

17.9.21 Communion Friday evening English

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Date: 17 September 2021

Preacher: Reverend Thomas Davies

[0 : 0 0] Well good evening, a warm welcome to the service this evening. It's good to have people in the building here as we come together to worship God. Also good to know that there are people on the live stream as well who are still tuning in at a distance and we come together.

In the name of Jesus we come together to worship God this evening. And we're very thankful to have Thomas back. We had you a few years ago now, I can't quite remember how many years ago.

So it's been maybe five or six years since you've been here with us. But it's great to have you back, Thomas, taking the service tonight and tomorrow and over the Lord's Day. So just to say one or two intimations.

The first is to say that the session met this morning. We opened after the morning service. And if there are those here who know and who trust the Lord but haven't yet come forward and professed faith in the Lord, then be encouraged to come and meet with the elders.

You'll just be meeting in the room on the left here. The other thing to say is that tomorrow there'll be a prayer meeting at six o'clock that will be led by the elders.

[1 : 1 3] And then at seven o'clock the evening service will be an English service with a Gaelic prayer and psalm. And again Thomas will lead that service. So I think these are all the intimations.

And I'll now hand over again. Thank you Thomas for being on to come and open God's word. Thank you very much indeed David.

And thank you all for your warm welcome. It's lovely to be with you again. I can't actually remember how many years it is but it was in the community hall last time I was here. So it's really nice to actually see you at home in your own building and to be able to worship with you again.

So thank you so much for the opportunity to be with you tonight. We're going to begin singing in Gaelic from Psalm 139. We'll sing the first two stanzas.

We'll sing two stanzas in Psalm 139.

[2 : 2 0] To God's praise. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Satsang with Mooji Satsang with Mooji

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He cleansed from sin and ruling war, from mine iniquities.

For my transactions are in content, mine will I ever be.

In city only have I sent in my sight.

[10 : 06] God bless hell, that when thou speakst thou mayst be just, and clear in judging still.

Behold, I in iniquity was formed the womb within.

My mother also be conceived in guiltiness and stern.

Behold, thou in the inward parts, with truth delighted art.

And wisdom thou shalt make me know within the hidden part.

[11 : 26] Do thou with this hope sprinkle me, I shall be cleansed so.

Yea, watch thou me, and then I shall be whiter than the snow.

A reading this evening is from Romans chapter 8. Romans chapter 8, and we'll read verses 1 to 14.

There is therefore no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. For God has done what the law weakened by the flesh could not do.

[12 : 40] By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.

For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace.

For the mind that is set in the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law. Indeed it cannot. Those who are in the flesh cannot please God. You, however, are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you.

Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness.

If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you.

[13 : 52] So then, brothers, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. For if you live according to the flesh, you will die. But if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.

For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. That's as far as I'm going to go. I got carried away there. So yeah, that's us to verse 14.

So may God bless his word. We're going to sing together before we come back to Romans 8. And we're going to sing the hymn, His Mercy is Moved. ■bis Amen.

Since they are many, his mercy is more. Praise the Lord. His mercy is more.

Stronger than darkness, new and before. And since they are many, his mercy is more.

[15 : 33] What patience would wait as we constantly roam. What Father so tender is calling us home.

He welcomes the weakest, the finest, the poor. Our sins, they are many, his mercy is more.

Praise the Lord. His mercy is more. Stronger than darkness, new and before.

Our sins, they are many, his mercy is more. What riches of kindness he lavished on us.

His blood was the payment, his life was the cost. We stood need the debt we could never afford.

[16 : 41] For since they are many, his mercy is more. Praise the Lord. Praise the Lord. His mercy is more.

Stronger than darkness, new and before. Our sins, they are many, his mercy is more. His mercy is more. Stronger than darkness, new and before. Stronger than darkness, new and before. Our sins, they are many, his mercy is more. Our sins, they are many, his mercy is more.

Lord, praise the Lord. Praise the Lord. Praise the Lord. His mercy is more. His mercy is more. His mercy is more.

Stronger than darkness, new and before. Our sins, they are many, his mercy is more. As we turn back to God's word, let's just pray for a wee moment together.

Father, as your word is open before us, we pray that we would be open before you. That you'd give us ears that hear, minds that understand, and hearts that burn with love for you.

