

Grace Abounding, Sin Continuing?

By Dr. Sinclair B. Ferguson

Text: Romans 6:1-14

[Link: https://www.sermonaudio.com/sermoninfo.asp?SID=32121150459](https://www.sermonaudio.com/sermoninfo.asp?SID=32121150459)

OPENING PRAYER:

Gracious God and Father, thank you for the joy of your presence with us. We praise you that you are a God of joy and of infinite grace, a Father to your children. We praise you that you have given up your own Son for us on the cross that all of the privileges of your grace might be ours this evening. And as we draw to the end of this day for all the blessings you have poured out upon us in it, we give you our thanks. And we come to you, again, hungry and thirsty. Your presence with us deepens our hunger for you and makes us feel ever more keenly the thirst that you alone can satisfy. And therefore we pray that you would gather us around your presence, that you would help us to sit under your Word, that you would open the eyes of our understanding that we may grasp its truth, and that we may see with the help of your Holy Spirit the life transforming power that is in the gospel of Jesus Christ. So we pray with our Lord Jesus Christ, make us holy through your truth. Your Word is truth. And so we pray to you tonight to do something in our lives to begin not do something fresh in ourselves and in our fellowship that will last for all eternity and gain you marvelous glory and us unending blessing. And this we pray for Jesus Christ our Savior's sake. Amen.

Please be seated.

SCRIPTURE READING:

Now we have come this evening in our studies in Paul's great letter to the Romans to Romans chapter six and we are scheduled to read the first 14 verses. We will be in this section of Romans six for a week or two or three perhaps and it will be helpful for us if, as we turn to Romans six, page 942 in the pew Bible or 1406 in the children's Bible, if you've brought your children's Bible with you. We turn to Romans 6:1-14. It would be helpful to us to read into verse one from the end of chapter five.

So I suggest we turn to Romans chapter five verse 18 and pick up where we have been studying in recent weeks and catch the flow of the apostle Paul's reasoning and argument and teaching as he moves into chapter six.

Therefore, (says Paul) as one trespass (that is the sin of Adam) led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness (that is the obedience of our Lord Jesus Christ) leads

to justification and life for all men. For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous. Now (and here we come to the theme we were looking at last week) the law (the law of Moses) came in to increase the trespass, but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more, so that, as sin reigned in death, grace also might reign through righteousness leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

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 our old man) was crucified with Christ 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 (that is the members of your bodies) to God as instruments for righteousness. For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace

SERMON:

How many times has it crossed your mind during the course of this week since we last met that you are baptized? And what difference has it made to this week in your life? How many times has it crossed your mind in the course of this week as a Christian, I am somebody who has died to sin? And what difference has that made in your life?

It is fairly obvious, I think, from what Paul says here in Romans chapter six and in a number of other places in his teaching that he regarded these issues as of paramount importance for living the Christian life. Indeed, just here in Romans chapter six he seems to pose the question almost with incredulity. Don't you know what happened to you when you became a Christian? Isn't it making a radical difference to the way in which you live the Christian life?

And so it ought to be clear to us as we read through verses like this that we are turning to yet another crucial chapter in Paul's great letter to the Romans. It is a crucial chapter. It is by no means an easy chapter. And I hope that we are the kind of Christian who when we come across

passages in Scripture that we need to think about, are not those Christians who turn away from those passages and say, “I don’t want to be a Christian who thinks.” Because, as I have sometimes reminded you as John Stott puts it so marvelously in his little book *Men Made New* the secret of holy living for the Christian lies in the mind. It is as the Word of God penetrates my mind and forms my understanding of the gospel that it touches my will and my affections and begins to transform my life. That is why we are taking a little time to work our way through Paul’s letter to the Romans. And so let me ask you his question.

“Do you not know that all of us who were been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? Buried by 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 be set free to live a glorious new life.

And so, later on, in this passage, as we shall see later on he says to these Roman Christians: This is the way you are to think about yourself as a Christian. So the question is: Am I thinking about myself? Do I think about myself as a Christian in this way? Consider yourselves, he says, think about yourselves as those who have died to sin and been raised to newness of life.

