

## Begin Sermon 2

**<sup>7</sup>For he who has died has been freed from sin.**

A believer has been freed from sin. Take note of the verb tenses here. He who has died- once and for all in our identification with Christ- has been freed. This is perfect tense. The action happened in the past but has this present effect.

Some scholars at this point say that the main way we are freed from sin is that we are free of sin's guilt. We are no longer under the penalty of sin if we are in Christ. And it is certainly true that we are no longer under the penalty of sin if we are in Christ. But I don't think that goes far enough. I am not sure why some of the reformers stopped where they did. There is nothing in the text to limit this. The rest of the text is not primarily speaking about life in a way that doesn't **fear the consequences of sin**. The text speaks of living in a way that **responds differently to sin than it did prior to conversion**. The conclusion based on Paul's reasoning is to **not let sin reign in this present life**. This is not talking about how we feel about sin or how we think about sin. It is talking about how **we respond to temptation**. It is telling us to **do something** instead of sinning.

So I am thoroughly convinced that based on what Christ did we are **positionally** enabled to say no to any clear known sin **operationally**. We were not just set free from the **guilt** of sin and the **punishment** of sin. We were set free from the **power** of sin, from the **dominion** of sin.

When we were in Adam, we could sin. In fact, we could not, **not sin**. We had to sin. Sin had absolute sway over us and we were absolutely powerless. We were under King sin and his dominion. We were his subjects and we had to do what our King said. And we were actually very willing subjects.

But now we are told that a believer has had his old self crucified with Christ. Death changes things. We are now free from King Sin. But **King sin** has not died. And **we** have not died. Our old selves have died. We have a new nature. But we live in our old bodies of sin. Nothing said in this passage in

Romans would lead us to the errors that so many religious groups take.

We aren't told **we won't feel like sinning.**

We aren't told that **we will ever completely stop sinning in this life.**

We aren't told that **faithfulness will now come easy to us.**

We aren't told that **we should accept sin as status quo and not concern ourselves with it.**

We aren't told that **sin no longer matters because Christ died for it.**

We aren't told that **if we feel like sinning we might as well because feeling like sinning is the same as doing the sin.**

No, but we are told that **we no longer are under the slavery of sin.** We no longer must do what we feel inclined to do. Something is powerless that once had absolute power. We **were** slaves to sin but we are **no longer** slaves to sin. We now have the power, the right and the obligation to say **No** to sin.

I am convinced that there is not a single sin that has power over us. Sin can no longer issue a command and we are powerless to say no to. We can say no now. We are free to not sin. This is not true of those in Adam, but it is true of those in Christ.

OK you may say, then explain to me what power sin **has** because it sure seems powerful to me.

Well sin is not without **appeal** to a believer. Sin still can advertise. It still can appeal to the residue of Adam still in us. It can appeal to our flesh. And we still have plenty of fleshly impulses. It can still whisper into our minds doubts about the character of God. It can still lie. It can still deceive. It's fiery darts can still spread. But now it needs permission where in the past it did not. Now in the face of temptation if we chose to sin we must say "yes" to sin or at least we must chose not to say "No". That is the difference. Sin has no power, no authority. It sits hat in hand waiting to see if we will exercise our faith and authority that was hard won in Christ. We are in the position in

Christ to say No to sin. And because of that position we are called upon by Christ to actively say No to sin and yes to Christ.

<sup>8</sup>Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him,

Paul is continuing with his logic. If we were identified with Christ and we died with Christ, we believe that our identification cannot possibly stop there. It must continue through the whole process. Christ was resurrected and it is only logical that we were resurrected with Him in the sense that we are now talking about.

<sup>9</sup>knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him.

Now we know that since Christ has been resurrected, he isn't going to go through this process all over again. He did it once for all. He has died as often as He ever intends to. And now that He has raised from the dead, death no longer has any say over Christ's life. It can no longer touch him. It can no longer affect him. It has no authority over him at all. When He took on our sin, He had to die. But now that he is done dying and has new life, death has no grip on Him.

<sup>10</sup>For *the death* that He died, He died to sin once for all; but *the life* that He lives, He lives to God.

