

# Do You Consider Yourself Dead to Sin?

By Dr. Sinclair B. Ferguson

**Text:** Romans 6:1-14

**Link:** <https://beta.sermonaudio.com/sermons/32121151280/>

## **OPENING PRAYER:**

God and Father, thank you for the overflow of your grace to us in and through our Savior Jesus Christ. Thank you that all grace and all the treasures of your wisdom and knowledge are stored up for us in him. We confess how often we have run to other fountains to drink and been dissatisfied. We praise you that Jesus Christ satisfies our thirsty souls and fills our hungry minds. We pray, as we turn again this evening to his Word that the will send from heaven his Holy Spirit among us, that our eyes might be opened by your truth and through the Spirit's illumination to see the wonder and awe of the gospel of our Savior. Teach us, we pray, gracious Lord, because we come as children to you as our heavenly Father, as disciples of the Lord Jesus to his ministry among us as those who are constantly dependent upon the Holy Spirit to guide and to teach us. Answer our prayer, oh God, and seal your Word within our hearts this night for your glory and for our blessing in this world and for our joy in the world to come. We pray it in Jesus our Savior's name.

Please be seated.

## **SCRIPTURE READING:**

In our studies in Paul's letter to the Romans in which we are engaged this evening we came last time we were in Romans to Romans chapter six. And we are going to read again in Romans six verses one through 14. Last time we were looking at his chapter we particularly noted Paul's teaching in verses one through four. This evening we are going to look particularly at verses five through 11 and, God willing, next Lord's day evening at verses 12 through 14. And you'll find the passage, if you are using the pew Bible, it is on page 942 and for children who have their children's Bible it is on page 1406.

So let us hear God's Word. Paul, you'll remember, has been arguing that where sin increased because of the presence of the law, grace has increased all the more. And this extraordinary statement in verse 20, second half of verse 20:

*"... where sin increased, grace abounded all the more..."* raises the question that is asked in chapter six and verse one.

*What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. We know that our old self (or better our old man) was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. For one who has died has been set free from sin. Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. We know that Christ being raised from the dead will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. For the death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God. So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal bodies, to make you obey their passions. Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness. For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace.*

Most of our students are gone from us, but most of us here at some time or another, I hope, have been students. Students in school, many of us students in one kind of college or another. And, perhaps, some of us have had the following conversation either with our high school teacher or, perhaps, with a learned professor in university or college.

Professor: What is the first thing you do when you have finished your paper?

Student: Press the spell check button on my computer?

Professor: No. For two reasons. Number one, the spell check button will tell you that you have spelt words property. The spell check button will not tell you that you have employed the right words. But, two, you do not press the spell check button until, first of all, you have checked your conclusion. And once you have checked your conclusion, the next thing you do is to go back through this—and he is implying this miserable paper that you have submitted to me—you go back

through your paper and ask yourself the question I was asking from the beginning of reading it. Does the information in this paper lead me to this conclusion?

Actually it is amazing the number of times that conversation ought to, but doesn't take place. There is probably no more obvious fallacy in the educational world and in our conversation with one another than to make conclusions but those conclusions not to have a solid foundation. Actually, the same thing is true—and I am sure some of you are thinking the same thing is exactly true of preaching, isn't it, and of the sermons to which we listen. The sermons that persuade us by the power of the Holy Spirit are the sermons in which the conclusion is the fruit of the exposition.

And the apostle Paul, as I was hinting in one of the services this morning, citing the principle of the university in which I was once a student, the apostle Paul is a master of clear thinking and reasoning. In fact, there is a fairly simple formula for clear thinking and reasoning and teaching. It is this. And you notice that the apostle Paul uses it here. First of all, there is a proposition. Then there is an exposition, an explanation of that proposition. Thirdly, there is a drive towards a conclusion. And, fourthly, in the case of the apostle Paul frequently then there comes the practical application. That's the way to think clearly and to communicate clearly and it is certain the way to think clearly about what Paul calls in this letter my gospel. He lays out foundational propositions and truths. He expounds those truths. He brings those truths into a conclusion so that we are drawn to convictions. And then he says to us, *Now let's see how this works out in your Christian life.*

And you can see that he follows that pattern in a very striking way here in Romans chapter six. He has given us his proposition in the opening four verses and it is this. Christian believers have died to sin and been raised to newness of life. He then goes on, as you will notice, from verse five through to verse 10 to provide us with an exposition. And it is to this that we are going to draw attention this evening. He is explaining the significance. He is providing us with nuances of understanding that will help us get a firm grasp on this great biblical truth about what has happened to Christian believers. And then he comes to a conclusion. And you notice it here in verse 11. So, he says, "Here is my conclusion. You must also consider yourselves as Christians dead to sin and alive to God in Jesus Christ." And then in verses 12 through 14 they application of this. There are implications. There are consequences of grasping this truth.

