

The Formula for Spiritual Victory

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[0 : 00] This morning we are going to devote our time together to our review session of Romans chapter 6. As has been our custom in the past, when we complete a significant portion of Scripture, we attempt to go back over it, tying together some loose ends, and endeavoring to put the entirety of the passage into a larger perspective.

We've shared with you numerous times in the past, and I'm sure we will be doing so throughout the 16th chapter of Romans, that the basic underlying theme of this epistle is the righteousness of God.

I have a number of statements or positions that I want to set forth before we get right into the 6th chapter proper, so bear with me, if you will, as we simply introduce these things as a matter of record, and I want to read to you what I have written, then we'll move into the material.

God's own righteousness is the only righteousness that his perfection can allow him to accept. Therefore, all human righteousness is rejected by God.

It is very acceptable to other men, but not to God. This moral human deficiency is embarrassingly and emphatically played out in Romans chapter 1 through chapter 3 and verse 20.

[1 : 21] Commencing then in Romans 3.21, incorporating also chapters 4 and 5, we have a detailed divine accomplishment that spells out how God provided for man that which he required from man and then offered to man for the taking.

This is borne out in Romans 3.21 through 28. Let me read that if I may. Turn to it please. Romans 3.21 through 28. This is the very heartbeat and essence of our redemption.

But now, apart from law, the righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets, even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe, for there is no distinction, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified as a gift by his grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in his blood through faith.

This was to demonstrate his righteousness, because in the forbearance of God he passed over the sins previously committed. For the demonstration, I say, of his righteousness at the present time, that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

Where then is boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? Of works? No, but by a law of faith. For we maintain that man is justified by faith apart from works of the law.

[3 : 05] And when Paul made that statement, it hit like a bombshell. It brought a kind of doctrinal, cataclysmic, emotional, psychological upheaval among all Jews.

And yet it should not have. Because what Paul was teaching was not something new. It was something old. And he demonstrated the validity of it by using Abraham as an example from history, as one who was justified by faith.

And what Paul is saying, in essence, is, listen, this isn't some new doctrine I'm teaching. This thing is as old as our father Abraham. He goes on then in the fourth chapter, a tremendous chapter, and lays this out in an unmistakable fashion.

How that Abraham, our father, was justified by faith before he was ever circumcised. So, Paul says, don't try to tie Abraham's salvation in with his circumcision.

He became a believer. He became justified. He became declared righteous by God before he was ever circumcised. And I want to call Abraham to witness.

[4 : 18] And then he goes on and talks about David as well before he comes back to Abraham again. And he says, just as David in 4.6 also speaks of the blessing upon the man to whom God reckons righteousness apart from works.

And here is what David said. And that means, spiritually favored and well advantaged is the man whose sins God will not tabulate.

Fantastic. Wonderful concept. But you see, the problem is this. When Paul began preaching this and spelling out in detail that man is justified by faith apart from the works of the law, the reason that it was received in such hostile fashion is because that truth had been lost.

This truth had historically escaped them. And when Paul came on the scene not teaching some new doctrine, but simply reviving what is laid down as far back as Genesis 15.6, he met with all kinds of opposition.

Heresy, they cried. This man's teaching against the law. And Paul says, I'm not. I'm not teaching against the law. What I am teaching actually establishes the law. It brings the full weight of the law to bear on the issue.

[5 : 39] I'm not destroying the law. I'm not taking away anything from the law. I'm telling you, the law is formidable. The law is demanding. The law needs to be reckoned with.

And what I am saying, that man is justified by faith, is simply pointing out the severity of the law and the critical issues involving the law. And it is telling us that we cannot be justified by the works of the law because none of us, none of us can measure up to God's standard.

That's why justification by faith has to be. It has to be that way. If we're not justified by faith, we're all doomed. All of us. There's no hope for anybody. Now, may I say this?

This truth of justification by faith has been lost again. It is ever in danger of being lost. Man has an innate tendency to lose everything that doesn't make him look good.

And this doesn't. When Martin Luther came on the scene in the 1500s and was awakened by this pounding, throbbing truth, the justified man is the one who has faith in Christ.

[6 : 47] He is the justified man. And Martin Luther began preaching that. Immediately the hue and cry went up. This man is a heretic. Do you hear what he's saying? That works count for nothing.

That human righteousness is no good at all. And the same kind of accusation was hurled against Luther as was hurled against Paul. Oh, shall we sin then that grace may abound?

Let's sin all we can so all the grace that can will abound. And on both counts they were wrong. And I dare say that in many, many, many churches today, justification by faith has gone right out the window.

