

Benefits of Belief IX -- The Filling of the Spirit - Part I. Romans Chapter 6. The Key to a Christian Life.

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[0 : 00] We have some content for you this morning that has the potential of being absolutely life-changing, not only for believers, but for unbelievers as well, if they are able and willing to plug into the content.

And I want to begin the session with the expression of some propositions, some basic premises that we will engage to fulfill as we move through the message this morning.

And while I am doing that, if you would be on your way, please, to Romans chapter 6. We'll be reading a portion of scripture from Romans chapter 6 that is, by far and away, the greatest single passage having to do with living the Christian life whose power it is lived and how it is lived.

And I think it is this passage, perhaps more than any other, that will explain the reason for failure or success as a believer in the Christian life.

And by failure or success, I am talking about living a life that is well-pleasing unto the Lord and at the same time enjoying the fulfillment and the enrichment that the Christian life provides for us.

[1 : 22] We're going to be talking about the filling of the Holy Spirit. This is a divine provision that God has made to enable Christians to live the life of Christ after receiving it.

Because one has become a Christian, it does not mean that he or she will automatically live as a Christian can and should.

As a believer, you have no more ability to live a Christian life than you had before you became a Christian.

Now, let me repeat that if I may. Marvis, can you see if you can eliminate the hum that's back here? I think it's to one of these instruments. Thank you. Because one has become a Christian, it does not mean that he or she will automatically live as a Christian should and can live.

And as a believer, you have no more ability to live a Christian life than you had before you became a Christian. I know that doesn't sound right, but it is, and I will explain why.

[2 : 34] It is because, as Christ is the dynamic and the basis for you becoming a Christian, so too, he is the dynamic for you to live a Christian life after having become one.

And this is connected to that familiar passage in Galatians 2.20, wherein Paul said, I am crucified with Christ. Nevertheless, nevertheless, I live.

Yet not I, but Christ lives in me. And the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith or by the faithfulness of the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me.

Jesus Christ is the key for your obtaining salvation, and Jesus Christ is the key for your living that Christian life after you have it.

You are not. You are important and you are involved, but you are not the key. He is the key. And we will understand that, I think, as we get into Romans chapter 6.

- [3 : 44] So let me explain further by saying, the potential for every believer to live a life well pleasing to God is automatic, but only potentially.
- the actual producing of a life that is well pleasing to God is dependent upon the filling of the Holy Spirit.
- And as I pointed out in our previous session, this is a subject that is terribly misunderstood in Christian circles. Outside of Christian circles, it virtually has no existence.
- But within the body of Christ, there is a great deal of confusion and a lot of disagreement over what the filling of the Spirit is. Some think that the filling of the Spirit enables you to speak in languages that you have not learned, that is to speak in tongues.
- Some think that the filling of the Holy Spirit enables you to perform miracles, like Christ did in the early apostles. Some people think that to be filled with the Holy Spirit means that you have some kind of special powers or abilities that other Christians do not have.
- [4 : 56] All of those things are wrong. None of those involve the filling of the Spirit. The filling of the Spirit is not something that is spooky or eerie.
- It is not ghostly. One of the unfortunate translations found frequently in our King James Version of the Bible is refers to the Holy Spirit as the Holy Ghost.
- I have even heard people say things like, I am not interested in being filled with the Holy Spirit. I want to be filled with the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost. How in the world has the Spirit of God ever came to be translated as ghost?
- I do not know. It is a very poor choice of words. It tends to think of a little bit of Halloween-ish or something. What is a ghost anyway? I do not know.
- I have no idea. Someone has said, Well, ghosts are those things that always appear in white robes. I have always wondered, Where do they buy those white robes?
- [6 : 07] Where do they get those white robes? The correct designation is Pneumahagios. It means Spirit the Holy One.
- And that which makes Spirit, Spirit is this. It has no materiality. Not even a white sheet. That which is spiritual has no materiality.
- No physicality. You cannot see, touch, or taste that which is Spirit. God is Spirit.
- God is Spirit. And they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth. We're told in John 4. This is one reason, by the way, why God condemns the making, the crafting of images.
- Thou shalt not make any graven image or any likeness and use that to represent deity. Because that has materiality and substance to it.
- [7 : 16] And God abhors that. God is Spirit. You are Spirit as well as physical. You have a human spirit.
- There is an immaterial part of your being where the real you resides. We are made up of a body, of a spirit.
- And the body plus the spirit constitute the soul. When we are talking about the Spirit of God and being filled with the Spirit, it simply means this is Ephesians 5.18 that we looked at last week.
- What Paul said of it, Believers are not to be intoxicated or drunk with wine, but we are to be under the control, under the dominion, under the influence, under the power of the Spirit of God.
- That does not result in flaky behavior, ecstatic experiences, weird behavior, running up and down the aisle, waving a hanky, and all of this nonsense that people try to use to demonstrate that they are filled with the Spirit.

