurrection).
- **Implications:** Because the ultimate end-time resurrection and new creation have not yet arrived, we live in the tension of knowing what is true in Christ, while needing to strive and live out this new reality in everyday life. The indicative (what is true) grounds and makes possible the imperative (the command).

#### 1. **Connection to Following Verses (6:12-end):**

- Verse 11 functions as a conclusion to 6:1-10, but it also serves as a springboard for the rest of the chapter.
- The subsequent verses (6:12-end) work out what it looks like to "count yourselves dead to sin and alive to God." This includes commands like "do not let sin reign in your mortal body" (6:12) and "offer yourselves to God" (6:13).
- They unpack the practical implications of no longer being under the dominion of sin.

**Key Quotes:**

- "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?" (Romans 6:1-2)
- "Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?" (Romans 6:3)
- "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." (Romans 6:6)
- "Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him." (Romans 6:8)
- "In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus." (Romans 6:11)
- "Therefore, do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires." (Romans 6:12)

**Conclusion:**

Dr. Mathewson's analysis of Romans 6:1-11 demonstrates a thorough approach to biblical interpretation by weaving together historical, literary, grammatical, and theological considerations. This passage highlights the paradox of the Christian life—already free from sin through union with Christ, yet still living in a world where sin's influence remains, calling for a continual reckoning of our freedom through our identity in Christ. The lecture shows how considering all these elements leads to a deeper understanding of the text and its implications for believers.

## 4. Mathewson, Hermeneutics, Session 29, Interpretive Process Applied to Romans 6

### Romans 6:1-11 Study Guide

#### Quiz

**Instructions:** Answer each question in 2-3 sentences.

1. What are the three purposes behind Paul writing the book of Romans as identified in the lecture?
2. How does Romans 6:1-11 relate to the argument Paul presents in the first four chapters of Romans?
3. Explain the literary device of "diatribe" as it's used by Paul in Romans 6:1-11.
4. What is the central question posed in Romans 6:1, and how does the rest of the passage respond to it?
5. According to the lecture, how does the concept of death function in Romans 6:1-11 in relation to the old era under Adam and the new era under Christ?
6. Why does the lecture suggest that Paul uses "sin" as a singular noun in Romans 6:1-11?
7. What is the significance of baptism in Romans 6:1-11, according to the lecture?
8. Explain what the lecture means by the "old self" and "body of sin" in the context of Romans 6:1-11.
9. What is the difference between the indicative and imperative in Romans 6:1-11 and why is the distinction important?
10. How does Romans 6:11 function as the concluding command to the previous section and what is the overall implication?

#### Quiz Answer Key

1. Paul wrote Romans to secure Rome as a base for his missionary activity, to explain the gospel, and to unite Jewish and Gentile Christians. These purposes likely arose from his travel plans, misunderstandings of his teaching, and tensions within the Roman church.

2. Chapters 1-4 of Romans argue for justification by faith, while Romans 6:1-11 examines the results of that justification. Specifically, chapter 6 examines the freedom from the power of sin that results from being declared righteous.
3. Diatribe, in this context, is a rhetorical technique where Paul introduces an imaginary opponent to raise objections to his argument. This helps him to anticipate and respond to challenges, thus furthering his own teaching.
4. The central question is, "Should we go on sinning so that grace may increase?" The passage responds by stating that we have died to sin and, through baptism, have been united to Christ's death, burial, and resurrection, so continuing in sin is illogical.
5. Death in this context represents the end of the old era under Adam, dominated by sin and death. Through being united with Christ's death, believers are freed from this era and begin a new era under Christ's headship characterized by life and righteousness.
6. Paul uses "sin" as a singular noun to represent sin as a power that rules and controls individuals. This power is part of the old era under Adam, not just individual actions or sinful behavior.
7. Baptism is the means by which we are joined to Christ, both in his death and his resurrection. It symbolizes our participation in Christ's death, burial and resurrection. It's a physical rite that stands for the whole conversion experience, including faith and the receiving of the Holy Spirit.
8. The "old self" and "body of sin" refer to the believer's entire being as it exists under the influence of Adam, controlled by sin. These do not refer to a part of the individual, but to the whole person's existence under the power of the old era.
9. The indicative statements describe the reality of what is true for believers because of their union with Christ (e.g., "you have died to sin"), while the imperative commands how believers ought to live based on that reality (e.g., "consider yourselves dead to sin"). The indicative creates the possibility of the imperative.
10. Romans 6:11 serves as a concluding command (imperative) to the previous discussion, urging believers to consider their new status as dead to sin and alive to God. It is an ethical exhortation that summarizes the reality of a Christian's identity based on the preceding section.

## Essay Questions

1. Discuss the historical context of Romans, including the expulsion of Jews from Rome and its potential impact on the church there, and analyze how the text and purposes of Romans are affected.
2. Explain the Adam-Christ typology presented in Romans 5 and 6, and discuss how this framework shapes Paul's understanding of sin and salvation in Romans 6:1-11.
3. Analyze the role of baptism in Romans 6:1-11, exploring both the literal act of water baptism and its symbolic meaning in relation to the believer's union with Christ and his death and resurrection.
4. Examine the tension between the "already" and the "not yet" in Romans 6:1-11, focusing on the concepts of the indicative and imperative and how these dual aspects of Christian life shape our understanding of sin and grace.
5. Discuss the different methods used to interpret Romans 6:1-11, including historical criticism, literary context, lexical study, grammar, and theology, and explain how each contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of the passage.



