

We Died To Sin

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Date: 15 July 2012

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[0 : 0 0] on what is the gospel? What is the good news? And I embarked upon this study because I think that oftentimes we use terminology and we throw terminology around and for those of you who have been around the church for any length of time, you've probably used the word gospel at some point in time. You've probably talked about the good news of Jesus, but we're looking at the question hopefully with a little bit of a fresh eye to say what's so good about the good news of Jesus? And if I said to you, what is the gospel you might come up with kind of on the spot, Jesus saves us from our sins, and that's right. But when we talk about what it means for Jesus to save us from our sins, what we most oftentimes mean is simply this, that God sends Jesus and he sends Jesus so that we don't have to endure the punishment and penalty of hell and we get heaven. That we talk about the gospel and Jesus saves us merely in terms of kind of a change in eternal postcode. That we are not going to get punishment and now we're going to get this reward. And we're kind of left with,

I think, sometimes the idea of, so what now? What are we all doing here? For those of us who are Christians, what's the point? Why didn't we kind of turn to Jesus by faith and him just suck us up, you know, like a Hoover, just up to heaven, right? Why did he not do that? Why are we here? And I think it's that point that we really need to look at and we're going to look at both that side of things, both this morning and evening. So come back, I expect all of you to be here.

The idea that what does it mean that Jesus saves us not only in what we looked at last Sunday morning in the idea of our justification, which is a fancy Bible word for saying that when we put our faith in Jesus, he counts our sins to Jesus and he counts his Jesus righteousness to me. And that is a beautiful promise of the gospel. That promise is life-changing. And if you have not experienced the life-changing grace of that promise, then I encourage you to turn to Jesus who really does invite sinners to be made whole, to be forgiven, to be restored to him. That's the doctrine of justification that we looked at last week that we are imputed with. That's another fancy kind of theological word that Jesus counts our sin to him and we get his righteousness. And that's beautiful, but it's not the whole story of the gospel. That's not all it means to be saved. There's a fuller story to come to even that beautiful part. I'm a big fan of the antique roadshow. That probably tells you that I'm kind of nerdy.

I think they have the antique roadshow here as well as in the United States. The antique roadshow, if you haven't seen it, is basically people bringing in their junk to be appraised by experts. And they have all these fascinating stories. One of my favorite stories of the antique roadshow, and really I'm more fascinated with the more expensive the items are, but one of my favorites was this person brought in a desk and it was in the United States.

They brought in this desk and it was clearly old. And this person, and so what they usually do is they talk to the presenter and they say, well tell me, you know, the presenter asked the person, tell me about this desk and he says, well it's been in our family for a hundred years. I know that for sure. It's been very special in our family. We love it, but I keep my television on it in the living room that we live in. It's there for us. We love it, but I kind of treat it kind of just like a normal object. But it's a family heirloom.

[4 : 35] My grandmother passed it down to my aunt and when she passed it down to me and it's very special and I'm here to find out a little bit more about it. And the presenter begins to say to them, well you know what you have is not merely a neat family heirloom. This is the first president of the United States school desk and he begins to describe all the details of how he was able. It wasn't just because it looked like George Washington chewing gum underneath the thing, but that he describes in detail how he knows that this desk is not merely a family heirloom, but it ends up being worth a hundred and fifty thousand pounds. Now that's in the antique roadshow world when I go, okay well you want to buy it? Who cares if it's a family heirloom? There you go. But what that person found out when they went to the antique roadshow that morning was that their family heirloom, something they cherished, they knew was important to them, had so much grander and more valuable and more treasured story about it. And so when we talk about the gospel, my encouragement to you is not to kind of forsake the idea simply that Jesus saves. That is a beautiful concept. It is straightforward and clear that I have an eternal destiny of life rather than death. But that's not the whole story. There's something even bigger and more beautiful about what it means to receive the salvation that Jesus gives us. And today we're going to be looking at not justification, but we're going to look at a little bit of the concept of sanctification. Tonight we'll look at sanctification a little bit too, and then the idea of glorification. Those are kind of the three elements of the gospel we're looking at in our study. But what we're going to look at today in the verses in Romans 6 are that God's, the kind of further story that we're going to look at this morning from the one that we kind of assume naturally is the idea that God not only is committed in the gospel by His grace to declare you as a sinner and me as a sinner righteous and forgiven, but that He is committed to making us what He has declared us to be.