[17 : 59] Amen. Well, I'd like us to turn together back to Romans chapter 8. And over the course of this weekend, we're going to spend our weekend in Romans 8.

In fact, we're going to just spend our time in the middle of Romans 8. Romans 8 is one of the richest chapters in the whole of the New Testament, in the whole of the Bible. And there's so much in it for us to learn about what Jesus has done for us and the amazing transformation that he's brought in our lives.

So we're not only just staying in one chapter, we're just going to stay in one wee part of this chapter. And we're going to do the bit from verse 12 down to around 23, 24, 25, that kind of middle section.

Tonight, I want us to focus on the words we read in 12 to 14 that are on the screen. And that I'll just read out for you, where Paul says, So then, brothers, we are debtors not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh.

For if you live according to the flesh, you will die. But if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.

[19 : 11] In the early part of this chapter, Paul speaks about the incredible transformation that Jesus brings into our lives when we put our faith in him.

Summed up by the amazing words at the beginning of the chapter, where he says, There's no condemnation for those who are in Christ. And because there's now no condemnation for every person who's a Christian or for everyone who becomes a Christian, we get freedom and life through our union with Christ.

An astonishing transformation has taken place in the life of the believer. And in particular, Paul wants to emphasize that our relationship with sin has totally changed.

So if you think back, if you know the earlier part of Romans, one of the things that Paul does in the early chapters of Romans, is he just really emphasizes that everybody stands guilty before God.

And so nobody can stand before God and say, actually, I'm okay. I fit the bill. Everyone falls short. No one is righteous. And so as a result, everyone's condemned.

[20 : 24] But by the time you get to Romans 8, he's saying that our relationship with sin has changed so much that now there's no condemnation for those who are in Christ.

And that means that if we are in Christ, there's certain massive changes that we've taken place. And I've summarized them in a short list we have here on the screen that we are delivered from the power of sin.

So sin no longer has dominion over you if you are a Christian. Sin is no longer your master. And that's what the New Testament means when it says that we are now free.

So we're delivered from the power of sin. And if we're in Christ, we're also delivered from the penalty of sin. Jesus has taken the punishment that should have been applied to us.

He's taken our place. And as a result of that, of the fact that he died as our substitute, instead of facing condemnation and death, we're justified and we have life.

[21 : 28] So power of sin, tick. Penalty of sin, tick. We're delivered from both of these. But we are not yet delivered from the presence of sin.

For the Christian, it's still a reality that we face. And you can see that in the world around you. You only have to turn on the news to see sin causing havoc in people's lives, whether they're Christians or not.

You see it in our own lives. Everything we do still has that, that is still in the face of sin. We're constantly confronted by its reality.

With the circumstances that we face, the sufferings or difficulties that we or people that we know and love endure. It's still a reality for us. And even in our own hearts. So not just in the world around us.

Not just in the community or families around us. But even on the inside. Sin is still a very real reality. And we're in a daily battle against our indwelling sin.

[22 : 39] And it's really important to recognize that. Because that's just what real life as a Christian is like. The final goal of the Christian faith still lies in the future.

And Paul will talk about this later in the chapter. And that's a wonderful day. Creation itself is groaning in anticipation of that day. Until that day comes.

We all have to face the reality of the presence of sin. That's why we wake up every day and we hear news of cruelty, suffering and evil in the world.

That's why people around us who we know and love have their lives ravaged by sin. And that's why even in our own hearts, sin is crouching at the door. It springs upon us.

And none of us go a day without saying or doing or thinking things that we regret. So the power of sin is broken by the cross. Penalty of sin paid in full by Jesus.

[23 : 41] The presence of sin, however, remains. And that raises the key question. What do we do about it? Or even more importantly, what does God want us to do about it?

How do we deal with our indwelling sin? Well, I want us to think about that question tonight. It's, I guess, part of our examination of ourselves.

But it's a key thing to do really on a daily basis. Because we want to make sure that we're doing what God tells us to do in regard to this. First of all, I'm going to say that there's two big mistakes that you need to avoid.

The first is to think, well, we don't need to do anything about it. Sin has been dealt with. Jesus has done his thing. So the fact that we might sin in our lives, it's no big deal.