## Glossary of Key Terms

- **Justification:** The act by which God declares a person righteous based on faith in Jesus Christ, apart from works of the law.
- **Diatribes:** A rhetorical device that involves a dialogue with an imaginary opponent who raises questions or objections.
- **Adam-Christ Typology:** A comparison between Adam, who brought sin and death to humanity, and Jesus Christ, who brings righteousness and life.
- **Old Self:** A person's entire being under the influence of Adam, controlled by sin under the old era.
- **Body of Sin:** A person's entire self as under the rule of sin and domination, under Adam in the old era.
- **Baptism:** A Christian rite symbolizing a believer's union with Christ in his death, burial, and resurrection.
- **Indicative:** Statements of fact that describe what is true for believers because of their union with Christ.
- **Imperative:** Commands that urge believers to live in accordance with the reality described by the indicative.
- **Metonymy:** A figure of speech in which a word or phrase is substituted for another which is related.
- **Historical Criticism:** A method of interpretation that seeks to understand a text in light of its historical and cultural context.

## 5. FAQs on Mathewson, Hermeneutics, Session 29, Interpretive Process Applied to Romans 6, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

### FAQ on Romans 6:1-11

1. **What is the primary question that Romans 6:1-11 seeks to address?** The primary question is whether believers should continue sinning since God's grace increases where sin increases. This question is based on a potential misunderstanding or objection to what Paul stated in Romans 5:20 ("...the law was added so that trespasses might increase, but where sin increased, grace increased all the more"). The chapter seeks to refute the idea that increased grace justifies continued sin, exploring the implications of being united with Christ.
2. **How does Paul respond to the question of continuing in sin to increase grace?** Paul emphatically rejects this idea with the phrase "By no means!" (or "May it never be," or "God forbid"). He argues that Christians have died to sin, and therefore, it is inconsistent and contradictory to continue living in it. This is not just a rejection but an explanation of what has happened to Christians.
3. **What does Paul mean when he says Christians have "died to sin"?** Paul does not mean that Christians have literally physically died in the traditional sense of the word. He means that through their union with Christ, particularly through baptism, they have experienced a death to the *power* and *domination* of sin, which was part of the old age under Adam. This "death" is connected to Christ's death, which broke the power of sin. Paul conceives of "sin" as a singular power that rules over humanity in the age under Adam and not merely a collection of individual acts.
4. **How does baptism relate to dying to sin and living to God?** Baptism is presented as the means by which believers are joined to Christ, his death, burial, and resurrection. It symbolizes the believer's participation in Christ's death, which releases them from the power of the old age (Adam) and sin, and their participation in Christ's resurrection, which ushers them into new life. While many may read it as spiritual baptism, the text leans towards the historical and physical baptism of the early church, standing for the entire conversion experience which includes faith, conversion, the Holy Spirit, etc.

5. **What is the significance of the Adam-Christ contrast in the context of Romans 6?** The Adam-Christ contrast from Romans 5 continues into Romans 6. Adam represents the old humanity under the rule of sin and death, while Christ represents the new humanity under the rule of life and righteousness. To move from the old era under Adam to the new era under Christ requires a death which Christ provided. Christians, by being united with Christ, have participated in this transition through faith and baptism.
6. **What does Paul mean by "old self," and "body of sin" in Romans 6?** The "old self" and "body of sin" are not separate entities but rather refer to the believer's entire being (physical and spiritual) under the dominion of sin and the old age of Adam. They have been rendered powerless due to the death of Christ and our participation in that. They have been "crucified", "destroyed", and "done away with" through Christ's death, and by our union with him.
7. **What is the significance of the tension between the indicative and imperative in Romans 6?** The indicative and the imperative represent the "already, but not yet" dynamic present in Christian life. The indicative are statements of fact grounded in the union of the believer with Christ (i.e., "you have died to sin"). The imperative is the command to act accordingly based on this reality (i.e., "consider yourselves dead to sin, but alive to God"). The imperative is only meaningful because of the indicative. It also helps to express the tension in the Christian life between having died to sin and still needing to struggle against sin. The tension arises because while the old era of sin has been broken, it has not yet been fully eliminated, and Christians live in this tension until the consummation of all things.
8. **How does Romans 6:1-11 relate to the rest of chapter 6 and the broader context of Romans?** Romans 6:1-11 establishes the foundation for the rest of the chapter and Paul's broader argument about living as justified people. Verse 11 serves as a conclusion for the prior verses and is also a command for the reader. The rest of the chapter, starting with verse 12, unpacks the practical implications of this dying to sin and living to God, explaining how believers should not let sin reign in their mortal bodies and should offer themselves to God as instruments of righteousness. Within the context of Romans, this passage continues the theme of justification by faith by explaining its moral and ethical implications and results.