

Romans 6

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Preacher: Reverend David MacLeod

[0 : 00] Good morning and a warm welcome to the service this morning.

Those who are watching online, those who are listening on the telephone, and it's good to be able to come together and worship in this way. Intimations, just a couple of points.

First of all, to say that the evening service will be online just before 6 o'clock, and tonight Gordon MacLeod, one of the elders here, will be taking the evening service.

And in the course of the week, YF and the prayer meeting are at the usual times. YF tonight at half past seven, prayer meeting on Wednesday evening at half past seven, both on Zoom.

And on the Wednesday evening, the prayer meeting, Gordon Thompson from the Faith Mission will be joining us and sharing a short word.

[1 : 08] So be encouraged to come along to that meeting. These, I think, are all the intimations. So let's worship God and let's sing to his praise.

We sing from Psalm 84, Psalm 84 verses 1 to verse 9. Down to the end of verse 9.

We sing to God's praise. How lovely is thy dwelling place, O Lord of hosts to me.

The tabernacles of thy grace, how pleasant Lord they be.

My thirsty soul longs vehemently, ye find thy cords to see.

[2 : 17] My very heart and flesh cry out, O living God for thee.

Behold the sparrow findeth out, an house wherein to rest.

The swallow also for herself hath purchased head and nest.

In thine own altars, where she's safe, her young ones forth may bring. O thou almighty Lord of hosts, who art my God and King.

Blessed are they in thy house that dwell, they ever give thee praise.

[3 : 23] Blessed is the man whose strength thou art, in whose heart there thy ways.

Who passing thorough becas' veil, therein do dig up wells. Also the rain that falleth down, the pools with water fills.

So they from strength unwearied go, still forward unto strength. Until in Zion they appear, before the Lord at length.

Lord God of hosts, my prayer hear, O Jacob's God give ear. See God our shield, look on the face of thine anointed dear.

Let's unite our hearts in prayer, let's pray. Lord God, we thank you for this day. We thank you for this opportunity that you've given us to come in worship.

[4 : 49] We thank you for the psalm that we have sung. And for the fact that we are reminded in that psalm that we have been made for that relationship with you. And our souls find no satisfaction.

Our souls thirst is not quenched until we come to Jesus. We think of the woman at the well whom Jesus met with. Who had a thirst that she tried to quench in many different relationships.

And found no peace and no satisfaction until she received that living water from Christ. And we pray that each one of us, that we would come to you this morning.

We thank you that you've taken us this far. That we are in worship. We are brought together in this way with the technology that's available. Lord, we thank you that we're gathered around your word. And we acknowledge, Lord, that your word points us to Christ. And so we pray that we would come to Jesus, each one of us this morning. And that we would find rest for our souls.

[5 : 56] We thank you that there is rest for our souls. Although we are sinners and although we are not at rest, but we are at odds with you. We are at war with you.

Your word tells us that because of our sin, we are in a state of enmity with God. And yet we thank you that Jesus came into this world. Whilst we were still sinners, when we were in that state of

rebellion, Jesus came.

And he lived and he died and he rose. To make it possible for us to have salvation, eternal life and peace with God. So help each one of us, we pray, to trust in Christ and to know that peace with God.

As we draw near in Christ's name this morning. We pray, Lord, that you would help us in the different situations in our lives. We are always conscious of those who are grieving. Those who are struggling. And as we think of them in our minds, we bring them to you in prayer. And ask that you would comfort. We pray for those who are sick. For some who have been in hospital.

[7 : 05] And in past days who have received treatment. And who have been in for tests. And we bring them to you, Lord. And we ask that your hand of healing, that your hand of grace would be upon them through this difficult time.

We pray on for those who are lonely. And who feel very much isolated in this time. And we ask, Father, that you would draw near to them. And that they would know the nearness of God. The God who is with us always. We pray that they, in a special way. Those who feel loneliness and who are isolated. That they would know a very real sense of your presence. That they would be still. And know that you are God. We pray for our young people at this time. Those who are in school and who are struggling with the homeschooling. And who are missing their friends. We pray for the boys and girls. And we ask that you would watch over them. That you'd look after them. That they would be trusting in you more and more in this difficult time.

