

ROMANS BIBLE STUDY

Romans 6:08-14

Lesson #13

Introduction

Last week we began chapter six where Paul says that we have died with Christ and been baptized into His death. (v.3) Probably every Christian has had to deal with how to understand what he means by this statement. Administratively, and judicially we can pretty much understand it, we realize that Jesus Christ himself accomplished this completely apart from our contribution, so we can accept this without any serious conflicts. The problem we have is personally and experientially. And this is a two part dilemma embedded within another two part dilemma. The two initial parts are the legal and the experiential, and then within the experiential there is the flesh and there is the spirit. The judicial is invisible, and the experiential is confusing. Add to this the fact that not everything happens all at once, and you get a complex situation that can cause much confusion. Last week we discussed the judicial versus the experiential, and we discussed the flesh versus the spirit. Of all of these, the flesh and the spirit are the most difficult to actually quantify and identify. How and where does our spirit and our flesh connect together? And what exactly is our spirit, and what exactly is our flesh, as these terms are used in the scriptures, it's not so easy to grasp all of this, is it?

The fact is it makes little difference to hear that we have died to sin and been baptized into Christ if we don't have any idea what this actually means. If we're told that we are dead to sin, but then we continue to practice it, what then are we to conclude about the scriptures? And what are we to conclude about ourselves? As a highly respected preacher has often said, it is the meaning of the scriptures that is the scriptures, incorrect interpretation is not scripture, it's error. The right words, but with the wrong interpretation of those words, has been the cause of very much trouble within the Christian, and pseudo-Christian communities. A casual and superficial treatment of scriptures, that believes that evangelism is the only reason for our existence, and that sound theology is just an optional pursuit that usually causes arguments, has led to a community of churches that are 90 percent unregenerate, and the 10 percent that are true never grow out of the diaper stage of maturity. History has clearly demonstrated that churches do not last, and it's not because the message isn't true, but because the people are not reliable. The gospel message is true, and new churches are constantly being planted, but they don't last very long because we don't diligently pursue the truth that would hold them together. Instead we seek to hold them together with human entertainment techniques, which might seem to work at first, but never lasts for very long.

Let's do everything that we can to dig deep into these chapters and discover the truths that Paul is presenting. It's most important to rightly grasp the meaning of these verses if we expect this study to have any lasting impact on us. I would love to tell you that I can clearly and easily define that connection of our flesh and our spirit, and that I could clearly explain both of these components, but you already know that nobody but God himself can adequately do that. But that doesn't mean that we can't try our best, and seek understanding from the Holy Spirit, because that is His assigned work in the hearts of truth seeking believers. (Jn 16:13) Let's not leave this section of scriptures completely baffled and mystified as to what it really means. There is no superfluous information in the scriptures, the Holy Spirit has inspired this book, and every sentence and every word has a purpose. It is our duty and our privilege to diligently pursue every sentence and every word to a right understanding, because there is a lot more than just evangelism described in the scriptures, there is sanctification and transformation into Christlikeness so that we will eventually be like Him, and be ready to take our place in the eternal kingdom of God. Where we will worship Him acceptably, in spirit and in truth, forever. And God gets us from where we are now to that point of maturity by way of all the trials and tribulations of this life.

This present life that we put so much importance on is not what eternal life is all about, this life is the means to be trained and molded into that final product that God has planned to have for Himself when all the work is finished. And failures are just as much, if not more a part of this learning and maturing process as are successes, that's why we aren't immediately and totally transformed at initial justification and regeneration. That's why the flesh, with its fallen nature was left to tempt and taunt and generally trouble every true child of God. It was meant to be this way, and we were meant to strive against it with inadequate weaponry, until Jesus Christ returns and completes that work that we are trying but failing to accomplish. This is why we eagerly await that time (Rom 8:23) and why His glorious return is our "blessed hope" (Tit 2:12-13) because He will finish, and make perfect, that process that we could not complete by ourselves. (Phi 1:6, 3:21)