Or it has never been there. And what do you hear? What do you hear in the average pulpit across the land? You're all nice, sweet, lovely people. You're okay and I'm okay. And let's all try to be better. And let's all try to have a better year.

And let's do better. And let's be kinder. And let's love more. And all the rest of this humanistic tripe that never gets the job done. But it sounds good. Oh, my. People love to be stroked.

[7 : 45] They love to be just, you know, sit there in the pew and be told how nice they are and all the rest of it. But that's not the truth of the matter. The truth of the matter is we are all alien and foreign to God.

We are all estranged from God. We are all under the curse. We are all under the ban. We deserve to be there. And that's where we are. Our sin has placed us there. And Jesus Christ died in our place to give us a level, a degree, a quality of righteousness that makes us accepted in him.

And all of our righteousness is attributed to the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross. And we are free. We are forgiven. We are blessed. We are seated with Christ in the heavenlies.

It's an utterly fantastic concept. One, I fear, to which many, many of God's people have not come. Then in chapter 5, he deals with the results of justification by faith.

And we saw the cornucopia, the things that God has provided for those who love him that are the byproduct, if you will, of salvation. That is all spelled out in chapter 5, as well as the great theme of our solidarity in Adam and our solidarity in Christ.

[8 : 55] We are in union with him in an inseparable way. And there is no way that those who are in union with Christ can ever be separated from him.

We are of the same plant. We are of the same person. We are bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh. We are in Christ, and Christ is in us, the hope of glory. That is an absolutely fantastic concept.

And words fail me in my limited human vocabulary to ever begin expressing what we really possess in Jesus Christ. Utterly, utterly wonderful. Then Paul makes this monumental statement in chapter 5 and verse 21, that as sin reigned in death, even so, grace might reign.

And the key there is the word reign, that grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. Now, eternal life is the end product of this.

That's where this thing is going to end, which is another way of saying that it isn't ever going to end. That eternal life will be the ultimate realization. But the thing I do not want you to lose sight of is that grace reigning through righteousness is now.

[10 : 11] Today. Today. It isn't simply when you die and go to heaven. God has provided, he has set this scheme of redemption and personal salvation up in such a way that grace might reign in your life and my life now, today.

You don't have to wait until you die for grace to reign in your life. How is it that grace reigns in our life? What are the mechanics of this? How does it work out? And that's the basis of chapter 6, which deals with the mechanics of walking with Christ.

In chapter 6, in verse 1, the apostle anticipates the kind of question that is likely to come from his detractors on the basis of what he has said in chapter 5.

What shall we say then? Where is this leading us? What kind of conclusion are we coming to? Are we to continue in sin that grace might increase? Is anybody thinking that that's what we're suggesting?

How could anybody think that? My answer is, God forbid. Meganoito. Anybody who has tasted of the grace of God, anybody who has had their heart regenerated and warmed through and through by the living Christ, simply cannot reason this way.

[11 : 33] Aha! Now I'm in Christ. I can do whatever I want to do and it doesn't make any difference. Paul is saying, if that's your attitude, something is definitely wrong. Because when Christ comes in and the individual is regenerated and becomes a child of God, he has a new master.

He also has some new desires. He wants to please that new master. Oh, he will not always succeed. There will be times that he will fail miserably, but his failures will mean something to him.

He won't want to fail. He will know that he has wounded his Lord's heart, and it will wound his heart as well. No one is suggesting at all that we might sin, that grace might increase.

Paul was charged earlier, you'll recall, in chapter 3 with teaching in verse 8. And why not say, as we are slanderously reported and as some affirm that we say, Paul says, I know what's going around.

I know what people are saying about me. I know what I've been accused of. And I'll tell you what it is, brethren. It's slander. It's slander.

[12 : 45] Some have actually accused me of saying, let us do evil that good may come. Well, people who charge us with that kind of foolishness have their just end.

They cannot be speaking from the viewpoint of a regenerated man. He says, their condemnation is just. Are we to continue in sin that grace might increase?

May it never be. How shall we who died to sin still live in it? That is a rhetorical kind of question that is designed to set forth a declared absurdity.

It's preposterous. Why, it's the most stupid thing I've ever heard of. That's what Paul is saying. It is a blatant contradiction in terms that we who are dead to sin can still live in it.

Can't be. Utterly ridiculous. If we are dead to sin, we cannot live in it. If we are living in it, it is because we are not dead to it. In fact, he goes on to give the remaining several verses down through verse 14 as an answer to this one question he has posed in verse 2.

[13 : 55] How shall we who died to sin still live in it? Died to sin is the basic underlying concept for the victorious life in Jesus Christ.

I mean, presuming, of course, that an individual is already plugged in to the reality of redemption. He is a believer in Christ and he knows that his faith and his trust is in Christ.