[8 : 09] And we pray for those who are up in years. Some who are in care homes. Connected with the congregation. And we ask, Lord, that you would protect them. That you would watch over them. That in this time in their life. That they would know more and more of the peace and the life of God with them.

And in them. We pray for your protection over care homes. Here and also in Skye. As we've prayed for Home Farm. We continue to pray for that place. And for the residents there.

We pray, Father, for the country at this time. We see such unrest. We see so much violence. Even on the streets.

And we ask, Lord, that your wisdom would be given to politicians. We pray, Lord, that your hand of restraint would be upon those who want to cause violence.

[9 : 06] And who want to cause harm. And who want to inflict injury on those who are around them. We bring the country to you, Lord.

And we ask that you would be at work in our nation. We acknowledge that as we drift from you. We see less and less stability. We see more and more unrest.

And so we pray that you would grant repentance to us at the national level. That we would come back to you. And we thank you that we have the promise that when we turn from sin.

And when we turn to Jesus. You will not drive us away. But, Lord God, you will take us close. We pray for this day, Lord. And we ask that you would be near to us.

And as we open your word. And as we meditate upon it. We pray that you would speak to us. We pray for Gordon. As he takes the evening service. And ask, Lord, that you would speak through him also.

[10 : 05] And that we would be blessed through the word that we hear. We pray for the faith mission. We thank you for Donnie. Who shared with us on Wednesday evening past. And we pray for Gordon Thompson. As he shares with us at the prayer meeting this Wednesday.

We ask, Lord, for the work of the faith mission. And we ask that as they reach out. In Christ's name. With the gospel of Jesus. That you would bless their efforts.

And we think of places where there was plans to bring the tent. In these months of lockdown. We think of Graver. We think of Point. Although they haven't been able to come physically.

We pray that you would be working in these places. As we pray that you would be working here. We think also of Lomas Prison. Where Gordon had the opportunity to share the gospel. In past weeks.

And we ask that you would continue to bless the word. That he shared. And that you would reach those who heard it. That you would be working still on the power of your spirit. So hear our prayers.

[11 : 07] There is much that we could bring to you in prayer. And we thank you. That although we bring our prayer now to a close.

We thank you that we are able to pray without ceasing. Each one of us. Wherever we are. So give us that spirit of prayer. That we may be constantly drawing near to you. And constantly bringing people and situations to you.

We are acknowledging Lord. That you are the one who is able to do far more. Than we can ask or think or even imagine. So hear our prayers. Cleanse us from our sin as we confess it.

Empty us of ourself. Fill us with the Holy Spirit. And enable us to fix our eyes upon Jesus. For we pray these things in Jesus name. And for Jesus sake. Amen.

Boys and girls. I hope you are well. I hope things are going good with you just now. What do I have to show you this week? Well.

[12:09] This is what I have to show you this week. Do you have any idea what that is? Give you a wee closer look. Can you see that okay? What do you think that is?

You know what do you think it is? Any ideas? Not a clue. Not a clue. Not a clue. Well I will tell you what it is. It is a bit of a broken door handle. And this happened to me on Wednesday.

So I thought I would tell you about this. Thing that happened to me on Wednesday. I was in the study on Wednesday. Mary was at Leverborough. And she was teaching. And Lois was in the room on the other side of the study wall.

Just a thin wall. And she was playing a recorder at the highest volume that she could. And Grace was in the other room just across. And she was on her violin on a V scene.

And I was trying to do a wee bit of work. And I wasn't finding the recorder and the violin the easiest thing to inspire me with my work. So I went, I got off my chair in the study.

[13:14] And I went to the door. And I pulled the door tight. Closed. And that's what happened. The door handle snapped.

And the door was pulled tight. It clicked closed. And the door handle snapped. And I couldn't. I went and I tried to get my fingers around the door handle.

And I tried to move it up. And I tried to move it down. And it was all sharp. You can see there. So I had to watch my hands when I was doing it. But I couldn't shift it up. And I couldn't shift it down.

And I wanted to get out. And I was needing to get a cup of coffee. And I was needing to do different things. And I stayed in for a few minutes. And then I thought, I have to get out of here. I scratched my head a bit longer.

How could I get out of here? And I tried. And I tried. And I couldn't do it. So what could I do? I looked at the roof.