I think Paul is using the rock solid position of Jesus Christ as the logical basis for us to think about our own lives. Paul tells us here just how immune from death and sin Christ is. And now Christ lives, but how does He live? He lives to God. His life is all about doing His Father's will in intimate relationship with His father. This was not true when Christ had taken on your sin and mine. His communion with His Father was temporarily broken by sin. But intimate communion is true now, after resurrection. And the punch line is that this is now true of us due to our identification with Christ. What happened to Christ happened to us. We may not feel it, but God tells us that it is true. So when we get the next application point, it comes at us with all the force

of a freight train. It is an unstoppable logic that can powerfully change our lives.

<sup>11</sup>Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

We are told that just as Christ was crucified, was buried, was resurrected and lives again to God, in the same way you should figure your life.

We are to reckon ourselves to be dead to sin.

I'd like to use April in an illustration this morning. I warned her weeks ago that I was going to do this so I figure I've got her full attention. When I owned the ambulance company, April was my employee. I had authority over her. If I did not like what she did I could fire her.

When I sold my ambulance company something happened to her. She now has a completely different authority. Now, I could go to her and bark out orders. I could get in her face and tell her what she must do. I could act like her boss. But all she needs to do is reckon herself to be an **EX** employee of mine but a **PRESENT** employee of someone else. That is the fact about her position. **Believing the fact does not make it true. It is true whether she believes it or not.** But **believing it sets her free** to tell me to hit the road. It sets her free to ignore everything I say to her about that job.

We can do the same thing with sin. Sin used to have authority over us. We could not stop sinning because it is what we were. Sin was our Boss. But when Christ called us, suddenly sin was no longer our boss. It is hard for us in our present bodies to get used to that. We still have many of our old sinful urges. We are still in the same body that we have trained to sin in so many ways. It will **seem** like sin is still boss. It is still barking out orders that we may feel that we must submit to. But Christ has bought the company. He has revealed the truth about our condition in His word and we have experienced His call upon our lives. We can know that we are HIS and His word is **true** for us. He is the new boss. And we can, by faith in what Christ has

done, say no to sin. All of sin's influence is now a bluff to a believer. It is a lie. We no longer MUST commit those acts that we know to be sins. We have the full authority to say NO. And we were given that authority when we died to sin when we died with Christ.

12Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts.

The strength of this therefore cannot be undone. It is based on the full strength of what Christ accomplished. It has nothing to do with anything that we did. It has to do with what Christ did. So you cannot undo the therefore. We might say, but I am weak. But the therefore isn't based on you. It is based on Christ. And He is strong. So because of what Christ accomplished, do not let sin reign.

We can learn from this that it is possible for us to say "yes" to sin in moments of time. Paul has not presented us with some idealistic view of Christian living. He is talking about reality. And when we are tempted he knows we can do one of two things. We can say no to sin and yes to Christ, or we can say yes to sin and no to Christ. We can obey Christ or we can obey the lusts of our mortal bodies that used to be In Adam. But over time, how can we possibly trample on the blood of Christ by partaking in that which Christ shed His blood for? There is never any comfort while we are knowingly and intentionally sinning. There is no assurance to be had while we are in that state of mind. While we must admit that logically a Christian can chose to sin, and we must admit that all of us have, if we appreciate what Christ did at all the idea of it will rend our hearts. It simply is not a place where a Christian can live, where a Christian can walk.

We can also see that letting sin reign requires no work on our part. It is still the autopilot of our flesh. It will take active effort on our part to not LET sin reign. To say yes to sin is easier than to say no to sin in this body. Paul does not act as if it is otherwise.

We can also see that our bodies have lusts that are holdovers of the old Adam and we are going to be at war with them. Paul doesn't make light of any of these things. He doesn't pretend that it is otherwise. But none of that does any damage to his "therefore". We have solid reason to say no to sin. And a believer, over time, will be found overcoming. That is what scripture says.

13 And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.

The Greek word for present means to place beside or near

1a) to set at hand- to present

to place a person or thing at one's disposal.