Do you get that? There's a fuller promise to the gospel that it's not just a legal declaration of what you are, even though that's beautiful. But Jesus is utterly committed to renovating you, to restoring you, to buying you back from sin so that you not only have the declaration legally, but you begin to experience the freeing power of the gospel. Look with me at Romans chapter 6. Bear with me as I read the entire chapter. This is God's word and it's part of the gospel that Paul explains. I'm going to read the first, the final two verses of chapter 5 so you get a sense of the joy that brings in chapter 6. The law was, by the way, this is on 1132, that's on your... The law was added so that the trespasses might increase, but where sin increased, grace all the more increased so that justice sin reigned in death so also grace might reign through righteousness to bring eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. What shall we say then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace might increase? By no means.

We died to sin. How can we live in it any longer? Or do you not know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father we too may have new life. We may live this new life. If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection. For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with. Do you hear that we just talked about? That we should no longer be slaves to sin because anyone who has died has been freed from sin.

Now if we died with Christ we believe that we will also live with him. For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead he cannot die again. Death no longer has mastery over him. The death he died he died to sin once and for all.

But the life he lives he lives to God. In the same way count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus. Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal bodies so that you obey its evil desires. Do not offer your parts of your body to sin as instruments of wickedness. But rather offer yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life and offer your parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness. For sin shall not be your master because you are not under law. You are under grace. What then shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace by no means? Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to someone to obey him as slaves you are slaves to the one whom you obey whether you are slaves to sin which leads to death or to obedience which leads to righteousness. But thanks be to God that though you were slaves used to be slaves to sin you wholeheartedly obeyed the form of teaching to which you have been entrusted. You have been set free from sin and have become slaves of righteousness. I put this in human terms because you are weak in your natural selves just as you used to offer the parts of your body in slavery to impurity and ever-increasing wickedness. So now offer them in slavery to righteousness leading to holiness. Then when you are slaves excuse me when you were slaves to sin you were free from the control of righteousness. What benefit did you reap at that time from the things that are now you're now ashamed of? Those things result in death. But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves to God the benefit you reap leads to holiness and it results in eternal life for the wages of sin or death but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen. Paul opens this chapter when he starts talking about and he uses some crazy illustrations in this chapter and he opens this chapter with a question based on all that has come before in

[12 : 36] Romans 3, 4, and 5 in particular where Paul goes on and on and on about the grandeur and the greatness and the inescapability of God's grace. Look at those words where sin increased, grace super increased, where sin used to have mastery now grace reigns. It's all of grace. We talked a little bit about that last week but he opens this new chapter with a question assuming that we are going to misunderstand the grace of the gospel that we're going to miss the grandeur and greatness of the good news of Jesus. You see he opens with the question what shall we say then if grace is this awesome should we go on sinning because you're just going to meet me in grace wherever I go and Paul's response to that is obviously a by no means absolutely not. Why? Because you've fundamentally misunderstood the nature of gospel grace if that is your response.

But what we need to understand is this and I think that it's an important it's important lesson for those of us who come from whatever we call ourselves evangelicals conservatives Bible-believing Christians that oftentimes grace isn't too good to be true but it sounds like it is. And we begin to like Paul begin to doubt the grace of God or at least kind of begin to truncate it to categorize it because we're uncomfortable with just how lavish it is. We're uncomfortable with the idea that it really is that free and I think to be honest one of the reasons we're uncomfortable or we doubt the grace of God is because we all know the kind of used car salesman fine print you know if you if you're ever watching the telly and it's something pops up and it says free free free then I don't know about here in the UK but certainly in the United States there's this long-running you know guy that is basically an auctioneer at the end of it like well it's not really free because you're never gonna get this and you're not gonna do it and it costs you a thousand million pounds you know I mean you know that there's this qualification at the bottom the fine print and we're all skeptical of a something that's free but I think Paul is hitting it something more than just kind of our natural worldly skepticism. I think he's hitting on the fact that by nature our kind of natural bent is toward self-reliance. I don't want to have to depend upon the grace of God. I don't I don't like it that I have to rest only in Jesus. I don't like it that Paul tells me in other places in the scriptures that my righteousness is rubbish before God. That God is pleased with my good works but in terms of their ultimate efficacy their effectiveness to to make me a better man their vain and hopeless. That what Paul is confronting us with the free-ness of God's grace is he's challenging us away from this natural bent towards self-reliance and what you need to understand whether you are a