[14:14] There was a wee window on the roof. And I thought, if I push that window, I might be able to squeeze out there. But if I got out of the window, the wee velox window, I'd be stuck on the top of the roof, which would be worse than stuck in the study.

So I thought, that's a bad idea. And there was no other doors in the study. So what could I do? I was stuck. And that's a picture of sin.

Sin makes us stuck. Sin holds us like a prisoner. We're going to be reading about that in Romans 6 in a wee while.

It holds us like a prisoner. And actually, we can't get out of sin. Not ourselves. Not in our own strength.

Not by looking for doors of our own making. Now, how did I get out of the study? Well, I had to wait for the violin and the recorder music to stop.

[15:18] And when I heard it stopped, and when I heard somebody going past in the corridor, I said, Help! I didn't really want to shout because it was a wee bit embarrassing.

But I said, Help! And Lois, I could hear her stop. And he said, Dad? I said, Yeah, I'm stuck.

And I think I heard her laugh. I said, Can you open the door? She said, Why don't you open the door? I said, Because the handle's broken.

And the handle's on the other side. So I think she thought about it for a minute or two. And then she opened the handle on the other side.

And the door opened. And I got out. See, I had to ask for help. I couldn't do it myself. I had to ask for help before I got out.

[16:18] Now, how can you and I be saved from sin? Sin makes us stuck. We can't find a way out of sin ourselves. So how can we be saved from our sin?

We have to call out for help, don't we? We have to call out for help. And there's only one person that can help us to escape from sin.

And that's Jesus. Listen to what he says in Matthew chapter 7 and verse 7. Jesus says, Ask. He's talking about prayer.

And he was talking about how he can save us. And he says, Ask and it will be given to you. Seek and you'll find. Knock and the door will be opened to you.

For everyone who asks receives. The one who seeks finds. And to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.

[17 : 20] And that's Jesus' promise. He's able to unlock the door of sin for us. And he's able to give us that salvation.

He's able to take our sin away. And he's able to give us safety that is not just for a little while, but it's forever. He opens the door of heaven, which is a place where there's no sin.

There's no sickness. And there's nothing to worry about. No lockdown. It's a place where everything is the way that God designed it to be. And that's a door also that only Jesus can open for us.

So, don't let sin lock you in. Call out to Jesus for the help that he's so willing to give us. That's the message for today. Let's pray.

Lord God, we thank you that you, Lord Jesus, are our savior. We thank you that you are the one who came to unlock the door for us.

[18 : 23] So that we could escape from sin. We could escape from the devil. We could escape from death and from hell. And we thank you that you, Lord Jesus, through all that you did for us on the cross, by taking our sin away, we thank you that you have opened heaven's door for us.

So that we could go there when we die forever, to be in that place of perfect peace. And all we have to do is cry out and say help.

So we pray that all of us, whether boys or girls or whether we're older, we pray that we would help, we would cry out to Jesus for that help that he is able and willing to give us.

And we pray all these things in Jesus' name and for Jesus' sake. Amen. Thank you boys and girls for listening. You're going to go now to your Sunday school and we're going to turn to Romans chapter 6.

Romans chapter 6. And we read the whole of this chapter. This is God's word. What shall we say then?

[19 : 33] Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means. We died to sin. How can we live in it any longer?

Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.

If we have been united with him like him in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection. For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin.

Because anyone who has died has been freed from sin. Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again.

Death no longer has mastery over him. The death he died, he died to sin once for all. But the life he lives, he lives to God. In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.

[20 : 51] Therefore, do not let sin reign in your mortal bodies that you obey its evil desires. Do not offer the parts of your body to sin as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life.

And offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness. For sin shall not be your master, because you are not under law, but under grace.

What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law, but under grace? By no means. By no means. Don't you know that when you offer yourself to someone to obey him as slaves, you are slaves to the one whom you obey, whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness.

But thanks be to God that though you used to be slaves to sin, you wholeheartedly obeyed the form of teaching to which you were entrusted. You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness.

I put this in human terms because you are weak in your natural selves. Just as you used to offer the parts of your body in slavery to impurity and to ever increasing wickedness, so now offer them in slavery to righteousness leading to holiness.

[22 : 12] When you were slaves to sin, you were free from the control of righteousness. What benefit did you reap at that time from the things that you are now ashamed of? Those things result in death.

But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves to God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness and the result is eternal life.