The word **present** here, by virtue of its tense, implies a critical resolve, a decision of surrender. It is clearly an act of our will. That is not to say that our will is the source of the act, but it is to say that our wills must be fully engaged in this obedience.

Paul tells us here that we are not to place our members or literally our limbs as instruments, as tools used in warfare in unrighteousness to sin. We are still capable of doing that, but we must not. We are not to give the Devil a foothold. But we are to place ourselves at the disposal of God as is congruent to our position in Christ. We are alive from the dead, we are living IN CHRIST, in new life and we ought to act like it. We should present our limbs as instruments of righteousness to God. This is not a suggestion. It is a command from our new King Jesus.

14 For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.

Those who are positionally in Christ have this destiny or destination. They **will not be** dominated by sin. Sin is not going to win in their lives. Sin will not have the victory. Sin will not be king over them. If we were under the law, sin would have dominion over us. If we were under the system where all that mattered was our record before the law, sin would have

dominion. Sin would win and we would be lost. We would suffer at the law's just hand and we would be destroyed... and rightly so. But we are under grace. We are under Grace's disciplinary power like is said in Titus 2:11,12 where Grace is training us to live sober upright and Godly lives. We are under King Jesus and the grace he displayed by becoming sin for us. God graciously accepted Christ's sacrifice in our stead and we will forever live under the dominion of Grace. Grace has rescued us from the punishment of God that the law requires. And we are forever under that wonderful grace that saved us.

I think John McArthur sums up the logic of Chapter 6 very well. He says this.

The explanation Paul gives for dead people not sinning can be summed up in three steps.

1. When Christ died, believers in some crucial sense died in him and with him.
2. When Christ rose, believers in some crucial sense were made alive in him.
3. Therefore, believers are commanded to become in practice (I would use the word "operationally") what we are in Christ (and I would use the word "positionally"): dead to sin and alive to God.

I believe this passage is one of the best passages in the Bible for telling us how we are to struggle against sin. Our battle against sin is really an exercise of faith. Will we believe what God says? Will we reckon the way God tells us to reckon? Will we believe what God says when our flesh is telling us something completely different? Will we act operationally based on who we are now positionally?

I have always had a problem understanding the place of effort in living a godly life. Some would speak as if the secret to success is **all** in human effort. They would give us human tricks and schemes to touch not, taste not, handle not in an effort to defeat

sin in our lives. But they are totally wrong. Those strategies are not effective in the struggle against sin. Colossians tells us that. Some would say it requires no effort. Just let go and let God. They would say apart from Christ I cannot do anything. Therefore I should not exert human effort at all. I should simply wait for God to do all the effort on my behalf. They create an ultra spirituality and call into question any act of the will as being ungodly.

But oddly enough Paul uses imperatives in this passage that very clearly involve an act of the will. He tells us- the people in our bodies- to present our limbs. He tells us to not LET sin reign. We must stop it. Our wills are addressed and commanded into action by Paul. He does not view that as anti-spiritual in the least. In fact it is our reasonable worship.

So what is the proper place of the will? I think it is displayed in Israel going to battle. David tells us in Psalms 20

Now I know that the Lord saves His anointed;  
He will answer him from His holy heaven  
With the saving strength of His right hand.

7 Some trust in chariots, and some in horses;  
But we will remember the name of the Lord our God.

8 They have bowed down and fallen;  
But we have risen and stand upright.

9 Save, Lord!  
May the King answer us when we call.

David was a man who wielded a sword for much of his life. He and his men gave great effort to their swords. When the Lord told these men that they would be successful in battle, they didn't lay their swords aside and say God will win the battle for us. They didn't say, "It would be unspiritual of us to go into battle against our enemies". Neither did they say, we will win the battle by our great effort. David said that The Lord saves His anointed. Then he would proceed to trust His Lord and put his full effort into winning the battle. His trust was not in his sword. His trust was not in his implements of

war. His trust was in His God and he exercised his greatest effort because of His trust, not in spite of it.

