

# The Cross - Part 3

by Henry Blackaby

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*The cross is central to the Christian's life, dealing radically with sin and bringing about a radical transformation in the Christian's life.*

**Scripture:** Romans 6:6-22, 2 Corinthians 5:21, 1 John 3:6

**Topics:** "The Cross", "Sanctification"

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## Description

Henry Blackaby preaches about the profound impact of the cross in the life of a Christian, emphasizing the radical nature of dealing with sin through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. He highlights the need for believers to understand the depth of what the cross accomplished in defeating sin and the importance of living a life of righteousness in response to God's grace. Blackaby urges listeners to surrender all areas of their lives to God, allowing Him to shape them for His glory and to experience true freedom from the dominion of sin through Christ.

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## Transcript

These days have been very special, and there are times when we need to hear and to participate in the Word of God and I Pray that in these few moments we have together that we can give you a few things will help you to add to your understanding of the cross. And tonight I would certainly want to begin at least the sharing of the cross in the Christians life. What impact given the nature of the cross as we have tried to say, death for the Lord Jesus was not just cessation of life, was not the process of dying, but rather was what the Bible calls, "he defeated death." He took upon Him the darkness and the blackness of sin. And that outer-darkness and that forsaking and homeless abandonment that was necessary including the wrath of God against all sin fell on our Saviour.

The cross is more than the physical moment, it has to do exclusively with sin. If God was not dealing with sin, the cross would not have been. You cannot look at the cross without a radical understanding of the nature of sin, and the cost to God to forgive us of our sin, and so we have at least have begun the process of stirring your minds and hearts toward understanding a little more of the nature of the word cross. And we share with you, at least we began to share what it meant when it says in 2 Corinthians 5; "God made Him to be sin, made Him sin for us, who knew no sin so that we could be made the righteousness of God in Him."

Now I want you to let the Holy Spirit bring to your remembrance some of the things that we said in the last two messages and put the context of the cross in the Christians life in terms of radically dealing with sin.

First of all, God in the cross radically dealt with sin and the intention was that when you entered into a relationship with Jesus Christ what God did radically relating to sin he does radically in your life also. He doesn't deal thoroughly with sin on the cross and then just barely touch sin in your life. When you enter into a relationship with Jesus Christ, we'll see in a moment, you are immersed into the death of Christ, and your immersed into the burial of Christ, and your immersed into the resurrection of Christ, and then your immersed into the reigning with Christ. We will see that in Romans 6. And so when God deals with sin and then He brings you into a union with himself He deals radically with sin. Now we are going to read some scriptures and I going to just sort of probe you with some questions, and I want you to watch how you answer those questions to yourself. Because our tendency is to answer the questions from the scriptures in terms of our experience, not the truth of the Word of God.

In a moment we are going to read a scripture that says, "you died to sin." What does it mean to die to sin? Well it means that you die to sin. But when I ask people that they immediately without even answering the question say, "well you understand we all sin," I say, "that's not the question I asked, I asked what does it mean when the Bible says, 'when you enter into a relationship with Jesus Christ you die to sin' end of discussion." Out of that then comes, "Lord what does it mean to die to sin?" and you wait until He takes the scriptures and pours it over your life until you understand that in the cross you die to sin.

Now there is a scripture and I going to read several of them because I want you to see a phrase that we have used a great deal. And we rarely refer to dealing with sin in this scripture it's the one and I will read about four of them for you. Where he says "you got to take up your cross," did he not say that Bob? Now to take up a cross if we understand the meaning of the cross means that you deliberately choose to radically deal with sin in your life. You see we, and rightly so, say the cross to Jesus was obedience, that's true, but that's the front end. It is the obedience to God as He deals with sin. Not just obedience, but obedience to God as He deals with sin and if the cross of Jesus Christ dealt with sin, then the cross in the Christians life must deal with sin also. It is not merely "you need to count the cost," you have to do that, but you also have the deal with the cost involved in dealing with your sin. The Cross is absolutely central in the Christians life! Therefore, the Christians relationship to sin is central in the Christians life. And holiness is central to the Christians life. The cross is at the heart of the Christians life! Paul is forever describing how the cross radically changed him. In Galatians 5 he's talking about "through the cross He died to the world, and the world to him through the cross." And we will touch a couple of those scriptures.