We did not start it by ourselves, and we cannot complete it by ourselves, this is something every occupant of the kingdom of God must know and fully understand to become a suitable worshiper of God. Jesus himself said that entry into the kingdom of God was through a very narrow door, and required walking a very narrow path (Mat 7:13-14) and Luke quoted Him as saying that we must strive (meaning literally agonize) to enter into that kingdom. (Lk 13:24) We often hear the phrase that "Jesus paid it all" and that's absolutely true, but we all too often use these words to infer that we ourselves have no participation in the process of transformation and sanctification, which is absolutely opposite of the truth, as this chapter and the whole of scriptures will tell us. Our participation and diligence is what the rewards that we discussed in an earlier lesson would appear to be based upon. This chapter is speaking of that battle against sin that every child of God is ordered to fight. I know several dear Christian brothers and sisters that do indeed understand this, and who strive to fight that battle, but for every one of them I can see many more who just ignore any struggles against sin because after all, Jesus has paid it all, so we're free to live without any concerns for our ongoing sins. And you can hear preachers preach this every Sunday, but you can't get this idea from the scriptures without severely twisting and distorting the meaning. Such thinking is a very serious oversimplification of God's planned sanctification and transformation process.

If we're going to learn anything that's useful to us in our growing and maturing process of life, then we have to rightly understand what the scriptures actually mean by the words and sentences that it uses. And gaining that level of understanding requires diligent and prolonged study of the scriptures. So now, in pursuit of that right understanding, let's continue with what I've titled :

Dead to Sin, but Alive to God (2)

8 Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, 9 knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, is never to die again; death no longer is master over Him. 10 For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God. 11 Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.

12 Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts, 13 and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. 14 For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law but under grace.

Romans 6:8-14 (NASB)

Verse 8:

8 Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him,

So that we're clear, let's stipulate that none of us has physically died with Christ, none of us were even born yet when He died, so this verse speaks not of our flesh but of our eternal soul, our spirit, our self as we understand our existence. So the death being described here is a death that happens to that invisible, intangible component of our being. We can't see or touch this portion, so our only conscious awareness of it, is how we think and feel in our innermost being. Our mindset, our emotions, our affections, our deepest desires are what is being spoken of in these verses. And it is this part of our being that has died with Christ vicariously through faith, and it is this part that was resurrected to newness of life. (v.4) Resurrected how? in newness of desires, newness of affections, newness of appreciations, newness of everything that makes us who and what we are in our innermost being. Our invisible component is new and alive to God. For that to happen, it was necessary for the old self, meaning that old innermost heart's desires for sin to die. And if our old innermost being that loved and desired to sin has died with Christ, then we believe that our new innermost being will also live with Him, for as long as He lives. And how long is that? The next verse tells us:

Verse 9:

9 knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, is never to die again; death no longer is master over Him.

If death has done its work, if it has fired its biggest gun and hit the target squarely, and did that ultimate work that it's designed to do, which is to produce death, what else does it have left? What further harm can death do to a dead person? What will death do to One who took its best shot and then rose again to life? What power does death have now? You see the point, it isn't that Jesus just managed to somehow avoid death's grasp, it's that he bore the full brunt of it, and then rose again to life. So what does death do to Him now, obviously nothing. Jesus proved to be the absolute master over death, just as He proved to be the absolute master over sin. Sin tried to tempt Him but He didn't fall, and death claimed His body but He rose again. So what powers or forces are there in existence that can overcome Him now? Absolutely

none whatsoever, period. He will never fall to sin, and He will never experience death again, forevermore. Death is no longer master over Him, and sin never ever was, so He becomes the eternal prototype of all those who are joined together with Him in His victory over sin and death. In another epistle Paul said that he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him. (1Co 6:17) Joined how? Certainly not physically, but in that invisible innermost part of their being that the scriptures call our spirit. If that innermost spiritual component of our being has died to its former love for sin, and been renewed and transformed in conformity to Christ, then what power does sin or death have over that portion of our being? The answer is - absolutely none whatsoever. This is the very essence of what Jesus meant when He said we must be born again. He wasn't at all speaking of our physical bodies, but of our invisible innermost being that we call our soul and our spirit.

If we are joined to the Lord, meaning made one spirit with Him, then we are as impervious to the consequential effects of sin and death as Jesus Christ Himself, because it is His power and His accomplishments that established our position and sustains our status. It is impossible to harm us, speaking of our invisible spiritual component, unless you harm Christ Jesus first, and there is no power in existence that can do that. Oh yes, our physical bodies will all eventually die, just as Christ's physical body died, but our invisible spiritual component cannot ever die again, that component of our being has already died and been resurrected. We now await the full completion of that process, whereby we will eventually get a new resurrected body just like Jesus' resurrected body. And then we will be complete and whole and suitable to enter into the eternal kingdom of God and be His eternal worshippers.