[8 : 30] We suspect they are filled with something else, but that is neither here nor there. Anyway, these are not, these are not evidences of a Spirit-filled life.

The evidence, the evidence of a Spirit-filled life is a life that honors Jesus Christ because it reflects Him. It is a life that demonstrates and produces love, joy, peace, gentleness, kindness, long-suffering, etc.

These are the fruit of the Spirit. It is nothing more than a consistent lifestyle that is honoring to God.

It is something that is available to every single child of God without exception. Whether or not we will implement what is made available to us is entirely up to the individual.

Because while the filling of the Holy Spirit is available to all believers, God does not impose it upon anyone. We are commanded to be filled with the Spirit.

[9 : 44] That is an imperative in Ephesians 5.18. Be ye filled. And actually the way it is rendered in the Greek, it is, be ye being filled.

It is an ongoing, continual process. It isn't something that happens once and for all, and that is it, you are filled with the Spirit for the rest of your life. No, no, no. Not at all.

We are filled with the Spirit repeatedly. It is an ongoing thing. You may be filled with the Spirit today and filled with the flesh tomorrow.

What happened? Did the Spirit of God leave? No. Did the Spirit of God lose control? No. We lost control.

What do you have with which you can lose control? Your will. God wants us to be filled with His Spirit.

[10 : 46] That is, under the control of His Spirit. But He does not make us be that way. We are provided with an opportunity. And if you really want to enjoy the Christian life, which is what I think Christ was referring to in John 10, when He said, I have come that man might have life and have it more abundantly.

This is for all believers. And it is tragic that a believer can go through his Christian life and virtually die and go to heaven and never have experienced or never had enjoyed what God provided for them while they were here on this earth.

So, the baptism of the Spirit takes place at the point of salvation. We are baptized by the Holy Spirit into the body of Christ.

That places us in union with Jesus Christ. We are bone of His bone, flesh of His flesh. We are members of His body and members of the body of Christ.

The indwelling occurs at the point of salvation. The sealing of the Spirit occurs at the point of salvation. Regeneration occurs at the point of salvation.

[12 : 06] Adoption, whereby we are placed in the body as adult sons and daughters. That takes place at the point of salvation. All of these are exclusively the work of God the Holy Spirit upon the believer at the point of salvation.

And you had nothing to do with those. Your will was not involved at all except as you exercise your will by placing your faith and trust in Jesus Christ.

And when you did that, you were, at that point, baptized, indwelt, sealed, and adopted.

All of those things took place instantaneously at the point of salvation. Not so with the filling of the Spirit. The filling of the Spirit involves your will.

It involves you. Salvation itself is a joint reality. that is, God provided a Savior, God provided for your consideration the finished work of Jesus Christ and what He did on your behalf.

[13 : 19] The joint part which you fulfill is your response to that. When you respond in simple, in simple faith, in simple belief, in an act of trust or reliance upon Jesus Christ and who He is and what He did, that is your response to God's provision.

It is faith. And you exercise faith with your will. It is a decision that you choose to make. You do not have to believe in Christ.

You are presented opportunity that enables you to believe in Christ and gives you ample reason for doing so. But it's up to you. It's your choice. You can reject Him.

You can believe in Him. God provided the Holy Spirit and your response or lack thereof will determine whether or not you are surrendered to Him and under His control.

And we must go to Romans chapter 6 that I referred to earlier. and we will see the mechanics and nuts and bolts of how this thing works out. And to my best understanding, this is the way this thing works.

[14 : 37] At least, let me put it this way. It's the way it works for me. And I cannot believe that God has somehow made me a special exception and it doesn't work this way for anybody else. I do not believe that.