But with a brief introduction to the cross as we have given you, I want you now to hear what Jesus says about the cross as it relates to your relationship to Him. Just listen carefully, I give the scriptures if you want to write them down, but most of you will know them. Matthew 16:24; "If anyone desires to come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me." Is it not true, that when we have studied that verse we think of terms of the physical cross of Jesus. We think of the physical cost to Jesus and we have understood that, "taking up your cross" as meaning doing the will of God regardless of the cost involved in your life and it is certainly that. But let me say to you, carefully you cannot understand the cross of Jesus Christ without understanding that it was there that God dealt with sin. And you cannot understand the picking up the cross in your life without understanding that you must deal with sin in your life. You must come to a particular kind obedience to God, or you will never follow him.

I believe we could say that of all the things that keep a person from doing the will of God, it is sin in the Christians life. And if you do not radically make a commitment in heart and mind, to deal with sin constantly your life, certainly once for all and then it is a way of life. Then you will have great difficulty, if impossible to follow Him. Listen to the other verses that relate to taking up your cross and almost each

one of them carries a greater impact than the one before. The first one simply says, "if you desire to follow him, you must take up your cross." In Matthew 10:38 He (Jesus) says, "he who does not take up his cross and follow me is not even worthy of me." Could you not in your own mind let that rest for a time of meditation before the Lord. Why does our Lord say, that for you to even think of following him, in a worthy manner, the cross has to be central in your life? Because would it not be an affront to God, for you to know that the cross was where God dealt radically with sin in the life of His Son at an awful cost, and for you to be indifferent to sin in your life. Why that's unthinkable to say, "Father I thank you that you have laid the sin of the world on Your Son and that in the cross you dealt with sin in the whole world, but Lord don't talk to me about sin, I just want to have the joy of following you." He says you can't follow me if the cross is not central in your life.

Now there is another scripture that goes one step further than that, and in Luke 14:27 he says, "whoever does not bear his cross and come after me cannot be my disciple." Now all through this time together we have been saying to each other when Jesus speaks is it important? When He gives you a word that is rather difficult or leaves no room to maneuver, and that word when He says, "you cannot be my disciple," leaves you no room to maneuver. He says if you do not bear your cross you cannot be His disciple. The essence of a follower of Jesus Christ is on who has dealt with and continually deals with sin in a radical manner in his or her life. Jesus never hid nor did He ever alter the terms of discipleship. The terms of discipleship that Jesus laid down are non-negotiable. They are absolutes, and it is time for us to let the living Christ once again define the terms of discipleship. There are non-negotiable you can not do it half way. and you might say, "Henry that sounds awful absolute." it does. But do you understand how God looks upon sin? It is awful with Him, and for us to call ourselves a disciple of Jesus Christ and have an indifference to sin is abhorrent to God, and unthinkable. And so He says there must be a cross in the Christians life. But if you fill that term full of New Testament meaning then you have to deal with the cross in your life with relationship to sin.

Now I want to go to several scriptures and sort of lay them out before you and then I want to talk about the impact of the cross, the implications of the cross in the Christians life. Turn with me, to 1 Peter 2:24, now you are going to see, and let me sort of drop it in on the front end of our sharing. You going to see how that you are crucified with Christ but you live with Christ. The two come together there is a death process, but there is a life process. And you'll watch the scriptures tie together so frequently what Jesus did in His death towards sin, and what He expects we should do with sin and righteousness in our own lives. Now this is a very simple scripture, but you could spend the rest of your lives and never plumb the depths of what he is trying to say. Now do you suppose Peter had a kind of sensitive relationship to the cross? I always read 1 and 2 Peter with a little different mind set. I think of Peter and I think of all that he went through and all of the promises he made and all of the activity of God that specifically directed toward Peter. How kind God was to over and over again specifically deal with Peter. So when Peter speaks you sort of catch it from a very special dimension. And so in this letter he says in verse 24, speaking of our Lord, "who Himself bore," what? "our sins in His own body on the tree," for what reason? "that we having died to sin might live for righteousness." Let me read that carefully again, do you see any relationship between the cross of our Lord and what happens in your life because of that cross? You die also to sin, but as Christ was raised so you walk in newness of life. And you walk in resurrection life which is live a life of righteousness. And in a scripture we will touch in righteousness unto holiness. Now hear it again the connection between the cross of our Lord as He relates to sin, and the cross in our life and its relationship to sin in our own life. "Who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree that we having died to sin might live for righteousness by whose stripes you were healed. For you were like sheep going astray but

have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your soul."