Then the next thing he needs to know in his walk with Christ is this. He is dead to sin. He really is dead to sin. It is an aorist tense.

It emphasizes the completeness, the finality of the act. Before being justified by faith, we were dead in sin, according to Ephesians 2, and you hath he quickened or made alive who were dead in trespasses and sins, and so on.

Now, we are not dead in sin. We are dead to sin. And we have looked at some of the ways this has been defined. What are you going to do with the phrase? We died to sin.

[15 : 03] Some say, well, what that means is that sin doesn't have the hold on us that it used to have. Well, I trust that's true, but that certainly doesn't answer to the statement. Some say, and this to me is very, very far out, some say we died to sin.

That means we don't sin anymore. Well, those of us around here don't put much stock in that because we all know each other too well, don't we? We know ourselves well enough too.

Some say what this means, we died to sin, means that we ought to live like we're dead to sin. But Paul doesn't say anything about that. He says we died to sin. And some say, well, that means we are dying more and more to sin as the days go on.

Well, that certainly ought to be true also in the sense of our progressive sanctification and our walk in Christ. We ought to be conformed more and more to Christ today than what we were yesterday, but that doesn't answer to it.

Others say that means we died to sin's guilt and sin's penalty. Well, that's true, we did that too. But what Paul says is we died to sin. Now, if it does not mean that we died to sin, then I submit that it is an enormous opportunity for misunderstanding about a very, very important issue.

[16 : 13] I find it difficult to believe, if not impossible, that the Spirit of God writing through Paul could have been so vague with such an important truth. We died to sin.

What it means simply is that legally, judicially, positionally, we are dead to sin. We aren't sick and we aren't dying towards sin.

We are dead to sin. We really are. But it does not mean that a believer cannot sin. We have established, I think, the meaning of this in the context and we went back to 521 for the basis of it and we see that the apostle is talking about a reign.

We are dead to the reign and the rule and the dominion and the jurisdiction of sin. We really are. That means, this is a glorious, glorious thing.

That means that sin's power. I'm not talking about S-I-N-S. I'm talking about S-I-N-apostrophe-S.

[17 : 18] Sin's power and jurisdiction and authority over us as believers in Jesus Christ has been canceled, neutralized, made of none effect.

We are set free. This means that for the first time in your life you have the power to choose between sinning and not sinning insofar as God is concerned.

Now, some say there are a great many unregenerate people who make choices every day between sinning and not sinning. But here is an important distinction and I want you to note this. An unregenerate person cannot do anything but sin insofar as God is concerned.

He can do a lot of good things so far as his fellow man is concerned. But the scriptures make it clear that even the plowing of the wicked is sin. Isn't that something?

You mean to tell me old Joe Dokes here is a sinner, goes out and plows his field and that's sin? That's right. That's sin. Everything he does is sin.

[18 : 30] Every breath he takes is sin. Every act he commits is sin. Because all of these things are produced from the one and only nature that he has. The old Adamic nature. And he is in the flesh and they that are in the flesh cannot please God.

He may be a nice man. He may be a generous man. He may be a good man. He may be loving. He may be thoughtful. He may be a good father. He may be a good provider. He may be a good citizen. He may pay his bills on time.

He never beats his wife. He never kicks the dog. He's a nice guy. But everything he does is sin. Because everything that an unregenerate man presents to God as a work is an evil work.

If it is not under the righteousness of Christ, it is worthless. It is sin. We must make a distinction between sin and sins.

There is a vast distinction. Someone has said it's a quaint little quip that's probably been around for hundreds of years. But it's true and I've never found a better way to say it.

[19 : 32] We sin. We are not sinners because we sin. But we sin because we are sinners. That is not a play on words.

There is a profound difference there. Sin is that which governs, rules, and reigns. Sin is that which governs, rules, and sins are the fruit and the product of that.

It is as though sin and the sin nature is the tree or the root. And sins are the fruits that are produced by that tree.

Where man is wrong, so far as God is concerned, is not so much in the fruit as in the root. Men go around trying to improve the quality of fruit.

And it is all to no avail. The problem lies in the root. It is in the heart of the tree that needs to be changed. We can enact all kinds of social legislation.

[20 : 32] We can improve people's lifestyle. We can increase and up the standard of living and make the place a better world to live in. We can feed people better and clothe people better and provide for people better.

But that doesn't make better people. Because you cannot accomplish that through any kind of legislation or good deeds or morality. It is something that begins on the inside. And only God can do that.

And God has chosen to do that through the proclamation of the gospel of the grace of God. Then he goes on in verse 3 to say, Do you not know?