Verse 10:

*10 For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God. 11 Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God **in Christ Jesus**.*

The death that He (Jesus) died, He died to sin, once for all. The death that Jesus died, He did so to satisfy the judicial and legal demands required by God the Father for the commission of sin. Obviously, not His own sin, but those of His elect whom He came to seek and to save. But that death, once and for all, satisfies every demand for justice that God the Father holds. And it also bears the full brunt of the power of death that sin holds over the sinner. The wages of sin, all sin, and any sin or any quantity of sins, is death. Once suffered, that's all the power that death holds, the power to kill. The sins of God's chosen children killed His Beloved Son, but it forever satisfied the debt and absorbed the consequences of sin for every person who is born again of the Spirit of God.

Therefore, just as Jesus Christ arose from the dead, bodily, we arise from the dead spiritually first, and then at the end of the age, with a new body just like His glorious body. But the spiritual component, that invisible innermost being is resurrected immediately, and just as Jesus Christ lives for the Father, we also share that Holy Spirit imparted life of God that rules our hearts and captures our affections. When this is genuine, when it is truly the work of the Holy Spirit, it is as permanent and irreversible as is the resurrected life of Jesus Christ. This is a one time, irreversible process that's done by the grace of God, through the gift of saving faith, imparted and imputed through the direct intervention of the Holy Spirit.

Unlike what you may have been told, this was not simply a human decision that you arbitrarily made by your own free will, anytime you wanted to, although that is certainly an integral part of it, but it was instigated and empowered entirely by forces outside of your own control. And the result of those invisible forces acting upon you was to make your innermost being sorrowful for you sins and desirous to repent of those sins, and follow the Lord, Jesus Christ in a whole new way of life. This happened, and you made that decision, entirely because the Holy Spirit was invisibly acting upon and empowering your conscious mindset to make you, of your own choosing, both willing to believe and also truly able to do so. Now I've said all this so that we can rightly understand the next verse:

Verse 11:

*11 Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God **in Christ Jesus**.*

What does Paul mean by *consider yourselves* in this verse? We can take this a lot of ways. For example, we probably all know people who seem to "consider themselves" to be something very special, while we hold an entirely different opinion on that matter. So what does Paul mean? To answer that we simply need to stay within the narrow and specific context that he has established up to this point. He has been speaking of our unique association with Jesus Christ in as much as that association affects our life and death, both now and eternally.

We may rightly consider ourselves to be dead to sin, first judicially, and secondly spiritually. Judicially we are dead to any obligations or demands that sin has over our eternal destiny. That debt has been settled in full, forevermore, even though we can't see it visibly. But also spiritually, meaning our innermost heart's desires and affections. That part of our makeup has also died with Christ and has already been resurrected to newness of life. And that new life is totally immune to the consequential powers of sin and of death. We are told to consider this because we can't actually see it with our eyes, but we can taste it and handle it from our renewed spiritual perspectives. But, since the flesh is constantly sending us signals we don't want, and because we all too often accommodate those signals, we're reluctant to believe that we are really what the scriptures say we are. Because we're basing it on our own experiences. So the verse answers that with the words: *but alive to God in Christ Jesus*. It is the "in Christ Jesus" that settles the matter with certainty.

Here again we have words that need to be examined. What exactly does Paul mean by the term "in Christ Jesus? We understand that cookies might be said to be in a bag, or in a jar, but how can we be said to be in a person? We shouldn't be mystified by this, we commonly say that we, or someone else is "in a club", or "in an association." By this we mean that they belong to a group that calls itself by some name. We don't mean they are physically wrapped up in that group like cookies in a bag. They are members of that group because they agree with its principles and have pledged to be bound by its rules. All of the benefits and all of the obligations of that group are directly applicable to every member individually. We understand this perfectly well, don't we?