For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

And may God bless that reading of his word to us. Let's turn back now to God's word in Romans chapter 6. We'll pray as we go there.

Lord, we acknowledge once more that we need your help as we focus upon your word. And we pray for that help of the Holy Spirit now. Give us understanding, we pray. We pray this in Jesus name.

[23 : 10] Amen. In recent months, with all that's been going on locally and nationally and internationally, most of us have showed a keen interest in the news.

I mean, at the very least we follow the headlines. And if you have Romans 6 open in front of you just now, I think if we were to try to lift a headline verse out of Romans chapter 6, it would probably be verse 23.

For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

And that's a verse that takes us to the heart of what Paul is teaching in this whole letter. It takes us to the heart of the message of the gospel, the good news story of Jesus' life and his death and his resurrection.

So that's our particular focus today. We look at the whole of Romans 6, but I want to look at it through the lens of verse 23.

[24 : 20] We'll take that as our headline or our text for this morning. And I want to look at it in three parts. And these three parts will make up the headings that we have for the sermon.

The first point will be for the wages of sin is death. The second point, for the gift of God is eternal life. And then the third point that we come to is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

So that's the structure, the map for the message this morning. We come first then to the first part of that verse. For the wages of sin is death.

And you might say, as an initial response to that, that just seems a bit stark. For the wages of sin is death.

But when you think about it in terms of a headline, very often a headline is stark. It makes an impact. It catches our eye. It gives us a jolt, especially if it relates to us.

[25 : 28] When in past months we were hearing reports and reading articles about coronavirus, the strange virus that was sweeping across the country of China, we followed these reports with a degree of interest.

They were far removed from us. But when this virus came to our own shores, when we began to hear of cases of this virus in our own country, even on our own island, it had our full attention.

And this headline that we're looking at this morning, the wages of sin is death, the first part of it, this should have our full attention.

Because already in Romans, it's been made very clear to us that we are sinners. Romans 3.23, for example, says, For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

And yet, when we look through this chapter, Romans 6, and we scan through these verses, we're reading here first and foremost about the death of Jesus.

[26 : 47] Is he a sinner? Did he sin? Well, no, he didn't. Not ever. We can read through the Gospels.

We can put the life of Jesus under the microscope. And the more closely we look at Christ, the more clearly we see the fact that he never sinned. Not in his words, not in his actions, not in his reactions, not in his thoughts even.

He never sinned. Hebrews 4.15, we read about Jesus, who has been tempted in every way, just as we are, yet was without sin.

2 Corinthians 5.21, Paul speaks of Jesus as he who knew no sin. 1 Peter 2.22, Peter, the apostle, who spent these years so closely with Christ, he takes the words of Isaiah, and he quotes these

verses in relation to Jesus.

He says, He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth. So, what is very clear throughout Scripture is the fact that Jesus never sinned, and yet, Jesus still died.

[28 : 08] That's the enigma, if we're thinking this through. He who is the life, in very essence, John 14.6, he died.

The wages of sin were paid out to him. So, how can that be? And the answer to that question is because of us.

It's because of all who are trusting in Jesus. See, when we believe, when we are born again, we are brought into union with Jesus.

That's one of the main themes that you see in Romans 6. Verse 3, it says there that we were baptized into Christ Jesus.

Tim Keller says Paul is referring to the spiritual reality to which water baptism points. He's not teaching, the main point of this verse is not baptism, it's what happens in baptism.

[29 : 15] It's the spiritual reality, the being born again. Archie McLeod, one of the elders in the congregation that you knew so well in past years, in his little commentary, I've got a few quotes from it.

Archie says, their immersion was a picture of what the Holy Spirit did, identifying them with Christ in his death, burial, and resurrection. See, when we believe, and baptism is a picture, we are united with Christ.

Verse 4, verse 5, verse 8, we have more in the way of emphasis on the fact that through faith we are united with Christ. Verse 4, we are buried with him.

Verse 5, we are united with him. It says that twice in that verse. Verse 8, again, there's that emphasis of being with him, but of being with him twice. And so, one of the main themes in this chapter is that through faith we are united with Christ.

Now, what effect does that union have? If you continue to think this through. Well, it's got a negative and it's got a positive effect. The negative effect, I will start with the positive effect.