So the conclusion to which he is driving us, the point he wants us to get, as it were, is this. That if we are Christians the Scripture says about us that we are those who simply because we are Christians, not as we noted last time, because of anything we feel, but simply because we are Christians, we are those who

have died to sin and been raised to newness of life. And his conclusion is this. Let me put it in the form of the question that forms the title of the sermon: Do you consider yourself to be dead to sin and alive to God? Because if I can put it negatively, if not, you haven't yet understood the riches of what it means to be a Christian believer.

This is Paul's gospel. This is not an incidental thing for the apostle Paul. We have noted that if we took a superficial view of what he was saying, he could have flown on from the heights of Romans 5:11 right to the end of chapter eight and simply rejoiced in salvation. But he wants, as it were, to go down deeper into the foundations of the Christian life, the nature of the Christian life, that provides us a strong enough foundation so that saying we are more than conquerors through him who loved us is not some flight of fancy of our minds, but is solidly rooted in the transforming power of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And this evening we're focusing attention on his exposition of the principle in verses one through four that if we are Christians, baptized into Jesus Christ, then by definition this is true of us. We have died to sin and been raised to newness of life in Jesus Christ. Verse three.

Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.

We are the ones who died to sin and have been raised to newness of life. Therefore, on two counts—one that we have died to sin, two, that we have been raised to newness of life—it is impossible that we should take the attitude, then, let's go on sinning that grace may abound, because we understand that grace finds us as helpless and hopeless sinners, but grace never leaves us there. God in his infinite mercy has loved us in our sin, but he refuses to leave us under the dominion of sin. So, as we saw from the very vocabulary that Paul uses here in chapter five and again in chapter six: In Jesus Christ he has delivered us from the dominion of sin and made us to live in the power of the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And now he wants to press this home for us. He wants to expound this to us. In a sense, the apostle Paul understands well enough how strange this teaching may be to some of us. And so he doesn't just throw out a verse. You have died to sin and been raised to newness of life. He, as it were, puts it under the microscope and says to us now, *Let's look at this. Let's see what it is that the gospel has done for us and in us. Let's take time here because this is so important.*

And it is clear he is concerned about this. More than once in this section he asks the question of these Roman Christians: “Don’t you know this?” He is obviously concerned. Although he has never been in Rome, he knows much about the Roman churches. Later chapters will explain to us although he has never been in Rome, he is concerned about this possibility that these Roman Christians may not know that part of what it means to be a Christian is that you have died to the dominion of sin and been raised into newness of life.

I think if he was concerned about the Roman Christians in the first century he would be profoundly concerned about Christians in the 21st century. You read through the books that help us to live the Christian life. You read through some of the literature that’s supposed to counsel those Christians who are in need and struggling with sin and you find almost a complete vacuum of the teaching that the apostle Paul is giving to us here which underlines the fact that not all counsel, not all instruction is rooted in the power and grace of the gospel.

Let me put it as bluntly as I can, if I do not have, as a minister of the gospel, a working knowledge of what Paul is teaching me here in Romans chapter six, there is a serious question as to whether I should be in the gospel ministry at all. Because this is absolutely of the essence of what Paul wants us to understand has happened to us in becoming Jesus Christ’s. We have died to sin, been raised to newness of life.

Now how does he expound this here in these verses five through 10 to reach the conclusion in verse 11? Let me lead you or try to lead you through this in three stages. First of all in verse five he states his principle. If being united to Christ in a death like his we will be united with him in a resurrection like his. Verses six and seven, you notice, he picks up the first half of that statement. We have been united to Christ in a death like his. And he works it out. And then in verses eight through 10 he picks up the second half of the statement. We have been united to Christ in a resurrection like his. And then he draws the threads together in verse 11 with his conclusion. So, you, Christian, consider yourself—this is the way you need to think about yourself. You are somebody who has died to sin in Jesus Christ and been raised to newness of life. Verse five, “For if we have been united with him in a death like his...”