That's a mistake. And you can see, if you go to John's letter, he's very clear about that in 1 John 2, 4. He says, anyone who says, I know him, but doesn't keep his commandments.

[24 : 50] Now, doesn't keep his commandments is just another way of saying sin. So anyone who says, I know him, but just sins, is a liar. And the truth is not in him.

So this idea that, you know, we can just think, sin is no big deal. The New Testament doesn't allow us to come to that conclusion. God forbid that any of us are casual about sin. So we mustn't think, you know what, we just don't do anything about it.

But the second mistake is to think, I can't do anything about it. Now, the first mistake is to sort of be thinking, well, I'm just not going to bother. You know, the second mistake is to think, well, I wish I didn't sin, but I just can't help it.

That's not true either. Romans 6 tells us sin will have no dominion over you. And so we're being reminded that on the one hand, we must not be casual about sin.

That's like playing with poison. But neither can we simply capitulate in the face of sin. Because that would be to allow sin to claim a rule over us that sin no longer has.

[25 : 55] So what do we do? What should we do with our indwelling sin? The answer is we are to mortify it.

And that's what Paul is talking about in this passage. And that's what I want us to think about tonight. This great old fashioned heading, mortification of sin.

That's what Paul is talking about in Romans 8, 12 to 14. And so I want us to think about this tonight. And we're going to ask four questions.

They are, what is it? Who does it? How is it done? Why is it important? So first of all, mortification of sin.

What is it? It's important that we understand that phrase. It's a little bit of an old fashioned word. And we might use the word mortification in a different sense. When I say the word mortification, you might think of the thing that I do to my children whenever I speak or sing or do anything like that.

[26 : 59] That's not what we're referring to. What we're referring to is what we have on the screen there. It's expressing the idea of putting something to death.

And it's a really important aspect of Christian living. So here you can see that in the ESV, it's translated put to death. But in the authorized version, the KJV, you have that word mortify.

And that's exactly what it means. Putting to death the deeds of the body. We've got the same in Colossians 3.5. Again, ESV put to death.

Authorized version, mortify. It means the same thing. The Greek word behind that translation simply means to deprive something of life, to cause it to cease, to put it to death.

And that is what we all need to do with the sin that is within us. Now, it's really important to recognize that this doesn't mean that Christians never sin.

[28 : 03] It's so easy to make that mistake and think to yourself, you know, Oh, Christians are these really good people. Best of all, our ministers, they never sin, you know, and I'll never get to that level. Christians are supposed to be perfect people.

The very fact that the command is there to mortify sin tells us that Paul expects it to be a problem in our lives. He's not saying that we're never sinner, that we're never going to sin.

He's addressing the fact that we do. It's a reality in the Christian's life. But what we are being reminded of with this language of mortification is that sin is to be tackled with the utmost seriousness.

And so when we talk about mortification of sin, we're talking about something radical. Now, when I say radical, I don't mean cool and trendy and all the things that I am. I mean the literal sense of the word radical where something is deep rooted.

That's what the word radical means, the idea right down to the roots of something. And so mortification of sin is a deliberate effort to make sure that sin is not allowed to take root and infect our hearts and our lives.

[29 : 14] And whenever sin does appear, we're to make sure that we kill it and get rid of it straight away. A great illustration of this is a garden. So imagine you've got a garden that's been beautifully restored.

Maybe some of you have done that. Maybe some of you have moved into a house or maybe built a house where you've established a garden over years and years and years. And after all the work, you've got this lovely, beautiful garden where tender, colourful plants are growing.

If you were the gardener, then you watch that garden closely to make sure that weeds are not allowed to grow. And that they don't take over and ruin that garden.

And if a weed does appear, what do you do? You yank it out. You uproot them to get them out of your garden. All of this is a reminder that the New Testament is never casual about sin.

Ever. It's always take sin with the utmost seriousness. And this is a really important reminder for us all as Christians.

[30 : 22] Because every single one of us gets up and lives our lives every day in a world that is casual about sin. And because of that, we can so easily become casual about sin as well.

But the New Testament makes it absolutely clear we must never be casual about sin. In fact, when it comes to sin, we must be ruthless. Jesus makes that so clear in Matthew when he uses really strong language to say that if your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out.