This is one of Paul's favorite expressions. And he doesn't mean to be asking the question from the standpoint that, Well, I'm not really sure you people know this. What he is suggesting here is, Surely you do know, don't you?

This is the idea. It is a rhetorical question that means Paul is saying, I know you know this. I know you understand this. And I'm building my case on this. Now use what you already know to go on and understand what you do not know.

[21 : 34] Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into his death? That means, and I'm going to take the liberty of exchanging a word here that I think conveys the idea better.

I'm not going to become involved in the issue of water baptism except to say that I am confident. This is a spiritual baptism here that it has nothing whatever to do with water regardless of what you feel about water baptism.

It is not in verse 3. What Paul is saying is this. Do you not know that all of us who have been identified into Christ Jesus have been identified into his death?

What he is saying is, We are identified, we who are identified with Christ are identified with him in every way. His death, he is going to go on and say, his burial and his resurrection. We are not partly identified with Christ.

We are identified with Christ in every way. In everything he accomplished, we accomplished with him. So that when Christ died to sin, we died to sin. Now do you not understand?

[22 : 43] That is where Paul gets the basis for the idea of our being dead to sin. When did I ever die to sin? I died to sin. At Calvary. I was in Christ.

I am crucified with Christ. Nevertheless, I live. Yet not I, but Christ lives in me, Paul says. When Christ died, you died. Are you in Christ? Have you received Christ as your personal Savior?

If you have, when he was on that cross, you were there with him. This is, you know, these old Negro spirituals got up some pretty good theology down there in those cotton fields.

And they were right on target when they said, were you there when they crucified my Lord? Doesn't mean, were you standing there watching him die? It means, are you in Christ?

Were you there when they laid him in the tomb? Were you there when he rose up from the grave? Which is another way of saying, are you in union with Christ? And we can answer. We who know him, yes, we were there.

[23 : 45] Judicially, legally, spiritually. From God's point of view, we were there. We died the death that he died. Now, what the apostle is saying in verse 3 is this. Something very dramatic and dynamic and real happened as a result of this baptism.

And I care not what you think regarding water baptism. There is nothing real and dynamic that happens when somebody is plunged in water or sprinkled in water or however. People who believe in it strongly are certainly entitled to their beliefs, but I am suggesting that at best, at best, it is symbolic.

And that nothing of real substance happens when that water is applied. You are not made a Christian by being baptized. But what Paul is saying in verse 3 is, this baptism that is involved here is baptism that did something.

It accomplished something. It resulted in something. And what it resulted in was eternal life. You were identified with Jesus Christ in his death. Therefore, we have been buried with him through baptism to 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.

We too might walk in newness of life. This is newness in quality or kind, not in point of time. It doesn't mean an old life made over. It means a life that is totally different and totally distinct from anything you've ever known.

[25 : 19] This is the life of 2 Corinthians 5.17. If any man be in Christ, he is a new creation. Not an old creation warmed over, modified, recycled, and rebuilt.

Totally new. Totally new. Then, he uses the phrase in verse 5, if we have become united with him, and this is a first class conditional clause that can be rendered since, probably should be too, since we have been or become united with him in the likeness of his death, certainly we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection.

He is saying the one is guaranteed by the other. Do you want to be sure that you will be in his likeness in his resurrection? Well, if you have been united with him in the likeness of his death, you most certainly will be.

And the sense there is that which establishes a certainty. It is not an if of question. 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.

When? Now. Today. Today. From the point in time that we are in Christ henceforth. This is not something by and by.

[26 : 38] It is now. And the burden and emphasis of this passage is our daily walk with Christ now. And this is the dynamic for it. This is how all of this comes about.

This verse, by the way, is an extremely problematical and controversial verse among believers. It is this particular verse that has given rise to the teaching of perfectionism or the eradication of the old nature.

Your King James renders it that the body of sin might be destroyed. And some have taken that to mean annihilation, where that the old sin nature is just completely obliterated. And if the old nature is completely obliterated, then you don't have anything left to sin with.

Therefore, you never sin. You may express righteous indignation. You may make mistakes. You may have shortcomings, but you do not sin. Of course, that requires a radical redefinition of what sin is.

But I think that the true meaning of the word here is not destroyed at all. It is the idea of neutralized, shut down, rendered idle, brought into a useless position.

[27 : 49] That's the meaning of done away with. Also, we should note that the body of sin here does not mean sinful body. There is nothing inherently sinful about our body. Our body, however, is the instrument that we use to commit sin.

But the body itself is not sinful. Any more than a gun may be an instrument that someone uses for evil purposes, but the gun is not evil in and of itself. Same could be said for any other kind of weapon.

The body is the physical outer extension of the inner person, and we use the body to do those things that we want to do and perform those acts that we want to perform.