I don't believe that I have any special corner or that any other believer has any special corner on anything that God has provided. What He has provided, He has provided for the entire body. And it is at the discretion of those in the body whether or not they will implement this.

So let's read together. Follow along whatever translation you have. This provides the key. Here is the very heart and soul of what is involved in a practical, not simple way.

How to do it. What are the steps? What is involved? This is it. Romans 6 is the best explanation in all of Scripture that I have found.

And it is predicated upon realizing something that is called reckoning here. So let's begin. What shall we say then? What is our conclusion? This is concluding to chapter 5.

[15 : 44] Are we to continue in sin that grace might increase? May it never be. May it never be. May it never be. How shall we who died to sin still live in it?

Now that's a curious expression. How shall we that died to sin sin? What does that mean?

Still live in it? Or do you not know, verse 3, that all of us who have been baptized into Christ, Jesus, have been baptized into His death?

What does that mean? It means just this. When you put your faith and trust in Jesus Christ, you were baptized by the Holy Spirit into the spiritual body of Christ whereby you came into union with Christ.

And you were identified into, baptized into, and that's the basic meaning of baptized here. It means to be it means to be so closely identified with one that you are like part of that one.

[17 : 15] And that's the analogy that is given that we are members of His body. In the same way that your arm and your leg is a member or part of your body. When a believer puts their faith and trust in Christ, they become a member of the spiritual body of Christ.

The spiritual body of Christ is comprised of all believers all over the world. Whatever their language, whatever their color, whatever their background, if they have faith in Jesus Christ, they are members of the body of Christ.

And when we were baptized into Jesus Christ, we were baptized into His death. Why? And what does that mean?

It means just this. It means that when Jesus Christ died on the cross, died that death on the cross, what was exacted from Him for human sin was the absolute ultimate penalty that He could pay.

He died. The wages of sin is death. Christ died on that cross. I don't want to get involved now in the spiritual death and the physical death of Christ other than to say that He died both deaths.

[18 : 38] He died physically in that His body expired. And He died spiritually in that He was separated from the Father. And that's what spiritual death is.

separation from God. Christ died both deaths. And in dying those deaths He paid the ultimate penalty.

So when you believe on Jesus Christ you are baptized into His death. That means you become a partaker of the penalty that He paid.

And it accrues to your account as if you paid it. But you didn't pay it. He paid it. That's right. But it is placed to your account as if you paid it.

What did it cost you? Nothing. Absolutely nothing. That's why salvation is free. It cost God everything.

[19 : 43] It didn't cost you anything. It didn't cost you anything. you have accrued to your account a payment in full just as if you had made it yourself and as if you had been separated from God for your sin.

This is the great transaction of substitution. And substitution is what Christianity is all about. It started way back in the Old Testament with the animal sacrifices.

The whole principle of substitution had to do with the life of an innocent being given over in place of the guilty.

So the sacrifice is made and the innocent paid the sacrifice on behalf of the guilty. And you say, well, where's the justice in that?

There isn't any justice in that. That's grace. It isn't justice. It is grace. Justice says the sinner pays for their own sin.

[20 : 55] That's justice. And everyone is going to receive from God as an absolute minimum God's justice.

That means you get exactly what you deserve. Not a bit more, not a bit less. That's justice. So, while God cannot do less than give justice to anyone because that's his nature, he is a holy God, he cannot do less than give justice to anyone, he can do more.

And he does more on the basis of grace. It is a gift. It is just a gift. It is a gift that is made available to you, free of charge, because someone else picked up the town and gives you the benefit.

And that someone else, of course, is Jesus Christ. So, when you were baptized into Christ, you were baptized into his death. You were baptized into the payment that he made for sin as though you were making the payment.

This is called identification with Christ. This is what the old spiritual is about. Were you there when they crucified my Lord? 2,000 years ago, were you there?

[22 : 14] If you are a believer in Jesus Christ, you were there. Well, how can that be? I wasn't even thought of 2,000 years ago. No, but God knew you were coming and all believers, all believers through all the ages have been crucified with Christ and raised with Christ and seated with Christ in heavenly places.

That's how God uses. We are looking at this from God's perspective. We may say, well, I don't feel like I've been crucified. Your feeling has got nothing to do with it.

Absolutely nothing to do with it. A lot of people don't feel like they're sinners either. But trust me, you are. We all are. There's not a one of us that isn't.