Christian or you are not a Christian here today is that you need to understand that the gospel cannot be achieved it must be ultimately received. And Paul's talking about that about sanctification here just like he talked about it in justification that we never kind of outrun Jesus. We never become independent of the grace of God. We never kind of grow up and mature and kind of leave God's grace and go you know what I used to need God's grace but now I don't. I've been a Christian for about 19 years. I've been a pastor for about 8 to 10 years and I am more aware now than I ever have been and I'm sure that those of us that are more wise and gray-headed in the congregation could stand before us and say the exact same thing people who have been walking with Jesus for 50 and 60 years knowing it is but for the grace of God. And Paul is hammering that point home that all you've got is Jesus. All you have is grace. Hebrews 12 tells us that Jesus is the one who started this. He's the author and he's the finisher of our faith. So when we talk about the grace of the gospel extending from justification the beginning of the Christian life to glorification tonight Jesus overarches all of it. That his grace overarches it and undergirds every point in the process and that is going to be tremendously good news for you and me as we wrestle and struggle with sin. Because when we come to Jesus and he declares us righteous we don't just immediately become righteous. We are declared righteous before God's throne. It is our legal status but I don't experience that righteousness. I still struggle and wrestle with sin. We're going to talk more about that tonight. But I want you to understand and I think that we need to embrace the all-encompassing sufficiency of God's grace because St. Columbus if you really preach the grace of the gospel you will be misunderstood too. Do you know that? If you really are a church that grace takes hold of there are going to be other churches, Christians, non-Christians around the city that go man those people are crazy. They got all kinds of loonies in here. Those people are sinners. They're not the typical Christians. They're blowing our paradigms. You don't look like the Christians I'm used to. You don't act like the Christians that I'm used to. If I come off the streets into this church and I hear you talking about grace and not this self-righteous judgmental arrogance that most Christians have people will misunderstand and need further explanation of the gospel of grace. Are you willing to be misunderstood because you hold on to grace so desperately? It's just Jesus.

It's just grace that he's confronting us with this. I was having a conversation I was sharing with Paul a little earlier. There's a woman next door in the sandwich shop and our team who was here all these past few weeks basically just goes over and gets a toasty or a panini or whatever else grilled sandwich that we can buy right now for not 20% more next door. I had a conversation with her and she said, what are you doing over there? I said, well, and I always hesitate to do this, but I said I'm a pastor and I kind of brace myself, figure out what she's going to respond. She's like, what? She began to tell me her story of basically after five years going back into a church and the priest not greeting her with open arms to say, this is a place for people like you who have abandoned their faith and who are now back come. He basically beat her over the head with her guilt and her shame and how could she possibly be away that long? And she told me she said, I'm done. I'm never going back. I invited that woman to St. Columbus because I told her this place is different.

This place is a place of grace. This is a place where you can see Jesus and that you are under grace, not under law. That's what the gospel calls us to. And it is sometimes scary and unpredictable, but I think that we need to make sure that we don't mitigate against the dangers because I think as conservatives, as evangelicals, as Bible believing, whatever we are, sometimes the freeness of God's grace scares us. And we start kind of adding on a few little subtle laws or qualifications. Yes, God is gracious, but don't do this. Well, yes, God is gracious, but you should dress like this, right? Or you should talk like this or you shouldn't do this, that we begin to kind of, we begin to kind of turn back to the law. And Paul tells us in Galatians 3.3, he says, are you so foolish that you would begin by the Spirit, you would begin by the grace of God, and that you would be sanctified by the flesh? It's grace from beginning to end that undergirds all of our redemption, all of our salvation, the whole of the gospel.