[30 : 31] The positive effect of our union with Christ is that his righteousness, that righteousness that comes from God, that is within God the Son, his righteousness is given to us.

But on the negative, this is the dark side of the salvation story, our sin is given to him. And because, as our text says, the wages of sin is death, he, Jesus, goes to Calvary.

He, Jesus, is lifted up on that cross to die for us. And Paul underlines that truth in these verses.

In verse 5, Paul speaks of us having been united with him, with Christ, in his death. Again, in verse 6, Paul says, For we know that our old self was crucified with him.

Again, in verse 8, Paul talks about us as those who have died with Christ. So we see that union with Christ in his death.

[31 : 56] Johnny Cash, in one of his last albums, he sang that old, old hymn. And the line in the hymn that's most famous is, Were you there when they crucified my Lord?

And Paul, in this chapter, It's at pains to make us see that we were there when they crucified the Lord Jesus.

We were very much involved. We sing often about this in that hymn, How Deep the Father's Love. One of the verses says this, Behold, the man upon a cross.

Jesus. My sin upon his shoulders. Ashamed, I hear my mocking voice call out among the scoffers. It was my sin that held him there until it was accomplished.

His dying breath has brought me life. I know that it is finished. Isaiah 53. Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our songs.

[33 : 18] Yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions. He was crushed for our iniquities.

The punishment that brought us peace was upon him. And by his wounds we are healed. We all like sheep have gone astray. Each of us has turned to his own way.

And the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. The wages of sin is death.

And on the cross, Jesus was united in death with all who believe in order to pay the wages of our sin.

And so the crucial question here in application is, is do you believe in him? Are you in union with Jesus in his death?

[34 : 25] Have the wages of your sin and mine been paid? You know, in the working world, some employers can be slow to pay. Some employers don't pay.

Some wages can be left unpaid. They're never paid. But sin's wages are always paid. They are never written off.

But the question is, where will they be paid? And by whom will they be paid? You know, we are given an option. We are given an offer in the gospel.

Sin's wages, if we determine to turn away from God, sin's wages, they can be paid by us. And the place that we pay eternally, the wages of sin, is that place of everlasting death, that place the Bible calls hell.

That's made clear in Scripture. Those who turn away from Christ, those who reject union with him, will pay the wages of their own sin. But the good news of the gospel, the amazing offer that is in the world, given to us in the gospel, is that sin's wages can be paid for us, by Jesus, on the cross, where he died in union with all who trust him.

[35 : 58] Verse 10, the apostle Paul says, the death he died, he died to sin once for all. And I think that's a good verse just for us to pause on, just for a second.

Just so that we hear it. Christian, do you hear the teaching and the riches in that verse? Jesus' death was once for all. We are trusting in him.

The devil loves to take our sin, and dig it up and throw it back at us. But on the cross, Jesus paid the wages of our sin if we're trusting him, our past sin, our present sin, our future sin.

It was paid in full and final settlement. Remember when Jesus was on the cross, as he cried out, he cried out, Tetelestai, finished.

And that was the word that was written across an account when the account was cleared.

Tetelestai, finished. Full and final settlement. It's done.

[37 : 14] And for you and I, if we believe in Jesus, if we are Christians, if we are trusting in Christ, if we have been united with him in his death, then our sin is finished.

We need to hear that. We need to hear that often. Our sin is finished. Death cannot hold us. The second death, death, hell, it cannot claim us.

The wages of sin is death. But Jesus has paid that wage in full for those who are in union with him through faith.

So that's the first point. The wages of sin is death. Secondly, but the gift of God is eternal life. And this is a characteristic of Paul with one little word there, but he swings dramatically from darkness to light and from death to life.

He says, but the gift of God is eternal life. And that actually is a clear, succinct summary of what Paul has already been teaching them.

[38 : 36] Like a good teacher, he keeps going over these key truths so that they sink in. He asks the question repeatedly, how can we be saved? How can we receive eternal life?

And Paul has already said in Romans 3, not by the law. We can't keep the law. Not by works. It's not about what we do. Not by religious signs. They can't save us.

They can't save us. But the righteousness that we need, the eternal life that we need, it is the gift of God. For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life.

And if you just focus again on that, on that verse, on our text, verse 23, it's a kind of peculiarly structured verse.