And when he speaks about that, he's not telling us to literally, physically maim ourselves. But he's saying, take sin seriously. And Paul is echoing Jesus' words when he says, when we see sin within us, we want to mortify it.

Now, it's important in all of this that we are biblically minded in terms of what we are putting to death.

The danger that we face today is that we live in a culture where certain sins are still offensive to people.

[31 : 37] But others are perfectly acceptable. And so in our culture, theft is still rightly unacceptable. But other things like lying or gossip or greed are seen as not too bad.

Sometimes they're maybe even encouraged. And so many sins are culturally acceptable. And that can even become true in a church context.

If I stood up to you, if I stood up just now and I said to you, I've got to confess to you, I lost my temper this morning.

You would maybe say, okay, we all do. It happens to us all. If I stood up here today and said, I was looking at pornography this morning, then that would be the end of the service.

That difference, if you got that difference in your mind where you thought, okay, losing your temper with your children, no big deal.

[32 : 40] Watching pornography, big deal. You didn't get that from the New Testament. You got it from the culture around you. We've got to make sure that our view of sin is biblical, not cultural.

Because biblically speaking, Paul doesn't draw a distinction between sexual immorality or covetousness, drunkenness or gossip. None of them are acceptable.

They're all sins, which means they all need to be put to death. And I have to ask myself whether my perspective of sin is shaped more by the culture around me, by what people think, or by what God says in his word.

We must never pick and choose for ourselves which sins we think are serious. So we're asking the question, what is mortification? It's a ruthless, radical, putting to death of sin within us.

Our second question was, who does it? In terms of mortification of sin, who does it? And in many ways, there's a kind of supplementary question. Not only who does the mortifying, but whose sin gets mortified?

[33 : 51] Well, in terms of the answer to the first question, who does it? The answer is found in Romans 8.13, where it says, If you live according to the flesh, you'll die. But if by the Spirit, you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.

So who does it? You. When it comes to mortifying sin, it's not something that God does primarily.

It's something that we do. That doesn't mean that God's not involved or that he doesn't help us. As Paul later on goes to say, just right there, in fact, he says it, that there's a clear link to the Holy Spirit helping us.

But the key point is that when it comes to mortification of sin, we're not spectators. We are actually the executioners. And that's reinforced in the verse we saw in Colossians 5, where the word mortify is an imperative.

That means it's a command that we must obey. It's a key part of Christian living. So for us as Christians, there's loads of things that we do, just daily, weekly, all the time.

[35 : 02] We come together to worship. We pray. We read the Bible. We tithe. We help the poor. We celebrate the Lord's Supper. And we mortify our sins. It's part of Christian living.

What about the second question that I added onto that? Whose sin gets mortified? Well, again, the answer to that is primarily our own. That's the great emphasis that Jesus made. He said, if your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away.

And that's a crucial point. Mortification of sin is something that we do to ourselves. So we look at our own hearts and at the sin that dwells within us, the deeds of our own body, and we strive to eradicate any sin that's taking root within us.

So if we go back to the illustration of the garden, we are the gardener because we're doing the weeding, but we're also the garden because it's our hearts and our bodies where attention needs to be focused.

And again, this is so important because all too often, as Christians, we can be far more concerned with the sins of others than we are with our own.

[36 : 23] So I ask myself the question, in the past year, how much have I spoken about people's, how much have I spoken to other people about sins in other people's lives? The answer is probably quite a lot.

And then I ask myself, how many times have I spoken to people about the sins in my life? And the answer is not very much. And I have to repent and acknowledge that that's the wrong way round.

How often do we find ourselves looking at other people and judging them for their faults, and yet again and again, the New Testament says, watch yourself. And that makes perfect sense because if we look at the sins in other people and yet fail to mortify our own sins, then we're just hypocrites.

So often, we can be ruthless in regard to other people's sins and gracious in regard to our own. So if somebody does something, you know, it's a scandal.

It's the talk of the town or the village and, you know, everyone's... And you see it in the world as well. You only have to park across the line in Tesco's and it's all over Facebook. Your sins are just splattered everywhere.