We, of course, in coming to faith in Jesus Christ are not nailed to a cross. We are not placed in a tomb and we do not rise from that tomb. But what the apostle Paul wants us to understand is that when we come to faith in Jesus Christ we are so united to Jesus Christ that all that Jesus Christ has done for us, as it were, becomes ours and imprints itself on our lives. We were chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world in order that we might be taken out of the family of Adam and placed in the family of Jesus Christ. When Jesus Christ died upon the cross he died as our substitute and representative and so there is a sense, the

New Testament says, that when Christ died on the cross I died with Christ on the cross. But then when I became a believer all of this, as it were, strikes home into my life. I come to share with Jesus Christ in his dying to sin about which Paul speaks in chapter six verse 10 and his resurrection into newness of life.

I don't physically die and physically rise. But in union with Jesus Christ the dominion of sin over my life is broken and the newness of life, the new creation of which Paul speaks in 2 Corinthians 5:17 becomes a standing reality of my Christian experience.

But what does Paul mean here then when he begins to explain what has happened? Well, follow his language. First of all, he says, in verse six, "We understand this to be true because of something we know."

Now whenever Paul says we know, you ought to ask yourself: Do we know it? And that's obvious, isn't it? Is he just being polite here? We know. Or is he drawing them in and saying, "Now, you need to know this. This is what we know. We know that our—in the English Standard Version—our old self, or, better, the old man, was crucified with Christ in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing."

Now that's not too straightforward, is it? I hope you understand that is not a straightforward... have you ever used that language? You have only used that language to another Christian if you have known Romans 6:6 by heart. So what is the apostle Paul teaching us here? Well, of course, he has been teaching us that there was a time when we were in Adam and when we belonged to that whole old order of humanity. But now he says, "By God's grace, we have been translated from the world of Adam and from the dominion of sin into the world and the family and the dominion of the Lord Jesus Christ and the reign of grace."

Now if I can put it this way, he is saying, *We are no longer, we no longer belong to the old family. We no longer belong to that old humanity, but we have been translated out of that old humanity and brought into a new humanity all together into Jesus Christ whom Paul elsewhere calls the new man.* And when we are united to Jesus Christ by faith as Paul says in 2 Corinthians 5:17, we have entered into a whole new world all together. Many of us can testify to that, can't we? We were blind. The Bible meant nothing to us. Singing hymns was a tasteless experience. The people of God seemed strange and then we were born again. We came to faith in Jesus Christ. Our eyes were opened and we felt we were living in a whole new world all together. There were glorious new truths gripped our mind, new affections touched our hearts. Our worlds seemed to be headed now in a totally and radically different direction all together. And we were conscious of what the apostle Paul is speaking about here, that when we came to faith in Jesus Christ, the old man—that is our union with the old Adam and all

that that involved—was brought to an immediate halt. The grip was broken. And we were delivered into a new order of reality all together in Jesus Christ.

Once I was in Adam and I was broken and in bondage to sin and I was old, but now I am in Jesus Christ and the bondage to sin has been broken and all the riches of his grace have been poured out upon me. And so he says, *Christian, understand this. That we know that our old man was crucified with Christ in order that something might happen.*

Now what is it that means us to understand happens? “The body of sin might be brought to nothing.” What does he mean by this? I think what he means by this is as follows. By body he means body.

Remember how later on in Romans chapter seven he speaks and says: “Who will deliver me from this body of death?”