And so the great question before us as we turn to a passage like this is the question: What does it mean to have died to sin and been raised to newness of life? Well, let’s try and creep up on this gently. You remember where we left off last week. Or, if you weren’t here last week let me tell you where we left off last week. The apostle Paul in a sense could have moved on in his argument from Romans chapter five verse 11 where he was in the heights of all the blessings of the gospel. He could have moved on, in a sense, immediately, to Romans chapter eight and verse one. All of these blessings are ours and he could have immediately said:

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

And then moved us immediately on to his wonderful teaching about the transformation the Spirit brings into the Christian life and the final exultation and triumph and assurance the Christian has that nothing can ever separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. But he is a wise teacher and he realizes that if that glorious experience is to be sustained in our Christian lives, it needs to have strong and deep foundations.

How is it possible for us to experience all this? How is it possible for the righteousness of one individual, the Lord Jesus Christ, to provide salvation for countless millions as it has done? So we saw in chapter five verse 12 through 21 he begins to explore all that Jesus Christ has done for us against the dark background of the tragedy that Adam the first head of the human race brought into the world. And he had reached an amazing conclusion. He’d spoken about the grace that is ours in Jesus Christ. And how Christ has not only, as it were, brought us back to the garden of Eden to begin again, but has provided for us a righteousness that will last forever and that will stand the holy gaze of God in all eternity.

And then he’d raise this question. Well, if this is our salvation, think about Adam, think about Jesus, what is the purpose of the law? And he would explained to us the law came in and it made

clear what sin is. And it irritated sinners' hearts so that they rebelled against God's law. They wanted to pull God down from this throne: You will not tell me what to do. And the very fact that God told them what to do irritated them inwardly so that it increased their sin. And then Paul makes this amazing statement — which I called last Sunday night a dangerous statement: “Where sin abounded, grace all the more abounded.” Where sin abounded, grace super abounded.

And he understands, as we understand if we are tracking with him that somebody is going to ask the question, with that kind of logic, with that kind of logic, if where sin abounds grace super abounds, the implication of that is, I can go on sinning to my heart's content and it will simply draw more grace out of God in the gospel. So let's go on sinning that grace may the more abound.

And it's this question that the apostle Paul answers in chapter six and he answers it in such a way as to bring us yet further into the depths of the riches of the saving grace of God in the gospel for our lives as Christians. And he puts it like this. In a sense he responds to that question in two different ways. Chapter six verse one: “What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound?” Here is the first layer or level of his response. God forbid. Those of you who carry the King James Version around with you or have it in your memory, that is what it says, God forbid. Very strong language. Here in the English Standard Version, “By no means.”

Now do you see what Paul is doing there? It seems he is not even stopping to think. This is what I would call a gut reaction from the apostle Paul. “Shall we go on sinning that grace may abound? By no means!”

And, you see, after the 15 or 20 years or 25 years or whatever it is that the apostle Paul has been a Christian believer, God has done something so profoundly in him that he has developed a kind of instinct towards anything that might smack of a rejection or denial of the gospel.

Notice this. He does not live the Christian life on the basis of his emotions any more than you or I should do. But if the Christian gospel doesn't change your emotions, it is not the Christian gospel that's here. The Christian gospel, Jesus Christ the truth of the gospel brings an emotional revulsion to anything that is going to be contrary to the grace of God and to the holiness of the Christian life. But that doesn't just fly, as it were, like a cloud in a blue sky. It is undergirded by a powerful doctrinal argument that we need to follow.

Now what would your answer be to that question? Shall we go on sinning? The law came in, increased the trespass. Where sin increased grace super increased. Should we go on sinning? By no means. Why not? What's your answer to the question? What do you say to your seven year old who gets a hold of this idea and he says to you: Does that mean I can go on sinning that grace may abound?

Why does Paul not say, “Remember the 10 Commandments?” I think some of us would be tempted to say that. No, you don't go on sinning because of the 10 Commandments. Why does

Paul not say that? Does he not believe in the Commandments? Of course, he believes in the Commandments. The Commandments are in so many different parts of his letters in the New Testament. Why does he not say that? Because to say that would not help us—nor his readers in Rome—to grasp the glory of the gospel.

In a sense, that would be to say the good news is Jesus forgives your sins, now keep the Commandments. Jesus forgives your sins. Now keep the commandments. But that would be too truncate the gospel. And you notice what Paul's reply is.

Should we go on sinning that grace may abound? By no means. You little Christians should keep the Commandments. No. "By no means! How can we who died to sin..."