[37 : 35] We're ruthless with other people's sins. We're gracious with our own. You know, if we do something wrong, oh yeah, but you know, it's not that bad. Ruthless with others, gracious with our own. Of course, God's way is to be the other way round.

God is saying, look, be gracious with other people's sins. If you have to forgive them 77 times, do it. But when it comes to your own, be ruthless.

Get rid of them. We want to mortify our own sin and graciously bear with the failings and mistakes of others. So that brings us to our third question.

How do we do it? If this is something that we need to be doing and it's us that does it, how do we mortify our sins? Well, again, I want to say, first of all, that there's two mistakes that we need to avoid.

The first is to think that we can just ignore sin and it'll go away. So sometimes we kind of might recognize a problem and think, oh, it'll be fine. It'll sort itself out.

[38 : 35] If I ignore it, then it'll just go away. Things will come right. And that can seem like a good idea. You think, well, I mean, ignoring sin, surely that's quite a good idea. We don't want to give sin attention in that regard, but it's actually a very dangerous thing to do because it means you're just letting your guard down.

Sin can catch us out so easily and so often if we ignore it, it'll spring upon us. And I think experience confirms this. I look at my own life. How many times have I done the same sins again and again and again?

You think, I'm never going to do that again and then within a day you've done it again. You let your guard down and sin is crouching at the door. And very often that's because, you know, I've thought, oh yeah, I'll stop doing that, but I've not actually taken active steps to ensure that that sin is eradicated from my heart.

And again, it makes perfect sense. Go back to your garden in your minds. If you ignore weeds, what happens? You just take over. They'll grow and grow and grow.

But there's a second mistake which is kind of the opposite to this. So on the one hand, you can have the mistake of thinking, well, okay, let's just ignore sin and give it no attention.

[39 : 50] At the other end of the spectrum, there's another big mistake you can make, which is where you can kind of tie and mortify sin by creating this big list of man-made laws that we think will deal with our sin.

And that's been a really common approach throughout history among Christians. And it's well-intentioned. You've got people, particularly in the early church, who advocated asceticism, you know, where you wouldn't eat and you wouldn't get married and you wouldn't do anything.

Deny yourself food, shelter, possessions for spiritual benefit. And we might do the same today. We might think, you know, well, if you stick to certain things, then that'll keep you right. In our culture here on the island, we've probably associated that with Sundays quite often.

Don't go in the garden. Don't go for a walk. Don't do that kind of thing. That's a good way to keep yourself in a good place spiritually. Now, in some ways, in many ways, self-denial is a good thing.

It's an important biblical principle. But if it becomes extreme, then it's unhelpful. And the New Testament warns us against it. Colossians, again, gives us the great example.

[40 : 57] Paul is addressing this. If with Christ you died to the elemental spirits of the world, why, as if you are still alive in the world, do you submit to regulations? So basically, Paul's saying, if, you know, the basics are right, the elemental spirits, the ABCs, the basics are right, if you're free from all of that, why do you still submit to regulations?

Don't handle, don't taste, don't touch, referring to things that perish as they are used according to human precepts and teachings. These have indeed an appearance of wisdom in promoting self-made religion and asceticism and severity to the body, but they're of no value in stopping the indulgence of the flesh.

These kind of man-made, you know, super extreme, you know, laws, very often they just lead to pride, where you think, ah, I'm doing all this stuff, that actually makes me better.

What have you just done there? You haven't mortified anything, you've just allowed another sin to grow. So how do we mortify sin? Well, there's several principles that the New Testament highlights that I want to just go over briefly.

The first is that, well, it's kind of the obvious one, that if mortification of sin is a command, then it's something we must deliberately strive to do.

[42 : 17] And so, a good parallel example of that is the Lord's Supper. So it's a command for us to observe the Lord's Supper. So you don't just sort of pack in your car on Sunday morning and think, well, I hope that an angel comes and carries me to the table and floats bread and wine into my mouth so I can eat it.

You just get up and do it. Because it's a command. And it's exactly the same with this. We don't want to ignore sin, we want to actively and consciously seek to remove it from our lives.

But in order to do that, and this is the second thing I want to say is that in so many ways, the key to all of this is in terms of the way we think.

Paul shows us that in verse 5. Those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit.