And the genitive there, of death, means a body dominated by death, a body that eventually will, as it were, cave in to the dominion of death in the body. And I think he means something similar here by this expression the body of sin. He means this body, my person as to my body. And he says, *I have been translated out of the kingdom of the old into the kingdom of the new in order that something might happen here and now in my bodily existence that the body of sin might be, as the ESV translates it, as the body of sin might be brought to nothing.*

Now he doesn't mean that when you become a Christian your body disappears. If that is true there is nobody that I can see in this room who is a Christian. Our bodies don't disappear. But he is saying when you come to Jesus Christ you are united to Christ and brought into a new order of reality. One of the glorious aspects of this I hope you know something of this in your own life and experience. One of the glorious aspects of this is that your bodily existence, what you look at with your eyes, what you listen to with your ears, what you do with your hands, what makes your heart beat faster, where you go with your feet, your body—if I can put it this way—becomes infertile soil for the reign of sin. that doesn't mean that you are yet free from the presence of sin, but because you belong to Jesus Christ the transformation of the gospel isn't just something that takes place deep down in my heart. It is a transformation that transforms the whole of my life. I have been addicted as a bodily person to myself and to my sin and to my pleasures and to my distaste for spiritual things and to my antagonism against God. I am a bodily person. I feel in my body. I think through my body. I act with my body. But now that I have been brought into the kingdom of Jesus Christ, it is as though this body has been planted into the soil of grace in which the fruit of the Spirit grow. And the soil of grace is far more difficult soil for sin to embed itself in my bodily existence.

Now you may say, *But since I became a Christian I have been so much more conscious of the sins that I ... that come to expression in my life and my body.* Of course that is true. Of course that is bound to be true. But you don't think that means you are under the dominion of those sins, do you? The reason you are conscious of them is because the soil of grace has been planted in your life. You weren't conscious of those things before. Yes, they were sometimes an embarrassment. You did foolish things and you were found out. But you didn't have that holy distaste for them, because there was no grace soil in your life.

And so, you see, he is saying this great idea, this is not just some clever idea I have made up as some ivory tower theologian who makes up interesting ways of looking at the Christian life. No, he says, *This is profoundly of practical importance to you living the Christian life, that you have been delivered from the old order into the new order. And that influences the way you live in your body here and now. If I can put it this way, if sanctification in my life hasn't transformed the way I use my body, it isn't sanctification. That is how radical and glorious the gospel is.*

And, as I said last time, it doesn't deliver us from the presence of sin in our bodily and our physical existence. But we need to rest our anchor in this, that it delivers us from the dominion of sin and that is what makes it possible to deal with indwelling sin as it seeks to gain ground again that it's lost in the soil of grace.

And the purpose of all of this, well, notice what he says, it is that "we should no longer be enslaved to sin."

Do you see, incidentally, the practical value of that when you are speaking to a fellow Christian who says, *I seem to be bound by sin.* You see what a physician of the soul he is? He is saying, *You, indeed, if you are a Christian believer, may be struggling with sin.* But let the Scriptures interpret the truth about your life. You don't—although people nowadays do, because they are all over the websites. They go to the doctor and they say, *Doctor, this is what is wrong with me and here is the prescription you should offer.* And the doctor says, *I am very sorry. You have no idea what is going on here. You are misinformed.*

Now, in the same way, you don't go to God and say, *There is sin in my life. I am under the dominion of sin.* You go to the Scriptures and the Scriptures say to you, *if you are a genuine Christian, you are longer under the dominion of sin.* That is the truth of the gospel if you are a Christian. If you are not a Christian, then you are under the dominion of sin and no wonder you feel under the dominion of sin, but if you are a Christian you are not under the dominion of sin, he says. And that is the very first thing you need to know, because unless you know that there will be no hope in your heart that you will be able to break the power of the presence of sin. And that is what he is saying.



The gospel “breaks the power of cancelled sin and sets the prisoner free” so that we are no longer enslaved to sin. And then you notice he gives this little explanation at verse seven. “For one who has died has been set free from sin.”

And if your eyesight is good enough, you can look down to the bottom of the page and notice that the word he actually uses is his ordinary verb for justify. What does he mean? Well, I think he means it in a very special sense. I think what he means is this, that the person who has died, on that person sin no longer has any claim to authority.

Very interesting, actually. Centuries ago in Scotland apparently you could occasionally see a notice. James MacPherson was justified at eight o'clock this morning. Do you know what it meant? It meant he had been hanged. Why use the word justify? Because whatever claim anybody had now on James MacPherson was null and void because he died to this world where those claims could be made and he was in another world all together.

That's what Paul means. He is saying, *Yes, sin can reach out its tentacles towards you. It can allure you. It can whisper to you. 'I am still your master.'* And, indeed, you may be persuaded by that because you are conscious that sins still dwell in your life. But the teaching of the gospel is that the Christian has died to the dominion of sin in Jesus Christ. And, therefore, sin no longer reigns.