We're all sinners. Every one of us. Now, let's read on in Romans 6. Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized or identified into Christ Jesus have been baptized into his death?

Therefore, we have been buried with him through baptism into death in order that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.

[23 : 35] And this walk, of course, has to do with our lifestyle, our attitudes and actions throughout the day. Your daily walk is the way you conduct your life, the way you live your life. That's the biblical meaning of the word walk.

For, verse 5, if we have become united with him in the likeness of his death, certainly we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection.

Knowing this, that our old self was crucified with him, that our body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin.

For he who has died is freed from sin. Now, the typical way to read that, verse 7, is this. Well, you just go through life as a Christian and you sin, of course, because even though we're Christians, we're still human, we're still flawed, and we're still failing in many ways, and we get on right now, sorts, and we lose our temper, and we say things we shouldn't say, and we cheat on our income taxes, and all the rest, but then when you die, you don't have to worry about sin anymore, because as a corpse, as somebody who's died, laid out there in the funeral home in that expensive casket, and your spirit is with the Lord, you're not going to sin anymore, because you're dead.

But that's not what it's talking about at all. The death that is involved here is our death in Christ, and with Christ, and when the text talks about he who has died is freed from sin, that means now, not when you die.

[25 : 36] We are freed from sin, now, today, as a believer. Well, if that's true, then why is it that I still sin sometimes?

That's what we're talking about. Christ, and this is why. Knowing that, Christ, having been raised from the dead, is never to die again, death no longer is master over him.

Alright? For the death that he died, he died to sin once for all, but the life that he lives, he lives to God. Even so, consider, reckon, count on yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.

I think it was Dr. A.W. Tozer that said, the Christian life does not mean that the Christian is unable to sin, but it means that the Christian is able not to sin.

Big difference. Huge difference. is it possible that you have an ability not to sin?

[27 : 16] Of course. That's exactly what the text is saying. And the reason you have an ability not to sin is that even as a believer, you have a human will that remains intact.

God does not override your will. God does not overpower your will and make you make the right choice when you're concerned with choice.

He doesn't do that. Your volition remains very much intact. And when I sin, I choose to sin.

I don't have to choose to sin, but it's easy for me to do. sin. What can prevent that?

That's precisely what this whole text is talking about. And it begins with understanding and reckoning who and what you are in Christ. Now let's go back a few verses, and let's look at verse 6.

[28 : 25] Our old self, what is the old self? That is the old Adamic nature with which we were all born. And the only person who ever lived who was not born with a sinful Adamic nature was Jesus Christ.

He who knew no sin was made sin for us. He did not have a sinful nature. That's what qualified him to die as a substitute for sinners. we have an old sin nature.

It is our Adamic nature. And the proof that we have that is the fact that we are going to die physically. Even as believers, the most godly Christian who ever lived still died physically.

this old Adamic nature, the old self, the sin nature, the Adam nature, the ego, the human ego, it dwells in these physical bodies.

We don't know where it dwells. Nobody's ever seen one. Your human nature, your old sin nature, in my opinion, this is a wise man opinion, it is part of the makeup of your human spirit.

[29 : 57] And it is your human spirit that commandeers and activates the body. It is the human spirit that animates the body. James says the body without the spirit is dead.

It is that human spirit within that dictates to the body what it's going to do. In that human spirit there is the human will and volition, the decision maker.

You decide things in your spirit. I equate this, or at least I cannot separate this from the human mind as opposed to the brain.

The brain is physical, the mind is not. And they are very much interrelated and interworking. The old Adamic nature dwells in that human nature with which we were originally born.

It is still with you even though you become a believer in Jesus Christ, you do not lose this old nature. You will lose it when you die, physically.

[31 : 07] But as long as you are alive, the old sin nature is alive and well. Your old sin nature is what you use to sin with. As a Christian, you do not have to use it.

You may use it. You may opt for a godly decision that comes through the Spirit of God controlling your life, or you may, with your will, lapse into a fleshly decision whereby you act in a non-Christian way, in your attitude or your actions.

Now we are confronted with this possibility every day, sometimes every hour. You just go through life all day long being confronted with all kinds of decisions that you have to make.