[23 : 48] And you see, the reason that grace is like this is not just kind of a static existence that's kind of, yeah, I got grace back then, and I'm kind of, yeah, I don't know what I'm doing now, but it's because by grace you enter into a relationship with a dynamic personal God. Did you see what Paul said? When he used the language, and it's kind of weird to us, I think, but that he uses the language, he says, you're not going to go on sinning that grace might abound, that you might not kind of casually look at the grace of God. Why? Because verse 2, you died to sin, and how can we live in it any longer? And then he uses this illustration to talk about the nature of grace, the nature of our relationship. He says, you were baptized into Jesus Christ, baptized into His death, and then in verse 5 he goes on to explain the word baptism, the idea of being united to Jesus, both in His death and in His resurrection. Anna-Lorne and

Tim, I saw them walking in this morning, in Morningside, and they had their, their, you have a little girl, is that right? Yeah, they had their little girl, Tim had the little girl bound up in one of those little wraps or papoose things, you know, that you like suck the kid to, right? So where if the kid's just like, out there, and we have one of those little baby-beorn, it looks like that actually the parent is the parachute to the child, I love that, but that the idea that's going on in this passage is that one. It's saying that you see by faith you have been united to Jesus, that you are attached to Him. Scripture will tell us in John, John 15, that we are engrafted into, we become one with, kind of like Anna-Lorne and Tim's little girl, you know, that's kind of wherever Daddy went this morning, she went because she is attached, she's along for the ride, she's united to Him. And so the fact that sanctification moves in the life of the believer is not this idea that we're kind of getting on and doing something for

Jesus, because sanctification is not something that we do for Jesus, but do by Jesus, that we are linked in, we are united to Him, that He is committed to us as much as He is committed to declaring you righteous, He is committed to making you righteous. That's a good word for those of us who are not right now righteous. And that if we're united to Jesus and it's Him who leads us, just like Tim running around with his daughter, that it's where he goes and leads us, then we can rest in his care. That grace becomes real to us, that we don't get all concerned and insecure and fearful as we come before our Father, because we are linked in and grafted to Jesus. Look at verses 5 through 9, these declarative statements, the idea that this is who you are, that you've been united to Jesus, you've been crucified with Him and raised with Him. So we know that the old self was crucified into the body of sin might be done away with. These are the indicatives. This is what God promises you and then it's from those indicative, the imperatives follow verse 11. So because you're united to Jesus, because you're linked into Him, because He's put sin to death in you, count yourselves dead. Do you see the point that I'm trying to get out? I'm trying to get us to understand when we're talking about the code, okay I've gotten saved and now

I am being saved. That this is not kind of Jesus' bit over here and now it's on with us, but that this whole thing that we call salvation, this whole thing that we talk about as the gospel, the good news is Jesus. I love the illustration in the Old Testament. Moses has died, Joshua was about to go in and face the enemy in Canaan. He is about to encounter giants that have already scared off generations of Israelites. They're fearful, they're coming up with strategies, the John, excuse me, did I say Joshua's standing there kind of hashing through the details and all of a sudden this warrior appears. It's the angel of the Lord and Joshua turns around and goes whoa, you can imagine the glory of the angel of the Lord, the power, right? The angels in the Bible are not these little fat cherubs that you put on a mantle somewhere. They are powerful, fear-inducing, glorious beasts who overwhelm you by their beauty, majesty, and strength. So

Joshua working through the final plans of how to overcome the Canaanite lands and he turns around and he sees this figure and his first words to this angel are are you you're on our side or on theirs because I just want to make sure I get that straight right before we start and I love what the angel of the Lord says back to him. He says are you on my side or on theirs? What was the angel of the Lord trying to convey? He was trying to say this is principally my fight. This is my judgment. This is my reward for my people. This is me. This is what I'm doing through you. This is not principally your effort to kind of please God. It is my fight. Are you on my side? I'm not on your side. You're either on my side or their side. The Old Testament says that over and over again.