Now the language Paul uses here might be slightly better paraphrased something like: How can we who as Christians are the kind of people who died to sin, how can we possibly go on living in sin?

Now do you see the difference between these two answers? Should we keep on sinning that grace may abound? No, keep the Commandments. It's right to keep the Commandments. But, you see, what Paul is saying is if you say or think that kind of thing, you have no idea how grace works. You have no idea what a massive transformation grace has wrought in your life. Don't you understand? You've been baptized, he says. Did nobody explain this to you that all of us who were baptized have been united to Jesus Christ in his death and in his resurrection? And since we have been united to Jesus Christ in his death and in his resurrection, don't you understand, therefore, that you've been united to Jesus Christ in the death he died to sin once for all and you have been united to Jesus Christ in the resurrection life he lives forever to God?

Don't you understand what it actually means to become a Christian? How can we who have died to sin go on living in sin? Do you see what he is saying? He is saying, "Don't you see the contradiction there that if you have died to sin you don't go on living in sin? And this is why he appeals to baptism, the ritual that they had experienced right at the beginning of their Christian lives. He is saying to them, "Don't you understand that this is of the very essence of what it means to become a Christian? Please tell me you know this," he says. He can hardly believe this. Don't you know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death, buried with him in baptism, raised into newness of life and that the gospel is not a matter of God wiping the slate clean and then telling you to get on with your life in a better way. The gospel involves God doing something that radically transforms who you actually are.

And since this is so and he comes to this, doesn't he, towards the end of the passage when he says in verse 11: "You must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus. And then in verses 12 and 13 and 14 he spells out what that means in practical Christian living.

I remember when I was a very young minister. I was involved—that is not the right word. I was trying to help a young man who was probably about my age who had been a drug addict and he came to faith in Jesus Christ and there was one of these jamboree type meetings at one time in

the country and I wasn't there at it, but somebody told me about it later on. They said that they had brought this young man onto the stage in this large auditorium, Christians from all over the place were gathered there and they brought him on to give his testimony. And he told how he had been a drug addict. And then something had happened to him one night when he had come to faith in Jesus Christ. And then he said this. And this was the embarrassing thing. He said, "And Sinclair Ferguson explained what had happened to me."

And there was one of the most distinguished theologians in the English speaking world, one of the speakers at this conference and I thought what does he think about me? This drug addict, something happens to him and I explain what has happened to him. That is not a very coherent account of becoming a Christian. Something happened to me and this fellow explained what had happened to me. But, you see, Paul understands. That's actually one of the great problems that many Christians have. They don't know what has happened to them. And that is what he is saying here. He is saying you have been baptized, Roman Christians. But I can hardly believe you don't understand what has happened to you. And that is what he wants to focus in on, because what has happened to us, he says, is that through faith in Christ that has united us to Christ in the Holy Spirit we have died to sin and been raised to newness of life.

And you see how he works this through. Let me just take a moment to show you how he works it through in verses one through four. He gives us his exposition of this. And then in verses five through 10—that we will come to on another occasion—he gives us a more detailed explanation of this. It is as though he is putting this under the microscope and saying, "Let's look at this in detail." And then in verse 11 he spells out very clearly what the implication of this is for the way we think about ourselves as Christians. And then in verses 12 through 14 he provides us with a series of exhortations in which he is saying to us, "Now, in the light of this, this is the way to live."

So there is exposition. There is explanation. There is implication and there is exhortation. But tonight it is just this big question. What is Paul driving at in these strange words he uses in verse two: "How can we who died to sin still live in it?"

Now let me begin with some negatives, because I think that is quite important here. We don't want to have the wrong idea. First of all, when he speaks about having died to sin and being raised to newness of life, he is not speaking about something that has happened to some Christians, but not to others. He is speaking about all Christians and the reason we know that is because he uses baptism which is the outward initial mark for these Roman Christians that they are Christians. He says, "All of you who have been baptized into Jesus Christ, this is true of all of you."

So to have died to sin and been raised to newness of life is not something that is true of super or even super duper Christians but not true of ordinary Christians. It is by definition true of all Christians. Before we go any further, let me put it as simply as I can. If you are a Christian in this room tonight you are, by definition, somebody who has died to sin and been raised to newness of life.