Some involve right and wrong. Some are moral issues. Some have to do with your attitude. Some have to do with your thought life. But every time, every day, all day long, we are confronted with a whole bevy of decisions.

You can work and operate out of the flesh, which is carnality. You can live as a fleshly believer whose lifestyle is so contrary to Christianity that nobody would even think you were a Christian.

[32 : 39] because you didn't have any characteristics of a Christian. You were just behaving like the world behaves. Christians can do that. You certainly have no justification for doing it.

But Christians can do that. And sometimes it can even get to the point where God says, I've gotten out two large two-by-fours to use on you.

You haven't paid any attention to either one of them. I'm not going to fool with you anymore and I'm not going to leave you here to disgrace my name anymore. Come on home. And he just takes you home prematurely.

I think that has happened. And this may very well be what John is referring to when he talks about the sin and the death in 1 John. It simply means, refusing to submit to God's will and insisting on going your own way to a certain point that God just said, that's enough.

Come on. And sometimes that happens. So as a believer, you have the option. You can be filled with the flesh, let the flesh dominate, you follow a pattern of fleshliness whereby your standards and your values and your actions and your activities and everything about you is just like the world's.

- [34 : 10] This is exactly what was going on in the church at Carr. And Paul said, I am so concerned about you people there. What you ought to do is you ought to stop and ask yourself whether you're really in the faith.

Whether you really are in Christ. Did you really make a decision for Christ or are you just kidding yourself? Because you're acting in such a carnal manner and such a carnal lifestyle and your values and standards are just like those of the pagan world out of which you come.

it makes me wonder whether you're really coming out of it or whether you're still part of it. And here is where it begins.

In verse 11, consider yourselves to be dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus. Therefore, do not let sin reign in your mortal body that you should obey its lusts.

Means exactly what it says. Do not let sin reign. Call the shots. Be on the throne. In your mortal body that you should obey its lusts.

- [35 : 44] What this means is exactly what it says. You can choose to let it reign or not let it reign. It's up to you. Godliness of life is a choice.

You can make it or not. And verse 13, do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness.

What are these members of our body that we can present to sin? What are these members? They are my eyes and my ears, my hands and my feet.

Those are the things we use to carry out a program of sinful behavior. We take in what we see with our eyes and our ears.

- [37 : 01] There are things that you will use your eyes and ears to listen to and to see and you know very well that you shouldn't.

That this is not good for you, it is not right, it is not honoring to the Lord, but you do it anyway. Why do you do that? Because you want to.

Because you choose to. don't give me this, I am just so weak and so helpless. I am a victim, I can't help it, this just overpowers me.

Or one that sounds even. more of what shall I say, helping us off the hook, the devil made me do it.

Remember the old flip Wilson, the devil made him do everything? We blame it on somebody else. Do you know where the buck stops? It stops with you.

- [38 : 07] It stops with me. we made choices. We choose to do things.

Now granted, we may through behavior, we may condition ourselves in such a way that it becomes more and more difficult for us to resist.

We condition ourselves and we put ourselves in a position of extreme weakness and vulnerability whereby we seem to have less and less power to say no.

We give in so much easier. Repetition does that. I remember hearing about the confessions of a serial killer.

A man who with his bare hands had murdered over 20 people over a period of a year. And he said, well, you know, after the first few, it gets easier.

- [39 : 22] Can you imagine that? That's the way sin is. It gets a grip. It gets a hold on you. It is paralyzing.

It's debilitating. lowers our faculties to where we just have less and less power because we just surrender it and more and more in bits and pieces and the next thing you know, we give over to it.

You know what you call that? what the world calls it is, the world calls it an addiction. The Bible calls it lust.

Lust. It is an insatiable craving and desire for more. and it doesn't have to be just sexual lust.

It can be monetary lust. It can be the lust of fame. It can be the lust of popularity. It can be the lust of anything like that that drives us and motivates us.

[40 : 25] But at any rate, it is a decision. So when he says, do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness, why do you suppose he said that?

It's because that's what people do. So what Paul is saying here through the Spirit of God is, hey, stop it. Stop it. You don't have to do that.

Oh, yes I do because I'm addicted. I'm just under the power of this thing and I don't have any power or any ability. I'm just so weak.

That's nonsense. That's all denial. That's all cop-out talk. That is trying to present ourselves as a victim. We can't help it.