Paul is talking about how we think. And he's telling us that we need to think in a certain way in order to deal with our indwelling sin.

[43 : 27] We need in our minds to purposefully resist and reject temptation when it manifests itself in our lives. So our thinking is really important.

And then the third thing that follows on from that is that that needs to be applied to many different things. So Paul tells us to put to death the deeds of the body.

You see it there. If by sin you put to death the deeds of the body. And that's a beautifully general statement, isn't it? It's just a broad description of the stuff that we do.

And I think that that's wonderful because it's reminding us that sin can take root in a whole host of different activities.

And so just as different weeds will grow in different soil or different climates, so too different sins can take root in different people.

[44 : 24] So some of us might struggle with anger. Others might struggle with lust. Others with pride. Others with gossip. It's different for everyone but whatever it is that we struggle with we want to set our minds towards a deliberate mortification of the sin that's trying to grow in our hearts.

And so you might be saying okay Thomas that's all very helpful but how exactly do we do it? If I'm standing here and saying to you we all want to mortify our sin more and more how exactly do we do it?

Well I think that something that will help us is to go back again to our illustration of a garden because if you've got weeds in your garden then I think that there's three ways that you can remove them.

Now I'm not an expert in gardening so please forgive me if there's other wonderful ways of removing weeds but I have three suggestions here that I think would effectively get rid of weeds.

Number one you can starve them. So plants need nutrients to grow. Soil, water, light if you starve them they'll die.

[45 : 30] That's why people might maybe put bark over a certain area so that the light doesn't get through and weeds won't grow. So you can starve them. Second thing you can do is uproot them. That's quite obvious you just yank them out of the ground.

Or thirdly you can treat them. You can put weed killer on them and they will die. So you can starve them, you can uproot them, you can treat them and I think the New Testament tells us that we can do all three of these with sin.

We must starve sin. Now that's a really important point to remember. The way to get rid of a temptation is not to feed it, it is to starve it.

This is maybe a silly illustration but I always try very hard to be careful about what I eat and so I try to never eat anything in between meals or certainly not very much.

So in the morning I'll have a slice of toast for breakfast and then it's just coffee, coffee, coffee, coffee, coffee until lunchtime. No food. But occasionally I'll have a snack at 10 o'clock and you think, oh that will just keep me going to lunchtime.

[46 : 42] Do you know what? By 11 I'm starving compared to the days when I don't eat anything. When you feed a temptation it doesn't get weaker, it just gets stronger.

If you want to make something weaker you starve it. And so often we can find ourselves thinking if I just do this once and if I just do it once more then it'll go away.

So the person who struggles with pornography might think if I just have one look today then tomorrow I'll never do this again. Or the person who struggles with covetousness might think if I just get this one more thing then I'll be happy and I won't want anything else.

Or the person who struggles with gossip might think I'll tell this one more thing because people want to know and then I'll stop it. every time we do that we are not mortifying sin, we are fortifying sin.

We're making it stronger. When it comes to sin we must starve it. That's why James says resist the devil and he'll flee from you.

[47 : 49] So we want to refuse our eyes to allow our eyes to wander. We want to refuse to allow our minds to stew on things and to refuse to allow our hearts to fall for the deceptive attraction of sin.

As Paul later on says in Romans, make no provision for the flesh to gratify its desires. So we want to starve sin as much as we can. The second thing we need to do though is to uproot our sin.

If we see sin taking root in our lives, we want to root it out. So whatever seed is germinating in our hearts, whether it's bitterness or pride or selfishness, greed or anger, whenever we see anything else, anything like that, we must root it out.

And do you know what? Rooting out sin is actually incredibly easy. all you do is talk about it.

Talk to God about it. And talk to one another about it. The Bible's term for that is confession. And so the moment sin tries to take root in our hearts, we talk to God about that and say, Lord, please help me with this sin.

[49 : 08] I'm confessing it before you. And as brothers and sisters in Christ, we share that burden together and we're to talk to one another and say, I'd really value your prayers. I am struggling with this sin at the moment and it's taking root in my heart.

And it is amazing how effective that is at uprooting sin in our lives. But it's a daily battle. Every day I have to pray against my pride and my selfishness, my speech, my conduct.