The body is, as it were, a slave to the mind. The mind is a slave to the old sin nature. But when the old sin nature is neutralized and canceled, that affects the mind.

The mind has something else to draw upon in addition to or apart from that old source that it was cranking out. Therefore, it can dictate new and worthy commands to the body, which it could not do before.

[28 : 55] And the body, in being used for sinful purposes, need not be used that way any longer. You now, for the first time, have a choice. You can please God or you can please yourself.

Before Christ came in, you couldn't please God. All you could do was please yourself and sin. And the conclusion then, in verse 7, is for he who has died is freed from sin.

That's surely true, isn't it? But when? Now. Not later. He who has died is free from sin. I'm amazed that the vast majority of Christians, with just a superficial reading, and I myself among them, I must confess, would just read that and lift it out of its context.

He who has died is freed from sin. Oh, he sure is. He sure is. Old Joe Bloop had a heart attack last week, and he died and has gone to heaven. He's with the Lord. He's sure free from sin now.

Boy, he who has died is free from sin. He really is. He's gone to his reward, we say. But that isn't what Paul's talking about. He's not talking about physical death here. What he is saying is, those who are identified with Jesus Christ, and are in union with him, are freed from sin.

[30 : 04] Today. Today. Today. Today. Not when the old man is dead, but today. We are free. And any kind of dabbling that we may engage in, so far as sin is concerned, is strictly a matter of personal choice.

Dr. A. W. Tozer, who for a number of years was the head of the Christian Missionary Alliance Church, and published their magazine, and so on, made the distinction, a very profound distinction, but a very simple one, when he said, it is not that a Christian, it is not the idea that a Christian cannot sin, but rather it is the idea that a Christian need not sin.

It isn't that we cannot sin, it is that we need not sin. And that's exactly what Paul is saying here. We now have a choice.

We now have a power that is resident within us, that is greater than he that is in the world, that actually provides us with the dynamic and the power to make the right choice.

And this means we are fully responsible creatures for exercising our will when we are confronted with a right and a wrong choice. None of this nonsense.

[31 : 28] I couldn't help it. I was just so weak. I gave in. I didn't want to, but I did it anyway. Hey, that's an unbeliever talking.

Now, a Christian may say, well, yes, I did thus and so, and I know it was wrong and I just couldn't help them out. No, no, no. The only honest statement a Christian can make in a situation like that is, I did it and I did it because I wanted to.

I chose to do it. Do you know what that does? It triggers a mechanism within you that makes you confront your own responsible area of choice and it makes you realize, and I'll say this, you are really then in a position to make some corrections.

As long as we can find some sucker, some patsy to blame our shortcomings on, we'll never really reckon with the issue. But when we come to grips and face the honesty of it that, hey, I'm the culprit.

I can't blame this on anybody else. This is my fault. This is my doing. When we face up to a situation like that, then there's something that can be done about it because we've got a right diagnosis and you can never really treat a problem until you've correctly diagnosed it.

[32 : 52] And as long as we go around trying to find scapegoats for our actions to defend ourselves for the wrong things that we do, we'll never really get to the heart of the problem. I am the heart of my problem.

Nobody else is. I am. I am responsible. I am not responsible for what you do or for what you say, but I'm responsible for my reaction to it.

I have no control over what others do, but it's a cop-out to say I have no control over what I do. I do too. I do so. Now, he who has died is freed from sin.

Now, not later. Now, if, another first-class condition, if and we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him, not in heaven by and by, now, today.

Of course, the in heaven by and by is understood, but that's not the burden of the message. It is now. Knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, is never to die again, death no longer is master over him.

[34 : 00] For the death that he died, he died to sin once for all. But the life that he lives, he lives to God. Now, says Paul, in the same way, that's the meaning of even so, consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.

That's an utterly fantastic verse. That is so packed. This, verse 11, is the first exhortation in the whole epistle to Rome.

Verse 11 is the first thing that Paul has told these people at Rome to do. Out of all the chapters that have gone behind, there has been explanation, there have been illustrations, there have been doctrinal points made, but he's never told them anything to do until you come to 611.

And this is the first exhortation. And what he says is, consider yourselves to be dead to sin. Why? Because you are. Reckon on that.

Act on that basis. Now, I want to make a very, very important distinction here. Listen. The Apostle Paul is not saying, Now, friends, I know that it's hard out there in that workaday world.

[35 : 19] It's a jungle out there. I know that. But here's what I want you to do. I just want you to think positively and try to think of yourselves as being dead to sin and maybe you can arrive where you will be.

Let's see if you can think your way to victory in this thing. Just keep filling your mind with positive thoughts and keep going around saying, Something good is going to happen to me today.