It's not my fault. But let me tell you something. You will never change if that's your mentality. You will never, ever change because you've already convinced yourself that you can.

[41 : 33] You see, when we move into a sphere of irresponsibility which is just denial. That's what it is.

It's denial. As long as we think it's not my fault, I can't help it, then you can't change it because the power for any change is outside of you and you can't control what's outside of you.

but the minute we are willing to say, you know what, it is my fault.

I'm to blame you. I am responsible. then you're in a position to do something about it because only you can do something about you.

This is called taking responsibility. You step up to the plate and you take ownership and you say, hey, I am the guilty person here.

[42 : 46] I am the fault. this is my problem. That is a breakthrough of unparalleled proportions.

It is amazing what can happen when one takes responsibility for their own actions. Don't blame your upbringing. Don't blame your mate. Don't blame a failed marriage.

Don't blame a failed childhood. Don't blame it. Say, I am responsible. The ball is in my court. Then and only then are you in a position to do something about it.

And let me tell you something. This is a big, big idea. Do you realize this is exactly the reason why most people who reject Christ do so?

Because they are unwilling to come to terms with their own moral failure and their own sin and they come off with, well, I'm not that better. I'm better than that.

[43 : 44] I don't need that. I think I can make it on my life. That's all denial. They are not living in the real world. And that causes them to say, I don't need this Jesus thing.

I don't need that. I'm okay the way I am. That's all part of the denial mechanism. And nothing changes. This is gut level reality stuff.

Let me tell you. And this has been around for 2,000 years. This is what the world needs. This is a dose of reality. Do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God because you can.

as those alive from the dead and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.

All of these members, eyes, ears, tongue, hands, and feet that we use to sin with. We can also use those very same instruments to serve and bless God and bless others with.

[44 : 57] Same arm, same leg, same eyes, different focus, different objective, different attitude. For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law, but under grace.

What an incredible passage. I tell you, Pastor Rosenthal and I spent quite a bit of time in this Romans chapter 6 and it is as valuable to him and means as much to him as it does to me.

We've had a lot of good discussions about it. This is the actual key. This is the sum and substance of the Christian life and it all has to do with reckoning yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin.

And this goes back to the key verse in verse 6. Our old self was crucified with him that our body of sin might be done away with. Well, if it's done away with, how is it that we manage to utilize it so often?

Good question. And here is the problem. Some translations, I think the King James talks about the body of sin might be destroyed.

[46 : 09] Well, if it is destroyed, then it is defunct. It's unable to operate. But somehow or another, we always manage to get it in here, don't we?

So, what is going on here? And the word simply means to be destroyed, it simply means to be rendered in poverty, or to be neutralized, or to be brought to the place where it has no real power over you anymore.

That's the idea. It's there, but it has no real power over you anymore, except that which you give it.

And what do you use? To give it is power over you. Your will. Your volition. Your decider.

believer. It means that when you became a believer in Jesus Christ, you were equipped and outfitted with everything that you need to live the Christian life as God enables you and wants you to live it.

[47 : 35] Probably very few of us do that, but it isn't because God has shortchanged us and hasn't given us the ability. God has given you the ability to be just as spiritual as he wants you to be.

The old sin nature that is in the life and the mind of every believer has been rendered neutralized, ineffective, and powerless by this new power that God provided that he has put in us.

This is Christ in us, the hope of glory, and he is more than able to overcome that old sin nature that would, if it could, rule the roost.

You are in the middle. You and your will are right here. The old sin nature is over here. The spirit of God to whom we are to submit ourselves is over here.

You are in the middle. You decide which way this thing is going to go. You do not have the power. You have the will. Now I want to make a careful distinction here because this is very, very important.

[48 : 53] Very important. Someone has said, and I think rightly so, living the Christian life is not difficult. It is impossible. impossible. I believe that.

Only Jesus Christ is capable of living the Christian life. And he wants to use your body as a vehicle through which you can do that.

And as you submit yourself to the spirit of God, to Jesus Christ, to the will of God, to the authority of scripture, you are placing yourself at his disposal, and you are enabling him to use his power.

You are, think of it this way, I know this sounds, I know this really sounds off base, but I'm convinced that it's true. You are giving God permission to utilize his power on your behalf.