Even when we look at the, the way it's put together in terms of the symmetry, or the lack of symmetry in the verse. We would expect this, Paul, to say in verse 23, for the wages of sin is death, but the wages of God, for those who believe, is eternal life.

[39 : 45] But that's not what the verse says. That's very determinedly not what the verse says. To use the word wages in relation to eternal life would assume that we've done something in some way towards earning it.

It would imply that we can work even at having the faith that saves us, but even the faith that enables us to grasp the grace of Jesus, that salvation offered to us in Christ, it's a gift.

It's a gift. Ephesians 2 verse 8 says, For it is by grace you have been saved through faith, and this not from yourselves.

It is the gift of God. I remember a conversation one day with a man in Westeros, a man called John, a big gentle giant of a man.

And he worked as a kind of specialist carpenter, and he'd been through a hard time, and I was in visiting him one day, and we got chatting and the conversation went in the direction of spiritual things.

[40 : 57] And he said after we'd talked about various spiritual issues, he says, he said, I wish I had faith. He says, I've kind of tried to muster up faith, but I just can't seem to, I just can't seem to work it up.

And I said to him, with Ephesians 2, 8 in mind, even faith, it's not something that we work up. It's a gift of God. He said, maybe you should ask for it.

Have you ever prayed to ask for it? And the eternal life that we need, and indeed the faith that we need to take hold of that eternal life, it's a gift of God.

And I want to ask you by way of application, have you asked for it? And have you received, have you received it yet?

Because it's offered in the gospel. If we, if we see the cross, and if we see the reason for it, it's because God the Holy Spirit is giving us eyes to see.

[42 : 14] And when he gives us eyes to see, and when he gives us ears to hear the message of the gospel, he will give us the faith to grasp the eternal life that is offered to us in Christ.

There were some in Rome that still needed to grasp that eternal life.

And there are, in all likelihood, some who are watching today, or who are listening in today, that still need to receive this eternal life. And I want to encourage you in as strong a way as I possibly can to not neglect that.

Don't neglect such great salvation. Don't refuse this gift of God. It's been bought and paid for through Christ's blood. It's offered to us in the gospel.

Let us receive this eternal life. eternal life. And there were some in Rome, many others in Rome, who didn't yet need to receive that eternal life, but they had already received that eternal life.

[43 : 22] They were Christians. They were Christ's ones. They had been justified through the finished work of Jesus. They were now in the process of being sanctified and made more like Jesus. And so Paul, he now sketches out for them, and he sketches out for us, a picture of how we are to live if we are those who have received the gift of eternal life.

So how are we to live if we're wanting to live lives which which are holy, which show that we have received that eternal life from Christ?

Well, there's three aspects to this. I'll run through it very quickly. Well, firstly, we're to live lives where we are constantly turning away from the world. and we're going to be a miracle of God. We're going to live lives where we are not going to live lives from sin.

There were some in Rome. You see this at the beginning of the chapter, verse 1. And they'd been listening to all that Paul had been saying about faith and about being saved by grace. And in essence, what they were saying to Paul is, Paul, we love all this teaching about being forgiven our sin, all our sin.

We love hearing all this stuff. So if we get this right, we can just keep on sinning. and what you're saying is God will keep on forgiving. We can keep on persevering and sinning.

[44 : 42] God will just give us more and more and more grace, right? It's the argument that was doing the rounds in Rome amongst some. It's an argument that we may think is far-fetched, but actually it's an argument that's still in the rounds today.

Still, there are some people who think that they can do whatever they want during the week, and as long as they come to church on Sunday for an hour, or as long as they go to see a priest for some kind of confession, everything will be all right in the end.

So you just carry on sinning and God carries on forgiving. Is that the way it works? They're saying to Paul, and Paul says, No, that's not the way it works.

That's not right. That's wrong. You don't keep on sinning. You don't persevere in your old way of life. He says in verse 2, By no means. We died to sin.

How can we live in it any longer? See, Jesus died to take sin's penalty for us. Jesus died to break sin's power over us in order that we can turn away from sin and live a new life.

[45 : 55] Verse 4, Just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.

In verse 6 to 7, Paul, he gives a bit more definition to that. He develops a bit more, and he says in verse 6, So what's Paul saying there?