And lo and behold, the more you think that way, the more it's likely to happen. Well, I want to tell you something, friends. I'm convinced there is great value in positive thinking.

And why think negatively when you can think positively without using any more brain power? Besides, it feels a lot better. Too many Christians are negative in their thinking. What we need is a balance, however.

We shouldn't go overboard on positive thinking. Neither should we go overboard on negative thinking. What we need to do is think realistically. And here's what Paul is saying. I want you to consider, reckon, count it as a fact, yourselves to be dead to sin because you are.

[36 : 32] You are. Matter of fact, now you listen. Matter of fact, here's the distinction. You who are in Christ are dead to sin whether you reckon on it or not.

Whether you believe it or not. Whether you log it as fact or not. You are dead to sin. But, until and unless you begin considering yourself that and reckoning on that and counting it as a fact, you're not going to get any good out of it.

There will not be any practical benefit that you will be able to put into application until you start counting this as a fact not to make it so, but because it is so.

Strong positive thinking is worthless if it is not anchored to truth and reality. And no matter how much you think positively about a thing being so, if it isn't so, it isn't so.

And you're thinking good thoughts about it isn't going to make it so. But the burden of this verse is it is so. Now, do you want to get some good out of this? This is a doctrinal position.

[37 : 41] This thing is up here. You are dead to sin. It is legal. It is a judicial act. It is a spiritual act. It is real. In so far as God is concerned, it is as accomplished.

It is finished. It is over with. You are dead to sin. But, if you are not walking in that truth, anchored to that truth, reckoning upon that truth, considering that to be a fact because it is a fact, it's going to do you a precious little good.

You'll just wallow around in defeat and one reeling and rocking after one spiritual blitz after another. You won't get any. This is the basis for it all right here.

Here, the realization of your real position, you are dead to sin and you are alive to God in Christ Jesus. Therefore, because this is true, do not let sin reign in your mortal body that you should obey its lusts.

Now, we have already taken the position that sin cannot reign in the life of the believer if he is a believer. That's been brought out in 6.1 and 2. So, what Paul is saying here is not contradictory to what he has already said.

[38 : 51] He is saying, do not let sin reign in your mortal body that you should obey its lusts and I am suggesting that there is a vast difference between sin reigning in you and sin reigning in your mortal body.

The natural reaction is to say, well, good grief, they're one and the same. How can I separate myself from my mortal body? Paul does. Paul is saying that the real you is not your mortal body. The real you is made up of your mind, your emotion, your will, your intellect.

That's the real you. Your mortal body is just the place where these things are housed. Your mortal body is the physical manifestation by which we know you and can identify you.

Your mortal body consists of head and arms and eyes and legs and hands and all the rest of it. That's your mortal body. And when you allow sin to reign in your mortal body, you are using your body for purposes not pleasing to God and you don't have to.

Therefore, don't. The power of sin is canceled. You do not have to use your body as a slave to these vices. You've been freed from that.

[40 : 01] Where do you get off using your body as an instrument of sin? How can you possibly justify that? You have no basis for it. You have no excuse for it.

And what he's saying is, stop it. The implication in the Greek is, is that sin is reigning in the mortal body of these Romans. Knock it off!

That's what he's saying. You've been freed from that. You don't have to be subject to that. And do not go on. Here's the follow-up.

Presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness. But present, make a present of yourselves to God as those alive from the dead and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.

Why? Because you can. You've got a choice. For sin shall not be master over you.

[40 : 59] That doesn't mean sin should not be. It doesn't mean sin oughtn't to be. It means sin cannot be master over you. Shall not is a strong, strong, assertive statement.

Shall not be master over you. Cannot be master over you. Why? Because you've got another master. Your master's Christ. Sin cannot be master over you.

Now, sin can dominate your mortal body, but it cannot dominate you. A believer's body may be enslaved to sin. A believer cannot be enslaved to sin.

That is a very intricate distinction. It is one on which we must insist not only to avoid the contradiction, but to set down the mechanics of this, otherwise the whole system breaks down and simply will not work.

For you are not under law, but under grace. And all that means is that Paul is saying you have moved out from the sphere, from the dominion, from the jurisdiction of law, you are now under grace and a new master.

[42 : 11] That immediately prompts a new question by way of an accusation which Paul is anticipating. What then? When he says what then, what he means is, what do you think about that? What is our conclusion?

Now, when Paul says what then, he means, how does that lie with you? What's your reaction to that? Is somebody going to say, shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace?

Meganoito. This is another rhetorical question. He devotes the remainder of the chapter to answering that question. And he does so by saying, do you not know?