And so it is when the scriptures say that we are "in Christ Jesus." We are directly associated, by recognized membership, into the association of "Jesus Christ" and we are entitled to all the benefits and obligated to keep all the rules of that Association. Now I've used this analogy solely for clarity, and it admittedly falls short of the whole picture, but what it does is make it clear that being "in Christ Jesus" is speaking of an association with, and recognized membership in, everything that Jesus Christ is, and everything that He has done. We are "Christians" which means that we are by our own voluntary profession, members of a group that believes in Jesus Christ. And being recognized, and duly accepted members of that group has certain benefits that cannot be rescinded. Benefits like forgiveness of sin, transformation into Christlikeness, and eternal life in the kingdom of God. For this reason, as members in good standing in the association of "Jesus Christ" we may confidently consider ourselves as being dead to sin and alive to God, forever, because our membership assures this benefit, and the Holy Spirit has sealed that membership by the new heart and mind that's been imparted. (2Co 1:22) This is much more than just an idle consideration, it is a well studied and thoroughly understood certainty, based not on the merits of man but on the merits and power of Jesus Christ. (To Him be the glory, Amen) Now, having said this, Paul begins to draw some conclusions and discuss some results, some of the rules of membership we might say:

Verse 12:

12 Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts,
CONTINUE HERE - STAY CAREFULLY IN CONTEXT.

Here we have it, we have the first rule in the association of Jesus Christ. We've been told of the benefits and now we're being told of the obligations. Both apply equally to all the members. There's a lot more being said here than first meets the eye, or should I say the ear? Do not "let" sin reign in your mortal body has always been the commandment of God. The 10 Commandments are very much about what we do and how we think and behave. But man has never been able to keep those commandments, this is the lesson that had to be learned before Jesus Christ presented himself as our vicarious propitiation. And He said that He did not come to abolish those commandments but rather to fulfill them. Which He did. (Mat 5:17) Many seem to think this has no direct affect on us ourselves, that it only means that Jesus could keep those commandments, but this thinking ignores verses like the one we're examining right now. Verses that tell those who believe in Jesus Christ that they are to cease to practice the old sins that formerly enslaved them and held them captive to a fallen nature. Jesus Christ did not come to provide His followers a license to sin with impunity. He came to save us from our sins, meaning both from the penalty and the continued **practice** of them. Justification and sanctification.

Before the new covenant, before regeneration by the indwelling Holy Spirit, mankind lacked the innate resources to resist sin, because his innate nature was to sin. But this is what we've just been told has died, and has been buried with Christ by our association with Him. That part is "dead" therefore we are not defenseless against sin, because we now have a new weapon that the we lacked before our justification and regeneration.

We have something with which we may resist the urges of the fallen flesh. No, the urges have not ceased, because the flesh has not yet been replaced, but we have something new that can be used against those lustful temptations. Now when the scriptures tell us *do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts* we cannot claim inability as our excuse. For the regenerate believer, every sin is one of rebellion, one of not adequately applying the weaponry we've been provided. Or, not knowing how to properly implement that weaponry effectively against certain temptations. I'm not saying that we can easily resist every temptation, you all know that's not the case, but at the same time we cannot claim that we were left unarmed either.

To those antinomians who claim that sin is no longer a problem, because Jesus ended all of that, I simply reply that the inspired holy scriptures say to the believing Christians: *do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts*. This verse clearly implies that sin still wants to reign over our actions, and at the same time that we **are not** to allow that to happen. Sin is a subtle enemy, it does its work from within our own component parts. Then, if successful from the inside (our mindset) then it manifests itself by physical bodily actions that are visible. Our body is the instrument of implementation of sin's desires. There are sins of the mind, in fact all sin starts in the mind, but by far the most evident are the sins committed by our physical bodily components. We use every part of our bodies to implement sin. From verbal blasphemy, to assault, to robbery, to sexual promiscuity, to murder, all use the members (the various parts) of our body as its instruments of implementation of sin. But this only happens after the battle has been fought in the mind, because the mind gives the body its instructions. And our minds have been renewed, the old self, the old mindset that loved sin has been put to death, (vv.2-4) and in our innermost being we really do not want to sin, even when the flesh is screaming at us to jump right in. Oh how I wish that I could say that I myself have learned the secret to never losing this battle, but I assure you I have not found that secret yet, and I know that's because neither I nor you were intended to do so on our own, that has been intentionally reserved by the Father for the glorious return of His Son, Jesus Christ.