Well, he's saying to them, Your old self, before you received eternal life, before you were a Christian, your old self, you still loved to play with sin. But if you've trusted in Christ, your old self has been crucified with Christ, says Paul.

And you've been freed from sin. Sin's penalty has been taken from you, and sin's power over you is broken.

Paul says it slightly differently in 2 Corinthians 5:17. He says, Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away, the new has come.

[47 : 18] So live that new life in Christ, says Paul. Don't be trying to get away with everything that you used to be knee-deep in in the past.

Leave that behind with God's strength. Live a new life in Christ, says Paul. The application for us is not complicated. If we have received eternal life, that will be seen.

There will be a change. And that change will be evident in our daily repentance, our day-by-day determination to turn away from sin and live a new life.

Archie, in his commentary, says, In Christ, we have died to sin, and we no longer want to continue in sin. We are also alive to Christ.

So we walk in newness of life. That's the first element of this new life.

[48 : 29] There is a turning away from sin. And secondly, here, there is a turning to Jesus. Verse 8. Now, if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him.

Tim Keller says, It would be a mistake to think that the main way we live our new life is simply through looking at sin and its desires and saying to ourselves, Don't. Our new life in Christ, says Keller, is about living positively and proactively.

It's about do. So Paul encourages believers to offer yourselves to God to live with him and for him and like him. See, when we receive eternal life, we turn away from the cause of death, which is sin, and we turn in faith to the one who is himself the life, and that's Christ.

The union we have with Jesus that Paul is exploring here, it's a sin and a death-crushing union. It's an eternal life-giving union, and it's a personal, and it's a real, and it's an intimate, so satisfying union.

It's a union whereby we are day by day turning from sin and turning to Jesus. Augustine, in that famous quote, said, Our hearts are restless until they find their rest in thee.

[50 : 00] See, because of Adam's sin, which Paul has talked about in Romans 5, we lost that intimacy with God. But through Jesus, that intimacy, that blessed union, is restored.

And when it's restored, when we are again walking with the Lord, remember Adam in the garden, he's walking with the Lord, and then sin comes in, and he's hiding from the Lord.

And when we, through faith in Christ, have gone from hiding from God to walking again close with God, the last thing we want to do is offer our lives and our bodies to sin.

Rather, we want to, and we must, offer our lives up to God. Do not offer, verse 13 says, do not offer the parts of your body to sin as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness.

Archie, again, says here, why does the Lord want your body? The believer's body is God's temple, and he wants to use it for his glory, but it is also God's tool and God's weapon.

[51 : 24] And so we offer it to him. We, we turn to Jesus. We offer ourselves to Jesus. The hymn comes to mind, take my life and let it be consecrated, Lord, to thee.

That's the heart song. That's the, that's the prayer of the person who is living a new life, a life where, where we are constantly turning away from sin and we are constantly turning to Jesus.

And the last element of this new life, it's a life where we are trusting in the promises of God. Verse 11, in the same way, says Paul, count yourselves dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.

Therefore, do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. There's various points in this chapter that I haven't got time to go into where Paul has underlined how important it is to know the truth of the word of God, to know the promises of God.

We see the word know in verses three and six and eight and various places, but in verse 11, Paul, he goes a step on from knowing. And he says, don't just know the word and promises of God.

[52 : 46] He says, you can count on them. You can put your weight on them. in a few weeks, we're hearing a fair bit of talk just now about lockdown and easing or not easing.

It's possible in a few weeks, there may be some degree of easing. It's possible that in a few weeks time, the ferries might be back on and they might permit us to go to the mainland, but you know, until we actually get on a ferry, we're going nowhere.

It's possible for lockdown to ease in some measure. It's possible to have a freedom to travel that we don't actually use. And that's actually the gist of this.

Through what Christ has done, the power of sin and the chains of sin that were wrapped around us, they've been broken.

We have the freedom now in Christ to live a new life that glorifies God. That's the promise of God. That's the privilege that Christ has procured for his people.

[53 : 59] But in order to realize it in our experience, we have to act on it. We have to count on it. We have to import these promises into our own lives by faith.

Think about it this way. You can have a car that is very powerful, a 500 horsepower car, but if you never move out first gear, you'll never feel that power.

and it's possible for us never to count on or to rarely count on and know the freedom and the power of living a new life in Christ.

