

Pointing to how we should now live

Introduction

- Arrow picture...
 - most of this long passage "points" us towards a practical conclusion
 - like the shafts of an arrow pointing the arrow to its target

Sin has been killed in us (6:1-10)

- First "flight": sin has been killed in us...
 - when Jesus died on the Cross, a death that was not necessary because of any sin he had committed, he killed off sin's power for those who have trusted in him
 - and so we share in the benefits of his death
 - that's what verse 3 is about - **baptised into his death** - baptism is identification with and participation in...
 - so we share the benefits of his death, namely new life (v.4 and v.8-10), resurrection (v.5) and freedom from sin's mastery (v.6-7)
- *So sin's power has been killed in us*

Righteousness now rules in us (6:15-23)

- Skipping over to vs.15-23 we find the second "flight" on our arrow:
 - **righteousness now rules in us** (v.18)
- Picture has shifted to slavery, and Christ's achievement for us on the cross is now portrayed as a change in ownership for a slave
 - where we were "owned" and controlled by sin (v.16)
 - now we have become slaves to Christ and the righteousness found in him (vs.17-18)
- Some folk entered into slavery, perhaps to pay off a debt:
 - Paul's picture is that we had done that to sin, perhaps unwittingly, but once sin had the upper hand we were trapped, with no resources to buy our way out
 - only in Christ are we set free - another master, Jesus Christ, has bought us out, and it is to him that we owe our allegiance
 - and he is the Lord of righteousness

We now belong to Christ (7:1-6)

- Final "flight" on our arrow is at the beginning of the next chapter, 7:1-7
 - **we now belong to Christ** (4)
 - Paul first draws an analogy with marriage - you can only be married to one person at a time!
 - we were "married" to sin
 - but now it has been put to death, and our new bridegroom is Jesus Christ himself
 - so now we belong to him, with a new household standard/tone...
- In all of this Paul is really reiterating what he has said before
 - **put up summary picture of Adam/sin/law and Christ/righteousness/grace...**
- **But now he has a particular point in mind:**
 - namely the contents of **vs.11-14!!**
 - **the practical application of this change**

Dead to sin

- In these verses Paul has a series of commands for us, 4 to be precise
 - no mere description of what Christ has achieved, **here are commands for practical action**
 - the point is, **if all that he says around about is true, then we will live differently**
 - if the flights on our arrow direct our living, control the direction of our life, then we will hit a target...

Count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus (11)

- This is about attitude: do I care about sin in my life or not?
 - cf attitude to dirt around the home, or around the hospital ward...
 - its not the attitude that does the damage directly, but it allows the sin to build up...
- There is a positive side too:
 - **alive to God in Christ** - time with him, worship, prayer, quiet times, attitude...

Do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires (12)

- This is about control, or priority:
 - **what is in charge in your life?**
 - this is about resisting the "commands" of the evil one
- Old image of devil and angel on your shoulders...
 - *(picture)*
 - compare with exercise at Mental Health First Aid course, with someone whispering in your ear...
 - incredibly hard to resist that whispering voice!

Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness (13a)

- Here's where it gets practical!
 - **tongue** - do we tell little white lies? Do we gossip? Do we boast? Do we flatter?
 - **stomach** - does our appetite rule?
 - **eyes** - are we nosy? Do we look with lust?
 - **ears** - do we want to listen to the latest gossip?
 - **hands** - do we steal? Do we hurt?
 - **mind** - do we our minds think on day-dreams for ourselves? (What if I was rich...?) Or do we turn over other's faults in our heads?
 - **sex-drive** - do we give in to lust or sexual temptation?
- Having counted self dead to sin, choosing to obey Christ's command not the Devil's whisper, realise it comes out in practical things - **individual danger areas...**

Offer the parts of your body to [God] as instruments of righteousness (13b)

- **Antidote** to offering those parts of our body to sin is to **offer them positively to Christ's service:**
 - **tongue** - can we speak words that build up, that affirm, that encourage?
 - **stomach** - can we fast, and devote ourselves to prayer?
 - **eyes** - can we gaze at the created order, and be caused to shout "Hallelujah!"
 - **ears** - can we listen to others in their need?
 - **hands** - can we help others, take out their bins, cook their meals? Can we give an appropriate hug, the compassionaite touch? Can we work around the church for the sake of the gospel - cleaning, laying out chairs? Can we devote ourselves to our regular job, remembering that all work is ultimately God given?
 - **mind** - Philippians 4:8 "**Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable - if anything is excellent or praiseworthy - think about such things.**"; can we think of fresh ways of sharing faith? Can we ponder the meanin of God's word? Can we pray?
 - **sex-drive** - ???

Conclusion

- **Saved by grace:**
 - **shaped by grace?**