The second negative is this. Paul is not speaking about us dying for sin. Men die because of sin, but we don't die for sin. Jesus died for our sins. He is not saying that you need to make some sacrifice to atone for your sins or that you have made any sacrifice to atone for your sins.

And then this negative, listen very carefully. He is not speaking about something for you to do. He is not speaking about something for you to do. And so if you are a Christian here tonight and as you shook hands with me at the door as you left tonight and you said to me: Now I am going to try to die to sin this week. My heart would sink. He is not saying this is something you need to do. He is saying, isn't he, this is something that has happened. We died to sin.

And then another negative and with this I had better turn away from negatives or you will think this is a very negative exposition. He is not speaking here about engaging in some kind of spiritual experience where you don't feel temptation or fail or stumble or fall.

I was reared as a young Christian on J. B. Philips paraphrase translation of the New Testament which, in some areas of Romans, is absolutely spellbindingly marvelous and at other places completely disastrous. And this is one of the places where it is completely disastrous. Because there canon Philips paraphrases Paul saying, "Anyone who has died can safely be said to be immune from sin."

Now just let me say something to you. If you are immune from sin and you are in this room tonight you are not a human Christian being. You must be an angel. And we get these hints, don't we, in Hebrews. It is possible to entertain angels unawares. And if you are an angel here tonight, you probably won't disclose who you really are. You probably are here to test us to see how we respond to strangers. But unless you are an angel, you are not immune from sin.

Now occasionally you meet Christians who so misunderstand this passage they think they are immune from sin. I remember meeting somebody who assured me that she was immune from sin. And I sinned. I did everything I could to irritate her. And she became wildly irritated in the course of the conversation. But I still couldn't persuade her that she was not immune from sin. That is not what Paul means.

You just need a minuscule understanding, a knowledge of your Christian life to know that you are not immune from sin. So if Paul doesn't mean these things, what does Paul mean? Well, he gives us, I think, some clues and a couple of them I want you to notice. The first clue is this. Do you remember how he has been arguing in Romans chapter five verses 12 through 21? He is saying you once were in Adam, but now you are in Jesus Christ. You once belonged to the family of Adam. But now you have been transferred to the family of the Lord Jesus Christ. And in Adam, he said, you live in the kingdom of death under king sin and that was the language he used. It is the verb he uses. Sin reigned as a king. But now you've been taken out of that kingdom and you have been put into a different kingdom all together, a different realm all together in Christ. And in Christ, he says, you live in the kingdom of life where grace reigns.

Before we became Christians sin reigned. We were in its kingdom. Now that we have become Christians, he is saying... do you see the idea of dying to sin, dying away from sin, dying to the disadvantage of sin, dying to the reign and rule of sin? He is already beginning to bring it in. Sin reigned in death, but now grace reigns in righteousness to eternal life. He puts it very vividly also, you remember, in Colossians 1:13-14 without using the same language. He says the moment you became a Christian you were transferred from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God's beloved Son. And he is capturing these same notions here in Romans chapter six by saying the only way out of that old kingdom of darkness and death and unrighteousness is by means of an exit visa that you get from that kingdom by being united to the Lord Jesus Christ who in his death upon the cross as he tells us later on in this passage, died to sin and was raised into newness of life. Just as the Lord Jesus entered that kingdom of darkness on the cross and was made sin for us. And that sin effected death in him. And then he broke those bonds and left that kingdom in shatters around his feet when he stepped out of the tomb.

So, the apostle is saying, because by faith we are united to Jesus Christ, we come to share in that glorious shattering of the dominion of the old kingdom and we are brought in faith by the Spirit in union with the Lord Jesus Christ into a new kingdom all together. That kingdom is still there. You understand that. That kingdom is still there. The difference is this. You, as a Christian, are no longer in that kingdom. You live, yes, in a world where that kingdom is all around you, where it prevails, where often times very clearly sin reigns to death, but you are not in that kingdom, Paul is saying. Because in Jesus Christ you have died to sin and been raised to newness of life.

And clue number two is found in the way in which Paul speaks about this. It's interesting to notice the different ways in which he speaks about sin. For one thing, notice he uses the singular, not the plural. He is not talking about the sins that we commit. Now notice the language he uses about sin, chapter five verse 21. Sin reigns as a king. Chapter six verse six. Sin operates as a slave master. Chapter six verse 13 where he speaks about presenting our members to righteousness as instruments or weapons. Actually the word he uses there is weapons. And I think he is thinking here about sin as a general in an army. And then right at the end of the passage he says: "The wages of sin is death."