So, many will ask, well if you say that it's not even intended to happen until the return of Jesus Christ, then why do you say that we should try so hard to do it? If we aren't even intended to conquer sin in these bodies then why try to do the impossible, isn't that foolish? My reply is - Not if the holy scriptures command it. Does God have the sovereign right to command His children to do more than they are able, especially if He has a very good reason for doing so? What if that struggle against the impossible was the whole point He was intending to make? What if that struggle against the impossible was His means to instill within us a burning desire for the righteousness that we cannot attain by ourselves, and a sense of the immense value of that righteousness? If you're a frequent listener of this ministry then you'll know that this is exactly what this preacher believes, and what we teach. God has a good reason for everything that He does, whether we understand it or not, and even if He didn't He's still God and His word is still Law.

Will you indulge me if I make a silly analogy? Lets say that God says to man to jump. So man replies, how high Lord? God answers, all the way to the clouds. So what does man do now? Some shake their heads and walk away, wanting nothing whatsoever to do with this apparently senseless command that everybody knows is impossible to do. Then another group stays, but they know it's impossible, so they just make a token effort, with little hops up and down, not being willing to outright ignore a command of God, but not willing to really commit themselves to fully obeying it either. But then another group musters every ounce of their energy, and jumps as high as they possibly can in an effort to do as they've been told, even when they know full well that they can't even come close doing it. Now, What does God do with these three groups? With the first, who walked away in disgust, and wanted nothing to do with God's apparently silly game, He puts them with the useless group. That group who won't do anything God commands unless they see the reason and agree with the commands. This group God dispatches to the cosmic dumpster called the Lake of Fire, where all refuse is destined to end up. To the next group, that group who acknowledged God's authority, but made little real effort to succeed, these might make it into His kingdom, but their garments smell of fire from their close proximity to the prior group, and any rewards that they could have had are all taken away. But now, how about that last group? Those who feared God and trembled at His word, and when He spoke they mustered every ounce of their energy to comply, even when they knew that the task was well beyond their ability. To these He has said:

just as it is written, "Things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard, And which have not entered the heart of man, All that God has prepared for those who love Him." (1Cor 2:9) Do you see what my analogy is implying? That the whole reason that God gave an impossible command in the first place was to display how the various people would react to it.

In my analogy God never thought that any of them could jump up and touch the clouds, any more than He thought that man could live entirely without sin, but it was their reaction to His command that demonstrated their true heart attitude toward God. And this was the point of the test, to visibly demonstrate the true intent of man's heart. And not just to God, but to the people themselves. For instance, do you earnestly desire, and muster every ounce of your efforts, to prevent sin from reigning in your mortal body, even when you have no hope of succeeding to the full scope of that commandment? The sincerity and vigor of your effort to keep that command might be the whole reason you're here, and it might be determining what you do, and what eternal rewards you receive, at the Judgement Seat of Jesus Christ. A half-hearted effort to resist sin, at best, is a sign that you don't take God's word very seriously, and lack the reverent fear that characterizes a true believer, and at worst it could even mean that you aren't really even a true believer, because the old self never died and the new self was never born. How can we who died to sin still live in it Paul asked in verse 2. The obvious answer being that we could not. This was speaking of a lifestyle, a perpetual pattern of actions, and a way of thinking.

But, at the same time, It is not the absence of all sin in the life of a believer that authenticates their salvation, and their regeneration, it is their heart attitude and vigor to resist sin that tells the story and answers the question. Where there is newness of life (v.4) meaning spiritual life, invisible mental life, there is an attitude of abhorrence, and disgust, and shame, at the very thought of sin, and never a flippant or casual disregard toward it. How you and I regard sin, and how vigorously we strive against it, tells both us and God how authentic our faith is, and how valuable His word is to us in our hearts. In an arena where total success is intentionally placed beyond our grasp, it is the sincerity and diligence of the effort that says everything. If I might refer back to my earlier analogy, there may be some merit in who actually jumped the highest, but the main priority, by far, is who were those who strived the hardest to comply? I'm using analogies and examples, so do you understand what I'm saying?