Now notice just about what Paul is saying here if you can just have the patience to follow along. Please notice he is not telling us there is something that we have to do. He is not saying, *Christian, crucify the old man*. He is saying, “The old man has been crucified with Christ.” It has happened.

The second thing—and this follows very obviously, doesn't it? Never think of yourself as a believer in who there are two me struggling. Some of you have seen that teaching. I remember when I first began to study Romans six as a teenager wondering about all this teaching and I got this book. It was a great big book and there was this amazing picture at Romans chapter six of two men — struggling with each other. That is not what Paul is saying. Paul is saying the old man, what I was in Adam, it's gone. I am a new man in Jesus Christ. I am not yet finally renewed. I am delivered from the dominion of sin, but I am not yet delivered from the presence of sin. But thank God because I am delivered from sin's dominion, it is possible for me in the power of the Spirit to do something about sin's presence, to actually grow in grace and not be in the hopeless situation of feeling I can never make any progress because sin has got mastery over me.

So the reign of sin has ended and I am no longer the subject of sin. It can trouble me. It can allure me in all kinds of ways. But it can never have dominion over me

and so long as I know it has no dominion over me, I am able, as Paul goes on to say, to give myself to Jesus Christ and say, *Now, Lord, you are my master and my king and I bow to your reign. Clean up my life. Clean up my conscience. Clean up my thinking. Clean up my feeling. Clean up my whole being, because I offer myself gladly to you.*

Let me try and illustrate this. The illustration is somewhat frivolous, but it may make the point. When I was a student very early on in my student career in graduate school I profoundly upset one of my professors because he hated the gospel and he was a professor of theology. Now seminary papers are not necessarily places for personal confession, but it is impossible, sometimes, isn't it, to keep your convictions out of what you're writing. And I apparently, meek, mild, back of the class Sinclair Ferguson enraged this professor to the extent that he incited one of the other professors to attack me more or less for an hour during the course of a lecture. And so we went on. I had this professor many hours because of the subject I specialized in. I had him many hours in my final year. There were times when he sought to intimidate me, demean me, despise my minister. But then I will never forget when it came to graduation and the senate had set its seal on the results of the final exams and my professor happened to be the dean of the faculty that year, leading in the procession to the great hall for the graduation ceremony.

Sometimes he tried to soften me up and he turned to me on this occasion. I happened, for reasons that are not at all significant, to be the first person in the line.

"Well," he said, "Sinclair, you have done very well."

And I said to him, I looked him straight in the eye and I said to him, "Professor, don't I know it?"

And he jumped, turned around and on went the graduation.

Now what gave panic stricken Sinclair Ferguson the courage to do that? I knew that all his authority over me had been ended. I was no longer his student. He was no longer my master. And that's what Paul is saying. Of course, it is much deeper than that, much deeper than that. But do you think about yourself this way, Christian believer? Are you learning to think about yourself this way, somebody who has died to sin and been raised to newness of life? Now that this the second thing. And I am not going to say anymore about it. You will just have to think about this for yourself, that we have not only died to the reign of sin in union with Jesus Christ that we have been united to Jesus Christ and not only in that union is the reign of sin broken, but we have been brought right through into a new life all together. He's given us his Holy Spirit.

Yes, we are living in the old order. We are living in a world where we are surrounded by sin and sinners and there is the world and the flesh and the devil and I know and there is the ongoing, lingering presence of indwelling sin. But the glory of the gospel is: I have not only died to its dominion in Jesus Christ, but I have been brought through into a whole new order of existence all together by the power of his resurrection. And I live in the power of a risen Christ. I am able to say as Paul does at the end of Philippians chapter three. I may be a citizen here of the United States or a citizen of Damascus, or I may be a citizen of Tarsus or I may be a citizen of Jerusalem or of Glasgow, but my real citizenship is in heaven. And I am living now between the time in which Christ died to deliver me from the dominion of sin and rose again in order to release new world powers into my life and one day as I look forward to him coming again from heaven one day the work that his goodness has begun, the arm of his strength will complete and I who am presently delivered from the dominion of sin will, by God's grace, one day be delivered finally from the very presence of sin.