I believe that is the place of effort in our struggle against sin. The passage we have just studied shows us that Christ has positionally won the battle. And it now gives Him glory for us to claim that victory operationally. He put our old man to death positionally. Now we put our old man to death operationally based in faith in what Christ has already done. I believe this struggle is intended by God to **take great effort** and because of the grace of God **it deserves our greatest effort**. But ultimate victory has already been won by Christ and we are simply participating in that victory. We are sharing in that victory by Faith. Our faithful effort is **Through Christ** now.

Look at the uses of the phrase- **through Christ** that we find in Romans. I think this will help us to keep our Christian walk in perspective.

Rom 5:1 Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God **through** our Lord Jesus Christ, **through** whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

How do we have peace with God? It is through Christ. We are justified by faith but it is always Through Christ. In fact it is through Christ that we have access into grace. Faith is the vehicle, but Christ is the highway.

Rom 6:11 Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in **(or through)** Christ Jesus our Lord.

How are we alive to God? It is through Christ. While we are called upon to exercise faith, we are called upon to believe and count ourselves to be dead to sin, it is not our faith that can accomplish such a thing. We are only alive in God because of Christ.

Rom 7:24-25 24O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? 25 I thank God—**through** Jesus Christ our Lord!

How do we commune with God? How do we even thank God? It is only through Jesus Christ our Lord that God can hear us and commune with us. Christ has filled the gap so we can express our gratitude toward God.

Rom 8:37 37Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors **through** Him who loved us.

How do we conquer? Is it by our effort? No, it is through Christ that we are conquerors. It is all about Christ. From beginning to end our salvation is through Christ.

There is one more thing I would like to point out. Look at our text again. Look for the word KNOW.

3Or do you not **know** that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?

Not Know- to ignore through disinclination

Paul is saying, have you let it become so unimportant to you that you have completely missed that we were baptized into Christ's death? Have you become so dull that you have missed this important fact? Have you stopped knowing this?

**6knowing** this, that our old man was crucified with Him, Knowing- Ginosko to absolutely cognitively know. We should be knowing this fact, this life changing truth. Our old man was crucified with Him. Paul expects us to KNOW this.

**9knowing** that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more.

Knowing- Eido- to see, behold, be aware of, to know

We are to be fully aware that Christ died and dies no more. This is a fact that we must keep in mind.

16Do you not **know** that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves **whom** you obey  
Knowing- Eido- to see, behold, be aware of, to know  
We are also to know, be aware of the fact that we chose slavery operationally by who we submit ourselves to. We can even temporarily be a slave operationally to one who is not our master positionally. We are to know and be aware that this is true.

We can see by all these references to knowing that the battle against sin is solidly based in what a believer knows. It is vital that we know and understand where we stand positionally. We cannot be like those who have little patience for good theology. Because every battle we will ever win will be based on the success of Christ. We must **know** that it is by faith in Christ that we stand against sin. He has **won the war** but we get to **participate in the warfare**. We must fill our minds with the facts and then act upon them believing them to be true, reckoning them to be true for us.

Notice that the scripture here does not say feel, it does not say imagine. It says know. We must win this war in our minds before we will ever win it in our bodies. Some would have us believe we win the war by entering some spiritual ecstasy, some spiritual emotional experience. But Paul is more concerned about what the believer knows, not just with his head but with his life. He knows that we go forward by looking back. We win the victory today by understanding and incorporating the victory Christ won 2000 years ago.

After reading and understanding what Paul tells us here, it is easy to see that we have no excuses. Christ has done all the heavy lifting. He has done all the things that we could never do. Now we simply need to exercise faith in what he says. We must know. We must reckon. We must decide in a way that says that

God's Word is true. We must trust. And the wonderful truth is that we have to power to DO that. The obstacles in our lives are largely ones of faith. Sin tells us, I am still the boss. You must do what I say. Paul says that is a lie. Sin is not boss. It is powerless. It is an impotent voice making suggestions that we can say no to. Is that what we believe about sin? It is true. God said so. Christ's resurrection power is much more powerful than we will ever imagine. And that power is in a believer's life in order for us to live our lives for the Glory of Christ. The question is, will we take the next step by faith, believing our Savior and living to please Him? That is what this week is for.