In an arena where sin still lives in our flesh, and constantly tempts us to sin, how sincerely and diligently do we struggle to resist its temptations and keep God's command to *not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts?* Stop it, quit it, don't do it anymore, this is the commandment of God, and it's beyond our capability to fulfill, so what's our response to this predicament? What are we going to do when God tells us to do something that we can't do? It might well be that our attitude of response, not our actual achievement level, is perhaps the greatest part of this test. Certainly the level of achievement matters, but the unceasing and diligent striving, from the depths of the heart, is what speaks most loudly and clearly in an arena of designed imperfection. Every time sin knocks us down, we must stand back up immediately, and confess it to God unreservedly and without excuse, and trust without hesitation in the justification of the shed blood of Jesus Christ, and resume our unceasing war against the lusts of the flesh, until He says that the battle is over, and completes, through Christ Jesus, that sanctification and purification process that's presently testing our heart's and bringing us to maturity. If you'll tolerate one more foolish analogy, we might say that we're kind of like guinea pigs in a laboratory experiment, we're being sorted out and evaluated by our responses under a controlled situation, and this is entirely part of the plan of God. Knowing this doesn't necessarily make it any easier to endure, but I find it comforting to at least somewhat understand what's going on. And, yes I know we're much more than mere guinea pigs to God, we are His chosen children whom He has loved from before creation. But, as He demonstrated by His Son on that cross, He has some pretty heavy means and methods of training and preparation for His children, because He has a very high calling for their future. For those to whom He has given much, from them He expects much in return. (Lk 12:48) And Paul continues with this theme in the next two verses:

Verses 13-14:

13 and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. 14 For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law but under grace.

This is saying the same thing as he said in the last verse but with different words. And it's all about how the believer is intended to deal with sin. Just the opposite of the liberal interpretations, that ignore or minimize the concerns for sin, these verses say straight up to cease from it, to stop doing it, not to let the sinful desires of the flesh, that still reside in that unregenerate part of our mind (our brain) to play themselves out in our physical bodies. Resist those temptations, do not let them have their way over our bodies so that we carry them out in the flesh.

Put them to death in the mind quickly, before they can gain a foothold and begin to influence our actions. Yes, this is easier said than done, but it is the unceasing command of scriptures, and therefore our duty to pursue with supreme diligence. Since our mind does have the last word, our bodies only get to do what they wish if we allow it to be so. Sin must win the fight in our mind for the use of our bodies to be able to carry out its lustful desires, so, we must win the fight in our mind to maintain control of what our bodies do. We are told first: *do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness*; This sentence takes as a given that this is what we have been doing in the past, but that was before our spirit was renewed, and our new self made alive. This new self has greater capabilities, and God demands that we put those new capabilities to use, starting immediately, whereby He says to *present ourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and our members as instruments of righteousness to God*. If we are in fact alive from the dead, meaning our new innermost being has been severed from its love for sin, and made alive to God, meaning desirous for God and His righteousness, then we are commanded to act accordingly, and we do have that capacity, because that's what God gave us when He imparted newness of life.

Sin is not our master, either legally or physically. Sin can no longer give us orders like it once could when we belonged to sin. Now it must accomplish its deeds through manipulation of our fallen flesh component and through temptations, but we are not obligated to follow those temptations, nor are we powerless against them as we were before. Now we can fight back, and we can learn to win very many of those battles. *For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law but under grace*. This verse is first legal, in that sin cannot control our final destiny because it is no longer our owner and no longer our legal master. We have died to that relationship and been made the property of another by the grace of God and the works of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. But experientially sin is no longer our master either. Its power to control our mental decisions, without opposition, has been broken, and we can choose to say "no" to sin and "yes" to the righteousness of God, at least for the most part, and the ability to do this perfectly is coming very soon.

This is said to be the state of grace. We are under the gracious provision of God, in that we are now "in Christ" and we discussed already that this means that we are in a kind of associational relationship with Him, (a loving relationship that is) and by the rules of that association we're afforded the benefits to everything that He is and everything that He's done. This is the grace of God at work, and it is our only standing and our only hope for the future. As it goes with Jesus Christ our Lord, so it goes with us, and we wouldn't have it any other way. To Him be the glory forever.

Conclusion:

If I were to sum this all up in one or two sentences, it would be to say that a believe must never ever take a casual view of sin just because we can't totally avoid it, or because we think that Jesus has made it all okay. Freely acknowledging that evangelism must be the predecessor to all of this, because the gospel is the means by which man is saved to begin with, nevertheless it might well be that our attitude and diligence to avoid sin, even though it will be less than perfect, is among the most important duties and responsibilities that we have while we're still alive on this earth, second only perhaps to worshiping and glorifying God, though the two are very much tied together. To Him be the glory forever. Amen.

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