Now I want to take just a moment I want to walk you through a couple of scriptures and one of them may take close to a chapter, and we will sort of walk through it. But you'll see the impact of the relationship between the death of Christ, the cross, the big total picture of what God did in that huge moment. And what He did to sin, and how what Christ did has a radical effect on your own life. Now before we turn to Romans 6, I want you to hear one more time a scripture we have touched on an heard several times.

Cause I want you to be aware, I want you to be aware of the radical change in a Christians life when the cross becomes real. And when God unites you with His Son, He unites you with the whole work of His Son. His crucifixion, His burial, His death, His resurrection, His ascension, and His reigning. You enter into a union with Christ Jesus and that process becomes real in your life. But just to help us remember that such a dealing with sin is so radical, and so real, and so life transforming the only way Paul could describe it is by saying if you ever into a relationship with Jesus in His death, and burial, and resurrection and ascension the relationship will Him will be so radical in your life it will be called, "becoming a new creation."

Let me read it again, 2 Corinthians 5:17, "therefore if anyone," now you have heard me say this many times, "how many is included in anyone?" everyone! If anyone enters into a relationship with Jesus Christ, God does something in you. He doesn't do it figuratively, He does it genuinely, personally, intimately, radically. Now how many of those that enter into that relationship have this change in their life? Ever solitary one! And if you're a pastor, I remind you I pastored for thirty years, and when ever we were dealing with individuals in such a way that their eternal destiny hung in the balance I always looked for, and expected, and encouraged a radical transformation in that persons life.

I don't play fast and loose with the eternal destinies of individuals. Because if for some reason I find it in my heart I should give them assurance that they are saved because this pastor said that they are saved, I could make that person twice the citizen of hell! That person is assured of eternal life because, and only because, he has born again by the Spirit of the living God, heaven touched his life and becomes a completely new creation! Now I didn't say it, God says it.

He does not negotiate this one, He announces it. "If anyone is in Christ," that means you have become immersed into a relationship with a person, and He in you. "He is a new creation, old things," What? "have passed away and behold all things have become new." Is that hard to understand? But I say at this point, and I will say it a number of another times, do not interpret the scriptures by your experience! Interpret your experience by the Word of God! And I heard some people with silly talk saying, "well I just know they have been born again, I was there when they went forward and I know they been, I know there a Christian because..I just know they are.

But of course there is no evidence of a changed life, but I just know they are saved." Nearly always when someone talking like that, there talking about a loved one. They are talking about a mother or father, or a son or daughter. "I just know they are saved even though their life doesn't demonstrate it." Impossible. And Im going to show you in a moment from two other passages of scripture because I want you to understand that there are incredible implications of the cross of Jesus Christ in the Christians life.

Were are going to look at 1 John 3, after we look at Romans 6. Well, let me go to 1 John 3 first. Cause it's a toughfy. But I want you to understand that if the cross dealt radically with sin then the cross will deal radically with sin in your life. I want you to look at 1 John 3 and I'm going to read it carefully for you I'm going to read it in the New King James. Going to begin at verse 6, we are going to go from 6-10, 1 John

3:6, now folks our problem is not that we don't understand it saying, our problem is that we do understand what its saying, "Whoever abides in Him does not sin," I know what your saying..."oh, but pastor we do sin."

So what your saying is you take your experience and interpret the Bible by your experience. On this one you better lift your experience to level of the Word of God. Because in these few verses you going to see how the scriptures says the cross makes a radical difference in the Christians life. Now let me read it through carefully, you see it gets worse as it goes on in this verse, "Whoever abides in Him," that's what we are talking about, in union with union with Christ does not sin, "whoever sins has neither seen him, nor known Him."

Would you get in impression that when you enter into a relationship with Christ He deals with your sin? Would it leave that impression? And if there is no dealing with sin in your life, you've not known Him, because the essence of a relationship with Jesus Christ is what He does with your sin. Well, it gets worse, "Little children let no one deceive you he who practices righteousness is righteous. Just as He is righteous. He who sins (or practices sin) is of the devil, for the devil has sin from the beginning."