Sin is an employer. Sin is a slave master. Sin is a king. Sin is a general. You see, he's what the high school teachers taught you. He is personifying sin to help us to grasp the point that he is not speaking here about sins as isolated acts, but he is speaking about sin as a reign, a power, a dominion that lords it over us when we aren't Christians. And we are in bondage to sin. We are in the grip of sin. And we don't know any other kingdom. We are so accustomed to sin that the kingdom of righteousness seems singularly unattractive to us. But when we become Christians, by God's grace, we are translated out of that kingdom into the kingdom of God's beloved Son. And whereas sin reigned in that kingdom over our lives, in our bodies, sin no longer reigns. Grace reigns to eternal life.

Now Paul is going to explain more fully some of the details of what that means, but let me just fast forward just for a moment as we draw to a close this evening to show you something. Do you see what he says in verse 11? So, he says,. He is coming back to what he had said right at the

beginning. We have died to sin and been raised to newness of life. So, he says, if you are a Christian believer, you need to learn to think about yourself this way. In Christ you are somebody who has died to the dominion of sin and it no longer has dominion over you. So think about yourself that way and then, as you think about yourself that way — my dear friends, this is the importance of learning to think as a Christian. You need to think this through before you will feel it in your Christian life. You need to think this way, Paul is saying, before it makes a real difference in your Christian life. And the thing that seems to astonish him is that there are Christians in Rome who may not even know this.

And so he is saying: I want to explain to you. I want to give you a little flavor of this. If I were with you, I would say more. And I am longing to come. Do you remember? Is this one of the things he was talking about in Romans chapter one when he says: I want to come to you to impart some spiritual gift to you. I would love to sit down with you hours on end and field your questions. I am speaking about Paul here, not about me. I would love to do that as well, but we have got synod this week. And we have all got homes to go to tonight. See, I would love to explain this. I would love to help you think this through. But you have got to learn to think it through and to begin to see that this is true of you. And then you will begin to see the transformation it brings to your Christian life so that you don't let sin reign. You don't present your members to sin as instruments of unrighteousness and sin will have no dominion over you, because you are not under law, but under grace.

Now three questions as we close. I began with some questions. I want to end with some questions — three of them. Do you know this? I think I need to ask that question, don't I, because Paul seemed to think there were Christians in Rome who didn't know this. Is this a big thing in your thinking about yourself? Paul is clearly saying this needs to be a big thing in the way I think about myself. So our first question is: Do you know this? Have you grasped what has happened to you? You see, you don't know what has happened to you, as it were, by some kind of osmosis instinct from the first day of your Christian life. If that was the case, you wouldn't need the New Testament, would you? No, you need to learn to think this way so that you know this.

You know, one of my great theological heroes, John Owen, says in one of his many voluminous writings there are two great problems in pastoral ministry, just two. Now in his case they had many subdivisions, but he says here they are. Number one—and I think you'll see the point— Number one, he says, problem number one is persuading those who are under the dominion of sin that they are under the dominion of sin. That is the challenge of evangelism, isn't it? Your neighbors, they don't think about themselves as being under the dominion of sin in bondage to Satan, dead in their trespasses and sins and aliens towards God, enemies of his. So pastoral problem number one is the evangelistic problem, persuading those who are under the dominion of sin that they are under the dominion of sin. And so you can guess, can't you, what pastoral problem number two is. And it sure is a problem. Persuading those who are no longer under the dominion of sin that they are no longer under the dominion of sin. That there is a glorious freedom from the dominion of sin offered to us, given to us in the gospel. So, my first question

is: Do you know this about yourself? Don't you know that you have died to sin and been raised in newness of life if you are a Christian believer?