Think of it! One day we will sing his praises without the hindrance of sin. And in the meantime we live as New Testament readers sometimes say, between the times when the dominion of sin has been broken and the eternal banishment of sin will take place. And, you see, that's actually what happens in our individual lives, as well. The dominion of sin broken and the prospect that the sin with which I still struggle and wrestle, but I am not under its dominion. The prospect that one day that struggle will be no more and I will be wholly Jesus Christ's and as he now is without sin. It's staggering.

And, you see, as he leads us through this you see where he is going. He says, "If we have died with him, we believe we will live with him." Not only that he says — This is really absolutely amazing — he says: "We know that Christ being raised from the dead will never die again."

Our union with him in his resurrection is irreversible. I as a Christian believer, can no more cease to live in the resurrection grace of Jesus Christ than Jesus Christ can be dragged down back into the tomb or placed again upon the cross. The liberation, beloved brothers and sisters, is radical and it is final. That's why Satan often comes along to Christian believers and whispers, *You know, it is not really final.*

Incidentally, speaking about my academic career, I have never forgotten six months after that occasion I just described I woke up in a cold sweat in the middle of the night because in my dream somebody said to me, "Have you don the second half of the exams?" And I remember in the dream saying, "I didn't know there was a second half." And, do you know, I think it was just those tentacles from the past. And Satan does that kind of thing, doesn't he? Be

surprised if he hasn't done that to many of us here. *You are still under the dominion of sin. Don't believe the apostle Paul.*

Ah, my dear friend, believe the apostle Paul a million, million times before you believe the whispers of the evil one, contradicting the gospel and seeking to minimize and then to abolish the liberty that the gospel gives to you to serve the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, says Paul, *Now here's the simple bit. Since this is true of you, think about yourself this way.*

Those of you who are my generation remember. Was it some time in the 1980s there was just a kind of explosion of books about the Christian self image, how we are supposed to think about ourselves. There was only one now. I would love to have a really great self image. So I read one or two of those books just to see what people were reading. There was only one I ever read that said anything about this. Consider yourself to have died to sin. Think about yourself this way. You want a Christian self image? Then this is one of the four most important things you need to grasp.

Stop thinking about what the other three are. We will get to them one day. This is for tonight. Do you consider yourself to be dead to sin, sin's dominion broken and raised into newness of life?

How many times in your hearing have I finished a sermon this way? Isn't the gospel of Jesus Christ absolutely glorious? But that is not the end. Let me say this to you. Some of you do struggle. Hidden away you struggle. You struggle with all kinds of things.

Paul is not saying to you: *Grit your teeth and say, "I must die to sin."* Paul is saying: *Let your eyes be open to the truth of what the gospel of Jesus Christ gives to you in union with Jesus Christ that you've died. Can it possibly be true, Lord, that I have died to the dominion of sin, I who even so long even as a Christian have lived and thought I am under the dominion of sin? And there is no way I see these other Christians and there is no way I can possibly live in the joy and apparent freedom and liberty that they enjoy. I am crushed. I am lost. I am hopeless. Yes, I am still a Christian, but I am under sin's dominion.* Christian, brother, sister, if you are a Christian, sin's dominion is broken and you have been raised into newness of life and now you must begin to think about yourself this way.

It doesn't become true when you think about yourself this way. You think about yourself this way because it is true of all who are Christ's. And when you grasp

this the gospel gives strength and power for the battle against indwelling sin. And this is the very thing to which, in God's mercy, we will turn next Lord's day.

**CLOSING PRAYER:**

Heavenly Father, thank you for the riches of the Word of God that you have given to us. For truths that stretch our minds and expand our emotions and place before us possibilities in the realm of grace that the evil one so often seeks to hide from our lives, from our understanding, from our appropriation and our application. By your grace we pray that we may go out into this week knowing that we are those who have died to sin and been raised to newness of life and that therefore we can live and battle against sin and stand erect and dignified in this world because you have taken us out of the kingdom of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of your beloved Son. Oh, Lord, can it be true that you have done so much for us? Surely this is too good not to be true in the gospel. We pray that by your Spirit we may appropriate it, that we may be transformed and liberated by it and we may live in its grace and power. And this we pray through Jesus our Savior. Amen.