But even if we have to take out the same weeds every day, so be it. Let's do it to get rid of it. So we want to uproot our sin.

As Paul says, let not sin reign in your mortal bodies to make it obey your passions. So we want to starve it. We want to uproot it. And thirdly, we want to treat it. So we need to apply weed killer to our sins.

We need to apply sin killer to our sins. We need to apply the treatment. What is the treatment? Well, I think the answer to that question is found in 1 Peter 4, verse 8, where it says, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins.

[50 : 19] Now, I don't think that that's not just a kind of general optimistic, positive statement. I think it's a very specific instruction to say that love is the treatment that will help eradicate sin from our lives.

So, for example, if you are envious of someone else's success, so maybe they've got better exam results than you, or they're going to a better university than you, or they've got a better job, or a better salary, or they got promoted ahead of you.

If that envy is taking root in you, which it probably will, it would in me, you can mortify that sin by loving that person and instead of resenting what they have, being thankful to God that that person has achieved something special.

If you're angry with somebody, if somebody's got in your nerves, or let you down, or done something stupid, you can mortify that sin by loving that person and accepting that they've made a mistake, and that may have arisen from insecurities, or weaknesses, or struggles that they have.

They probably feel bad about whatever they've done. They're probably full of regret and worries themselves. If we just think about the other person and love them, it'll just put water on that fire of anger that stirs up in us.

[51 : 32] And if you're tempted to gossip, you can mortify that sin by refusing to spread something that you know that that person wouldn't want people to talk about. You can love them, and it instantly pulls the desire to sin away.

In so many ways, love is the treatment that will help us to mortify our sin. And the key point that I want all of this to sort of highlight is that we want our hearts to be places where sin is put to death.

So if you think about it, what's the opposite of mortification? The opposite of putting something to death? The opposite is to nurture something. To provide an environment where something can thrive and flourish.

When it comes to sin, God forbid that our hearts are ever a place where sin will find nourishment and nurture. But maybe you're hearing all of that and thinking, well, yes, all of that sounds like exactly what I should be doing, but I don't know if I can do it.

Well, we must remember over it all that God never commands things that he doesn't then promise to help us to do. And so if mortification is something that God wants for us, then he will help us do it.

[52 : 56] That's why he says that we are to put our sins to death by the Spirit. Through our union with Christ, through the indwelling of the Spirit, we're being transformed into people who are turning away from sin and who are living in God's way.

That takes us to our very last question, which is just very short. Why is this so important? Well, again, there's loads of things that we could say here.

I just want to highlight three things that Paul says in the verses that are before you. First of all, Paul says we are not debtors to the flesh.

We are debtors not to the flesh. Now, that is an incredibly important statement for all of you. It is saying that you do not owe your sinful flesh anything.

You do not owe it anything. So often we hear a voice in our minds or our hearts that can say, just indulge yourself a wee bit.

[54 : 06] You owe it to yourself. You deserve it. It is not true. We do not owe ourselves any moment in sin. Sin never deserves a place in your life.

It is an utterly hideous intruder that has no right to be in your life. God has got a far better way for you. So that's reason number one.

We are not debtors to the flesh. Number two, by putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live.

Now, it's important to recognise that Paul here is not contradicting what he said earlier. So one of the big things that Paul has said in Romans is that we are saved by grace through justification by faith we can have eternal life.

And so you say, well, Paul, are you saying now that it's only if we put to death the deeds of the body that we can then have life? No. Here Paul is talking about how we live as Christians. And he is saying that the key to an authentic, meaningful, purposeful, joyful life is to avoid indulging in sin.

[55 : 24] The key to joy and peace and purpose is to put sin to death and to live in God's way.

And of course, that makes perfect sense because who made us? God did. Why did he make us? To bear his image and be like him. To live the way he wanted us to live. To be what we created to be.

Sin is just a hideous distortion and intrusion in all of that. And Paul is reminding us that if we put to death the deeds of the body, if we mortify sin, then it gives us a life that is so much richer, so much more worthwhile.

Have you ever looked back on a year of your life and thought, well, you know, I wish I had sinned a bit more. I wish I'd been more greedy. I wish I'd been more angry.

I wish I had hurt more people. Nobody in their right minds thinks like that. No wonder God says mortify sin. It's not to make your life boring. It's to make your life brilliant.