Question number two. Do you see the implications of this for the Christian life? Well, let me rephrase that question. Do you see this implication? Let me limit myself to one. Do you see this implication for the Christian life? Because, you see, isn't it true, I wonder if this thought is in anybody's mind. I'd be surprised if it is not present in some of our minds. But if I am delivered from the dominion of sin, why do I keep sinning? Answer: Because although you are delivered from the dominion of sin, you are not yet delivered from the presence of sin. Now why is that important? For this reason. That people who are delivered from the dominion of sin but not yet delivered from the presence of sin are going to experience a conflict in their lives that the non-Christian never knows. Because we have been delivered from the dominion, but we are not yet delivered from the presence. Thank God one day we will be delivered from the very presence of sin. What a day that will be, at least for me, I am sure for you, as well. What a day. It will be a great day for all who know me when I am delivered from the very presence of sin in my life. But, you see, in this battle, in this fight, in this warfare against sin in our lives, the great truth Paul is teaching us here is we are not battling for victory. We are fighting from a position of victory. We are no longer under sin's dominion. And, paradoxically, that is a glorious liberation and also a very important explanation of why it is that there are battles against sin in the lives of Christians.

And question number three, with which I close is a very simple one. Not do you know this or do you see the implication of it, but do you think about yourself this way? Well, you say, it is all very well for you to say to us you should think about yourself this way. Well, I probably have said you should think about yourself this way, but that is irrelevant. What is relevant is what Paul says, verse 11. "So you also *must* consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus."

It will take some of us many readings of this, much study of this, much reflection, many questions that we have. We need to listen, first of all, to what the apostle is teaching us and then we will begin to experience the power of its reality.

I close with this illustration. My wife and I went out for dinner one night last week. I think it was Friday night. I am a little hazy on last week. But I think it was Friday night. I was fishing in my hip pocket, getting my wallet out at the end of the meal. The waiter had come along and asked if we wanted dessert and we had declined dessert and I am fishing around for my MasterCard in my wallet and the waiter comes along with dessert. One dessert. It was a mighty big one dessert. He put it down in the middle, two spoons. He said, "The bill has been settled. Enjoy the dessert."

Now if you paid my bill — thank you. I don't know what happened. But I tell you this. That has never happened to me before. I have actually occasionally done that for other people. But I have kind of always been with them when the bill came. I have never had that experience in my life before, have you? I tell you. Walking out of that restaurant without paying the bill myself — I was kind of expecting to hear the police cars.

I saw in my mind's imagination the headlines: First Presbyterian Church ministry in the local jail. I just couldn't... my emotions couldn't take it in. But, boy, I was going to believe it. I had been told it was true. There was no charge. The bill had been taken care of. I was no longer under any obligation to the management of the restaurant where the meal had been served and it was a really strange thing as we walked out of the restaurant. Dorothy had more faith than I did. I just couldn't take this in. I felt strange. It seemed so counter to me.

So something deeply instinctive in me that if I am going to get it I wanted to pay for it and then I will know I have handled it. But then we went out. There were no police cars. Nobody chased us out of the restaurant. I thought. Can this really be true? Will I wake up and suddenly I will find myself the security guard has got hold of me. It just... there was nothing in me. There was actually nothing in *me* that made me feel I am discharged from that obligation. But as I believed it and walked free, I discovered among other things there is more money in the bank.

Now that's a terrible illustration, but you will remember it, won't you? This is what it means to become a Christian. He comes to you in his Word and he says: Sir, madam, in Jesus Christ the bill has been settled. Not only has the bill been settled, but the dominion of that kingdom over you has been broken. You are now free to live for his glory. Yes, you will battle. Yes, you will find... what was that expression? I know that expression from observation, that expression that Neil brought before us. You will experience frost heaving. But you will not be under the dominion of the rocks. And that's what he is saying.

What a great thing it is to know that. Well, do you know it? And if you don't know it, but you are a real Christian, you re a real Christian, you know you are a real Christian, you are trusting in Jesus Christ, and this is perhaps you are a teenager. You are a young Christian. You never heard anything like this in your life before, you didn't... you have never read Romans six before. It is all so new. And perhaps even all so strange as it was for me to walk out of the restaurant on Friday night and set your heart on this, your mind on this. And we will begin to see in these coming weeks how gloriously this transforms living the Christian life. May it be so.

Let us pray.

CLOSING PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, thank you for the riches of the grace of Jesus Christ, for these mind stretching truths in your Word, for the radical transformation that has taken place by your grace. And we pray as we meditate on this, as we apply it to our lives, as we go on to live in it that by your grace we may consider ourselves to be men and women and young people who have died to sin and been raised to newness of life and giving ourselves entirely to him. We pray this in Jesus' name.