Listen to this verse very carefully, "for this purpose the Son of God was manifested that He would destroy the works of the devil. Whoever has been born of God does not sin," Why? "for His seed remains in him, and he cannot sin because he has been born of God." Do you have a problem understanding what He is saying? Or do you have trouble because you understand what He is saying. Now listen it gets worse, "in this children of God and the children of the devil are manifest whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God."

Kinda of tough isn't it? God was not playing games with sin when His Son was crucified. Sin is as bad as God tells you that it is. Sin has eternal consequences as bad as God describes it. And so serious is sin in the mind of God He was willing to take His only Son who knew no sin, who lived in perfect holiness, and make Him sin for us, and deal with sin in His Own Son. We saw the manifestation of that in the most cruel death physically man has ever devised in the cross, but that was not the greatest tragedy.

The greatest tragedy is what God did when He laid the sin of a world on His Son. And there God dealt thoroughly and radically with sin. So that His justice would be upheld, His holiness would be upheld, and all that would be required to deal with sin fell on His Son. Do you suppose that sin is serious with God? Do you suppose that He would deal with sin radically in His Son, but when He comes to bring you into a union with His Son He is indifferent to sin in our lives? No, Sir! He deals radically with sin in ever person He brings to Himself.

Now most of you maybe be aware that in the use of the terms in this passage he uses a continuous present. And he says it like this, "whoever is born of God." Let me give you my own free translation, "whoever is born of God never, ever again, continually practices sin." He cannot because the One who dealt with sin and never sinned dwells within him. And God has place His presence within you He has placed His Son within you, and has placed His Holy Spirit within you. And a person who is genuinely born again by Spirit of God has had a radical transformation in his life concerning sin.

That's why I am so concern when I see tracts and evangelism taught without any repentance towards sin. Impossible, that's the whole meaning of salvation, it is when God deals radically with our sin! And when you see how He dealt with it in His Son, it will crush you concerning sin. Now in a moment we are going to read, which I think this helps put this into place. From Romans 6 he say, "Should we continue in sin so

God's grace could upon us," and in the strongest terms he says, "God forbid!

How can we who have died to sin ever live in it again?" The answer is, impossible! The nature of salvation is that God radically deals with our sin, and He deals with our whole nature concerning sin. And so He places within us a horror of sin. He places within us a resolve that we will do everything in our life to oppose sin and move against it if it tries to get a stronghold in our life we move against it and all the presence of God within us moves against it. Because the soul which keeps on sinning will die.

And that is horrendous with God! So how could it be possible for a person who claims to be a Christian to be indifferent with his sin? That is a spiritual impossibility. Because for you to do that you have to move against the activity of the Father revealing to you the nature of it. You have to move against the Son who shows you with hands and His side what it cost Him. And you have to move against the Holy Spirit within you convincing you of sin. Now His whole assignment is to convince you of sin.

And the only thing I can say with a person who says they are a Christian with no conscience towards sin, he is either totally quenched the Holy Spirit which is a worse sin, or he has never known the experience with the Holy Spirit who convicts him of sin. You see there is not a child of God, who is genuinely a Child of God who is not indwelt with the Holy Spirit. And God's assignment to the Holy Spirit has been to make absolutely certain that He convinces you of sin constantly.

Because sin is your ruin. Sin holds back everything God had in mind for you. So I ask you the question, what does it mean when he said, "you that you died to sin?" You see many of us say, "well, I don't know what it means, but I know that I sin." But we say it with a casualness that frightens me. When the Christian treats sin causally we are in a disaster. There's not a time that I don't begin a day by asking the Spirit of God to keep my heart, and life, and mind, and will radically sensitive to sin. For sin crucified my Savior. And I do not have the audacity to say, "God I thank you for who you are and I thank you and praise you name," when sin runs unchecked in my life. It's just hypocrisy.

But I want you to take sort of a little look at the 6 chapter of Romans because of all the chapters it helps us to know very simply what effect does the cross have on the Christians life. It certainly would be found there. So take these moments with me, and I am not going to do a fifteen minute exposition on each verse. I want you to catch the flow of it, because over and over again he says the same thing. And you'll notice that he connects two things. What happens to sin and what happens to righteousness. That is, you exchange sin for His righteousness. But is that not what he said in the 5 chapter of 2 Corinthians? "He made him to be sin," what? "So we could be made," what? "the righteousness of God in," union with "Him."