It's possible for us to neglect the Bible and not truly to know and to forget the reality of what it means to live in Christ. It's possible for us to know but not put the weight of our faith on these things.

You know, we're going to sing at the end in just a few minutes. My chains are gone. I've been set free. My God, my Savior has ransomed me.

[55 : 14] Archie, in his commentary, I think this is the last time I'll quote it, says, sin wants to be our master but sin and death have no dominion over Christ.

We are in Christ therefore sin and death have no dominion over us. It's very clear and logical and that's the truth.

That's the promise but Paul wants us to count on. He wants us to experience. He wants us to know the reality of these promises not just in this world to come not just in the world to come through resurrection life but now as we experience new life in Christ.

That takes us to our final point. It's very brief. For the wages of sin is death. Point number one. For the gift of God is eternal life and he gives us a picture of what that life looks like.

Then the final point here is in Christ Jesus our Lord. All this payment of the wages of our sin the gift of eternal life it's all conditional on being in Christ Jesus our Lord.

[56 : 32] So I've got a question mark at the end of this last point. In Christ Jesus our Lord. Are you or are you not in Christ Jesus our Lord? That's the challenge actually that Paul is driving towards.

That's the implied question that comes through all of this. Are you in Christ or are you out of Christ? Is he your Lord or is he not your Lord?

It's the same challenge actually that the previous chapter finished with. There's that very pointed question. Are you in Adam and in sin or are you in Christ and in salvation? And in this chapter the illustration changes.

It's the illustration of slavery from verse 15 onwards. I've got no time to go into it at all. But the thrust of the application through the example is the same.

Paul is asking you and I are you a slave to sin or are you a slave to God? Dylan sang about that in probably the 60s.

[57 : 36] He said you've got to serve somebody. It may be the devil or it may be the Lord but you you're going to serve somebody. So who are you going to serve?

Who is going to be your Lord? Sometimes we make the mistake of thinking that sin serves us. Sometimes we make the mistake of thinking that we can take it and then leave it.

That we can pick it off the menu and taste it for a while and then we can set it aside and throw it away. But that's not true, argues Paul. If you're not in Christ, Paul is saying, sin is not your servant but actually sin is your master.

I've been reading about a python in the last few days and a python when it makes its approach to a victim apparently at first it seems quite harmless.

It plays with its victims. It comes close and then it touches its contact. Then it begins to wrap itself around its victim very gently and loosely almost affectionately and then very, very slowly it begins to squeeze.

[59 : 07] And once you've realized there's a wee bit of pressure coming through this creature. Its grip is so tight that you can't escape and it crushes its victims to death.

And that's a picture of what sin does. to those who choose it as master. And Paul is saying to us in the strongest possible terms that don't do that.

Don't choose sin as your master. Choose Christ. Be in Christ. Take him as your Lord and master. He will not crush us to death. He has crushed death for us. And he promises new life. He promises resurrection life.

He promises eternal life to all who are in union with him. For the wages of sin is death.

[60 : 12] But the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. We pray.

Lord God we pray that you would help us to understand and help us to act upon your word. Enable us we pray to see sin in its brutal reality.

Help us to see the seriousness of refusing to turn away from sin. And enable each one of us we pray to receive the faith that in turn equips us to take hold of the grace and salvation that is offered to us in Christ.

And we pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen. We'll sing to conclude the newer version of Amazing Grace.

That version where we read over our chains being gone and being set free. So we sing this hymn to God's praise. amazing grace how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me I once was lost but now I'm found was blind but now I see grace t'was grace that taught my heart to fear and grace my fears relieved how precious did that grace appear the hour

[62 : 23] I first I first believed my chains are gone I've been set free my God my Savior has ransomed me and like the flood His mercy reigns unending love amazing grace the Lord has promised good to me His word my hope take care take care of even my shield and portion be as long as life endures my chains are gone

I've been set free my God my Savior has ransomed me and like a flood His mercy reigns unending love amazing grace my chains are gone I've been set free my God my Savior has ransomed me and like a flood His mercy reigns unending love amazing grace the earth shall soon dissolve by snow the sun forbear to shine but God who called me here below will be forever mine mine will be forever mine you are forever mine mine and I may the grace of our

Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God the Father and the fellowship of God the Holy Spirit be with us all both now and forever more amen together not who so