[56 : 30] And it's an amazing reminder that God's purposes are so much better. We will not find happiness by indulging our sin.

We will find happiness when we mortify it. And then the third reason is the most amazing one of all in verse 14. The whole reason we are to do this is because you're sons of God.

Why do we want to mortify sin? Well, above all else, it's because we love our Father in heaven. Our Father who has done so much for us, saved us, and given us the extraordinary privilege of becoming children of God.

And that gives us every reason we need to strive to get rid of everything in our hearts and lives that is offensive to God and that would grieve him.

We're sons of God. Sin deserves no place in our lives. Instead, we want to be the people he created us to be.

[57 : 46] So mortification of sin is an incredibly important thing. It's something that we should think about every day of our lives.

As Christians, it's really important. But it's also a wonderful thing.

It's a great reminder that God's ways are so much better. And living for Jesus is far, far better than living for ourselves.

Just imagine what Scotland would be like, or what school would be like, or work would be like, or the community here would be like, if everybody mortified their sin.

That's why God tells us to do it. Because it will make our hearts and our community and our world a far better place.

[58 : 41] That's why following Jesus is so good. Not just for us, but for the world. He's calling us to be different.

He's calling us not to indulge in sin, not to gratify it, not to spread it, but to kill it. And that means that you can all be wonderful beacons of that transforming power of Jesus in your life.

Now, none of this means that it's going to be easy. And none of it means that, you know, if you sin again tomorrow, that you failed miserably. Not at all. Like weeds in a garden, it's just a constant battle.

But we've got to go for it together. And by the power of his spirit, by his grace working in our hearts, he will help us to do it.

It's an amazing reminder that when God looks at you, he sees the potential for something amazing.

[59 : 58] And any sin that tries to muck that up deserves nothing other than to be put to death. By God's grace, may we all do it.

Amen. Let's pray. Dear Father in heaven, we thank you so much for your wisdom, your goodness, and your love.

And we confess and acknowledge that so often we see sin as something tempting and attractive. And we sometimes nurture it, indulge it. Sometimes we even run to it.

We pray for your forgiveness, but we also are reminded of your empowering strength to help us mortify it. And so collectively, we repent and we just commit ourselves to you and you, praying that in the days and weeks and months ahead, we would be people who are always ready to mortify sin.

May our eyes be opened so that we can see sin taking root in our lives. May we support one another in doing so, confessing our sins to you and to one another. And together, we pray that our hearts and our lives would never, ever be places where sin would thrive, but they would be places where God, the Holy Spirit, would thrive, bearing fruit to the glory of your name.

[61 : 23] Amen. We're going to conclude singing the hymn, I Heard the Voice of Jesus Say, Come unto me and rest.

Let's stand and sing together. Amen. I heard the voice of Jesus say, Come unto me and rest.

Lay down the weary wall, Lay down thy head upon my breast.

I came to Jesus as I was, nearly unborn and sad.

I found in Him a resting place, and He has made me glad.

[62 : 36] I heard the voice of Jesus say, Behold, I freely give.

The living water, The living water, thirsty woman, Stood down and drink and live.

I came to Jesus, And I drank all that life-giving stream.

My thirst was quenched, My thirst was quenched, My soul revived, And now I live with Him. I heard the voice of Jesus say, I am this dark world's light.

Look unto me, Look unto me, Thy Lord shall rise, And all thy day be bright.

[63 : 45] I look to Jesus, And I come, In Him my star, My son.

And in the light, Don't lie by a wall, Till travelling days are done.

Just one intimation that I forgot to give earlier. Tomorrow evening at six, we'll have the prayer meeting led by the elders. It'll be here in the church, the main church building, but also there'll be the chance to zoom in.

So for those who've been zooming in Wednesday nights in the past, you can zoom in on the same code at six o'clock tomorrow, and there'll be an in-person meeting, and also the ability to zoom in, which hopefully we'll take into Wednesday next week as well.

So six o'clock for the prayer meeting, in person and on Zoom for those who want to do that, or who are not able to be here. And then the service led by Thomas tomorrow evening.

[64 : 53] Thanks. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all, now and forevermore.

Amen.