Which means you do know, don't you? I know that you know that when you present yourselves to someone as slaves for obedience, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin resulting in death or of obedience resulting in righteousness.

But, I love it, love it, but, thanks be to God, not thanks to your brilliant intellect, not thanks to your deep spiritual perception, thanks be to God, that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart.

[43 : 31] That's an inner attitude of conformity as opposed to outward compliance only. This is the thing that really makes a difference. Obedient from the heart.

You know, people can render obedience outwardly while they are rebelling inwardly. It is possible, you see, the law, the law that men make, even the law that God makes, the Mosaic law for instance, as well as traffic laws and whatever else have you, laws that men impose upon other men, they can demand and receive outward compliance.

they can pass a law that says you will pay income tax. That's the law. And we do it.

Now let me ask you this. We pay taxes outwardly. What do I mean we pay them outwardly? Well, we get that form, that wonderful 1040 form, and we get it all filled out and we get all the figures in the right place and we sign it and we joyfully, with exuberation, write out a check payable to the Internal Revenue Service and we put it in the mail by April 15th under penalty of law.

The law says you have to do that. But the law can't make you like it. How many people pay their income taxes from their heart?

[45 : 10] Not very many of us. We pay them from our pocket book, but it sure never gets to our heart. We resent paying taxes to the government, in the first place, we think they ask for too much and they do too little for what we give them.

In the second place, we're certainly not in favor with a lot of the ways they spend our money and we could go on and on and on with a list as long as you're armed as to why we pay taxes on the outside, but we sure don't pay them on the inside.

And that's the difference. The law can say you will comply and make you. And you'll say all right, I will, only because I don't like the alternatives.

But inwardly, I'm fighting this thing all the way and I begrudge you. You see, the law has no dynamic to change the heart and attitude of a man. Only grace can do that.

Only the love of Jesus Christ can change a man on the inside so that the change is genuine and not just external trappings and compliance outwardly out of fear and out of punishment and retribution.

[46 : 16] No believer ought to serve Jesus Christ motivated by fear, motivated only by love. That's the only way, motivated by love and by desire. You were slaves to sin.

You became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed. And having been freed from sin, you see, he keeps emphasizing this over and over again.

we could certainly challenge one verse with ambiguity about being dead to sin if that's the only verse we had in verse 2. But he continually repeats the idea that we are dead to sin and freed from sin.

You became slaves of righteousness. And this means we are free to become a slave. We are never free for the sake of being free just to be free. So we can say we're free, we aren't enslaved to anybody.

Everybody is enslaved to somebody. It is not a question whether you are a slave. The only question is who is your master? You are a slave.

[47 : 15] You really are. In this instance, we have been freed from sin and have become slaves of righteousness in Jesus Christ. Paul says I'm using this analogy that is one of slavery with which you are familiar because of the weakness of your flesh, because of the inability to perceive these spiritual truths.

I do not think he's talking about a moral weakness there. For just as you presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness resulting in further lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness resulting in sanctification.

For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. All the way through this chapter, it is an either-or proposition.

Here it is emphasized again. It is one way or the other. You cannot have it both ways. Nobody can. You cannot be in Christ and out of Christ. You cannot be a slave to sin and a slave to righteousness.

It's simply impossible. You cannot have two masters. No man can serve two masters. The very idea of master denotes singularity.

[48 : 30] You cannot have two masters. You cannot have two over you, but only one who is master. That is true in any sphere of life. Free in regard to righteousness.

What does that mean? Well, we've already touched on that. When you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. That means righteousness constantly escaped you. You never could do anything to produce righteousness.

Even your plowing was wickedness from God's perspective. Therefore, what benefit were you then deriving from the things of which you are now ashamed?

You there at Rome, who have become believers in Christ, look back over your history. How do you feel now about some of those things that you did, some of the attitudes that you had, some of the expressions of your life that you thought were having a good time?

How do you feel about them now? I think the answer would be the same to believers down through the ages. They're certainly true in my case. I look back on the days before Christ and all I can say is, I remember the times when I thought I was having a good time.

[49 : 39] I'd be too embarrassed to even tell anybody about it now. My only response is shame. I'm shamed of those things. Remember that passage in Jeremiah that talked about the children of Israel, how they had reached such a low level of morality, that whatever they did was not a cause of shame to them, and Jeremiah says, neither could they blush.

Boy, when a people lose their blushability, they've really hit the skids. The outcome of those things is death. Because you do them?

No. But because of who your master is that enables you to do them and do them consistently, you are enslaved to sin. But now, having been freed from sin and enslaved to God, it is a joyous slavery, a loving slavery.

You derive your benefit resulting in sanctification and the ultimate outcome, eternal life. Why? How does that work?