And our initial thought is, well, God doesn't need my permission to do anything. Yes, he does. And I'll tell you why he does. He needs your permission because he is not going to just barge in and overwhelm your will and crush your will and crush your volition and beat you down so that you have no choice but to be submissive to him.

[50 : 11] He does not do that. If that's what you're waiting for, you're going to wait a long time because he's not going to do that. God wants to use you and work in you in a cooperative manner.

He is pleased to partner with you in the process, not because he has to, but because he wants to. He chooses to.

He wants to utilize you. He wants to provide his power, but he will not use his power against your will. Think of that. Think of that.

God will not use his power against your will. God does not make you make the right choice, but he has provided you with everything you need to make the right choice.

I don't know of a better way to illustrate this, and it doesn't get the job done, but it's the only one I can think of, and it's the only one I've ever come up with, that adequately demonstrates it.

[51 : 29] Who really lives the Christian life? Jesus Christ alone lives the Christian life in you. This is what Paul meant in that passage we began with. I am crucified with Christ.

Nevertheless, I live. Yet not I, but Christ lives in me. And the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faithfulness of the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me.

That means the ability and the power to live the life I need to live is not mine. It's his. It's his. It's his power.

But who determines whether or not his power will be used? I do. So the buck stops with me.

With my will. When you take a firearm and you insert a round in the chamber, and you pull the trigger and the hammer hits the rim or the center of that shell, there is an explosion that takes place.

[52 : 51] It is a confined explosion because it is reduced to a very small area that you are holding there in your hand. But there is a powerful explosion that takes place.

And as a result of that explosive energy, the round is propelled through the barrel, which is its only way of escape.

It's got to get out of there some way because of all this energy that has been created. And it is propelled out through the barrel of that weapon and it goes to wherever it's pointed.

energy. That is power. That is energy. That is explosive dynamic energy. What caused it?

Well, we can talk about the semantics of the explosion and the contact and the powder and all the rest. But we know, as the old saying goes, guns don't kill people, people kill people.

[54 : 03] And that's true. Who pulls the trigger? Whoever's holding that weapon in their hand and they pull it.

And when they pull the trigger, there is an incredible amount of energy that is released. Now, they don't make the explosion.

They don't provide power. All we do is pull the trigger. The mechanism that is already set up for that, it, as a result, provides all of the power and energy and next projectile comes rushing out of that barrel at tremendous velocity.

But the one who pulls the trigger makes the decision, do they not, as to whether or not I will pull the trigger.

And when you pull the trigger, you set something in motion by way of consequence. This is exactly as I see it in the Christian life. The power to make right decisions is not yours.

[55 : 16] If you think it is, you will fail again and again and again because you don't have the power. You don't have the ability. Neither do I. But Jesus Christ does.

And when you exercise your will and you acknowledge you are not sufficient for this thing, you don't have the power, you don't have the ability, you are weak, you are incapable, but Jesus Christ is not.

And Lord, I want to acknowledge all of these things. I can't do it, but you can. May I yield myself to you and will you do for me what I can't do for myself?

And will you take on this thing for me in my stead? Will you be my power and my influence? I'm yielding to you.

He will. He will. I don't believe I'm anybody special.

[56 : 26] But He's done it for me time and time and time and time again. And I can't believe that it will not be the case for every believer who utilizes.

This is what God is providing. And He wants to do it in concert with our will, not against our will. Spirituality, submission to God, living a godly life, is our responsibility.

But it is His provision that enables us to do so. But He will not do it against our will. He will do it in concert with our will. That is incredible.

Now that makes me more responsible that makes Him more worth you. I know this is probably generating a lot of questions.

Feel free to write them out if you want. You'll get a better answer if you write out your questions and drop them in the box. And we'll talk about it next week. Maybe next week we will open with Q&A; because this is probably going to generate a lot of questions and a lot of controversy and I welcome it all.

[57 : 38] So let's pray. We're grateful Father for the provision that you have made for us. It has been here for 2,000 years and yet it has often escaped many in the Christian community.

We don't want Grace Bible Church to be another congregation that has found it to be escaping from us.

We want to utilize this because you have graciously provided this for us and we want to implement out of gratitude all that you have provided. If there's anyone here this morning that does not have that personal relationship with Jesus Christ we trust that you will give them no rest and no peace until they come to know him and to know his life eternal.

In Christ's name we pray. Amen.