[31 : 24] This salvation belongs to the Lord. Our hope for this grace that we all long for is in his mighty and righteous right hand. Not in yours, not in mine. It is grace by which we are dead to sin and we are united to Jesus. Now this doesn't mean that we're just merely passive kind of well you know what thanks for saving me Jesus I'm gonna sit back here and I'm just gonna kind of twiddle my thumbs and passivity until you come again. No we need to be much more strategic than that. Joshua still went out and fought battles and had to trust and try to but it was principally God's fight. You see we have this weird notion that it's kind of either God does it unilaterally or we do it and God doesn't buy into those categories. God brings about his sovereign ordained purposes through our prayers, our praises, our efforts, our preaching, our singing that he actually uses me and you in this great work of redemption. It's amazing. So don't sit back just kind of passively and we really need to be more strategic in understanding our enemy as well as our Savior. You know so he promises us this freedom. You've been freed in Jesus you died to sin you're now free to live but he does so in the in the last part of the chapter in a bit of a curious way the way that he describes freedom. Did anybody pick up on that? That he describes freedom verse 14 sin is no longer master you're under grace you're under grace verse 18 you've been set free to sin sweet love that and have become slaves of righteousness excuse me verse 22 you've been set free from sin so that you can be a slave of God. Does anybody else find that concerning? We've been freed to be slaves freed to slaves you see what Paul is picking up on is what

Jesus has already told us that we talked about a couple of weeks ago is the idea that we all have a master there is something in life for each one of us whether we're Christians or non-Christians that owns us where we rest in what gives us value where we find joy what shapes our identity and what we love about life or what we hate and Paul is making it clear that either these masters lead to life or they lead to death either you under a master that will shape your identity in the trajectory of your life towards a greater fracturing and undoing of who you were created to be or you will be shaped by a new master towards life. Why the image of slavery? I think in some ways he's trying to kind of be provocative Jesus did that when he talked about the leaven sometimes a lot of times Jesus would talk about the leaven as a negative thing but then in Matthew 13 he goes on and he says now be the leaven in the world same kind of thing here I think that he's using the word that kind of image in our mind of slavery and why is he doing that I think he's doing that for two reasons I think he's doing that one because it really is according to Lloyd

Jones the idea of a totalitarian obedience that we were absolutely his there's no clock-in clock-out idea identity in the Christian life that's called hypocrisy and Jesus speaks quite directly to that in Revelation 3 15 and he says that makes me sick that idea that you kind of live the Christian life here and don't live it over here makes me want to vomit but it's not just that and I think the reassurance to us is not he's not just calling us to like you know Matthew 22 love the Lord your God with all your heart soul mind and strength all of you you are a slave you are submissive you are servant giving all of your life and heart to him but also the idea of slavery is something very beautiful and reassuring that we are captives of God's grace he's gonna go on and say in Romans there's nothing that can snatch you out of my hand not that person not the scheme of the devil not even your sin can snatch you out of my hand I've got you I own you you are mine we are bound by the grace of God that's part of the gospel that we are slaves to Jesus and he he mixes in here this idea that our sanctification our idea of being slaves of righteousness is not just righteousness by the way is not just that kind of legal thing here we're talking about sanctification where it's more of an experiential thing and so he's mixing here the idea of our growth in grace and our mission in the world because those are not dichotomous in God's view of the gospel that the idea is that you will grow up in God's grace that it will become real to you that you will look at yourself and be shaped by it and then you will go out and reshape the world there's these concentric circles of the reach of God's grace into the world and we are those instruments second Corinthians Dan when he was here was looking at second Corinthians in second Corinthians 5 clearly tells us that we have received the message of reconciliation so that we might be messengers of the reconciliation that God is making his appeal through us that you are slaves of righteousness now go and be instruments of righteousness in the world you have died to sin Jesus has given you his grace if you have turned to him by faith and Paul wants us to understand this doesn't lead us to apathy he wants us to grow in our view of the gospel that we treasure it all the more my hope for us saints sees is that we see the beauty of the promise of the declared righteousness of Jesus that is ours by grace alone but that our understanding of the good news grows that we see this whole thing called the Christian life that we have seen that Jesus has definitively broken not

only and killed the penalty of sin but broken the power of sin in our lives and that he has got us and that is his fight and not principally mine and that he as will look tonight will bring us home that he will make us fully who he declared to us to be that he is at work by his Holy Spirit to making us we will one day see him as he is and be made like him that's the gospel is your understanding is my understanding the gospel big enough is your understanding of God's grace big enough to see all of that I pray that it is so let's pray together father we thank you so much for the opportunity to look at your word confront us by your grace lead us away from ourselves and our self-reliant attitudes and make us new like Jesus help us to believe the promise of the gospel that you really have put sin to death in our lives that you may be renewed by your grace in Christ's name amen