Well, the predictability of the whole thing is the wages of sin is death, and that is spiritual death. It is eternal death of Revelation chapter 20, the second death.

[50 : 57] But the free gift of God, without measure, without price, is eternal life, and it is all summed up in Christ Jesus our Lord.

He is the depository of eternal life, and if anyone is going to have eternal life, they must receive it from the only one who has it to give, and that is Jesus Christ.

And when you have the Son, you have the Son's life. And when you are in Him, you share in His life. His life then becomes your life, and that is the basis for your eternal life.

Glorious, glorious chapter. Questions or comments that you may have? AJ? The question that Paul said, the things I do, I wouldn't honor how you word it.

What do you mean to that? What I wouldn't do what I do? Well, that's coming up in chapter 7 and verse 14 and 15. And basically, the great pivotal issue, I don't want to spend much time on this because this is our next few messages from Romans 7.

[52 : 05] The great pivotal issue of Romans chapter 7, and I would encourage you to keep this in mind and also encourage you to read over it a few times, is whether Paul is speaking from the viewpoint of his life before he became a Christian, and Romans chapter 7 is a commentary on the life of an unregenerate man, or is Paul talking about his life since he has become a Christian, and this warfare that is going on within is that of a believer as opposed to an unbeliever.

My own personal opinion is the latter is the only one that can ever begin to hold water, and one of the reasons for that is based on verse 22, where Paul says, I delight in the law of God after the inner man, and I just believe there is no way in the world that can ever be true of an unbeliever.

An unbeliever cannot say and cannot mean, I delight after the law of God in the inner man. He doesn't. He is at enmity with God. He is hostile from God.

He is estranged from God. He is at war with God. He doesn't delight in the law of God after the inward man. But there are other reasons as well. What you are suggesting there is that Paul is simply saying that even as a believer he has a struggle.

It isn't always easy to make the right choice. Let me say this. As a Christian, when you are confronted with good and evil, it isn't always easy to make the right choice.

[53 : 40] Many times it's very difficult and very painful to make the right choice. But it is always possible to make the right choice.

And we are charged with the responsibility of doing it. It may be a difficult choice, but it's always possible. No Christian, no Christian will ever be in the position where he would have to say, I knew what was the right thing to do, but I just couldn't.

I didn't have the power to do it. That is nonsense. We do too have the power. It is a matter of choice and we chose to make the wrong decision. Someone else?

Jim? Would you agree that, I'm looking at Hebrews 5, 14, says that solid food is for the mature who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil.

Would you agree that what you're talking about here is sort of a growing process? Well, yes, definitely. That is involved. I don't think that's really the burden of it.

[54 : 49] But it is a growing process and I think that what this means among other things is that the more we engage in decision making and making right decisions because they are right, not because they're easy, not because they're expedient, but because we have, I'm talking about if we have biblical direction.

I'm not talking about a matter of personal preference where believers may have legitimate differences. But I'm talking about things that are described as in scripture as being right or wrong.

The more we practice making right decisions based upon biblical truth, the easier it will be to continue making those right decisions. And that is a growth process.

No question about it. I really get the feeling in Romans 6.11, everyone talks about consider or reckon. It's hard for me to think that that's just something that as soon as you become a believer that happens.

It seems to me that that has within its context the idea of a continual type thing. I might, you know, I could very well be wrong about that. That's just sort of the feeling that I do.

[55 : 56] Well, I would say that verse 11 is a very key and germane truth to our walk with Christ. And I would also say, sadly, that there are many, many believers who live their Christian lives for years and years and years before they are ever confronted with that truth.

And some never are confronted with it. Some never do really get plugged into verse 11 insofar as its doctrinal aspect is concerned. And usually these are people who frequently live a very frustrated kind of Christian life too.

As I look back over this again, I'll tell you something, friends. Quite honestly, if I had it to do over again as your pastor, there's no way I would have waited ten years before preaching on Romans 6.

This would have been some of the earliest truth that I taught if I had it to do over again because it is so critical. And I've got a number of things that I would like to do over again, but you can't go back of course.

And I try to tell myself, well, the Lord has his own timing. And that's true.

[57 : 17] I don't want to obviate that, but I'm saying that speaking after the manner of men, if I had it to do over again, this would have been some of the first things that I taught. I didn't know this was here.

I didn't know this was here. Oh, sure. I've read Romans 6 just like you have. Did you know it was there? You can read and read and read until you're blue in the face, but until you study and analyze and dissect the verses and take them apart and study the context, many times we just run roughshod right over some very, very important truths.

And I ran over this one I don't know how many times. Sad. Anybody else? Okay, we've got about ten minutes before the Sunday School Hour.

Let's stand, shall we? Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.