So you're going to find a relationship here, now I understand I've gone through this chapter hundreds of times and I feel like I'm a child just beginning. The depths of this chapter in both directions are astounding. That whole matter of presenting your body to God as an instrument of righteousness overwhelms me. And then dealing with sin, but I don't think you are going to have difficulty understanding the language. Our difficulty is going to be that we do understand it but were are not practicing it.

But we want to tell ourselves we are ok. "Well I saved," someone made a statement today and comes straight from scripture, the key is not wither you have accepted Christ, but wither you clearly know He has accepted you. Matthew 7 comes to the end and makes this statement, "Many will say to me in that day, 'Lord, Lord have we not prophesied in your name, cast out demons in your name, done wonderful works in your name,'" in other words we know you Lord. The next statement is awesome, He will say , "Depart from

me you workers of iniquity I never knew you."

The key is not whether you can say you know Him, the demons all know him, the key is whether He knows you. And how would you know if He knows you? That term know is intimacy. If has entered into an intimacy with you, the first thing He will deal with is sin in your life. Because sin is the greatest source of death and He would say I have dealt with it so now you are free from it, now put off this, put on this, and deal with this and deal with this. So you are going to see some terminology here that I pray you will take seriously.

You could spend the next six months, and many people come up to me and say, "Henry we have a group and we have just finished Experiencing God, do you know any other book that we would study," and I will say, "Yes, I would recommend Romans." And they will say, "that's not what we are talking about, were are thinking about..," and I said, "our problem is we are reading all the books of men and we are not reading this book (the Bible)." Could you not let the Spirit of God stretch you mind and your heart into a chapter like this one?

And then go through the seventh and then when you hit the eighth chapter it will take you six months to go through the eighth chapter of Romans. But if you'll will do it, and let the Spirit of God be your teacher and wrestle with that you'll come out, "we are more than conquers through Him who loved us." You will come out with great truth that sets you free. Well lets read just a little from Romans 6, let me back up read verse 20 from the 5th chapter. "More over the law entered that the offense might abound," that simply means when you know God's standard then you know how to identify sin.

When God put the law out there He then gave you standard which you could always measure whether you are right with God are wrong with God. So he said, "when the law entered," then the offense was there. But he said, "where sin abounded," because the law let us know how far short we have come. "When sin abounded, grace abounded much more. So that as sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Now you are going to see two things, what God did in Jesus Christ to deal with sin and death and what He did in Jesus when He raised Him up to bring you His life. And so His life now becomes our life, on the same level, that is, He will deal with sin in your life and He will bring you unbounded love and unbounded life when you are in union with Him. So after he has just made this statement he then says, "What shall we say then, if grace abounds where sin abounds then why don't we go off and sin a lot. Because then where sin abounds grace does much more abound, so if you want a whole lot of grace then do a whole lot of sinning." Now don't laugh at that, that's the way to many Christian's are practicing it! And do you know how they say it? It doesn't matter what we have done, it doesn't matter how far we have gone, thank God His grace covers it all. What blasphemy! That doing what Paul just condemned! A Christian doesn't continue in sin that grace may abound, he flees sin with a horror because the cross is ever before him and he cannot understand the cross and continue to sin without awful conscience about it. So Paul, I guess those believers in the early century faced things similar to us, "shall we continue to sin that grace may abound? Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin, live any longer in it. Or do you not know that as many of us who were immersed," you say my says baptized. I have never understood why people who translated the Bible never translate that word, and it just bewilders people. The word baptize when you see it, it has not been translated. Its been what we call transliterated. The word baptizo means to immerse, and plunge and submerge. But when they translated it in the Anglican church in 1611 to much of Christendom had already been practicing sprinkling. And so they knew if they translated that word they're in trouble. Because the

people would say, "why haven't we been immersed?" "Well you have been baptized." "Well what does baptism mean?" "Well the common usage is, sprinkling, pouring or immersion." But can you see what happens when they don't translate it here? Let me read it again with the word immerse, "do you not know that as many of you as were totally immersed into Christ Jesus were totally immersed into His death therefore we were buried with Him through immersion in the death, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father even so also we should walk in the same old life," is that what yours says? "in newness of life." I don't know how Paul would have said it verbally but I believe Paul with great reverence would say, "Oh, brethren I have been crucified with Christ, never the less I want you to know that I live, but I don't live, I live by faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me."

What an enormous statement. Paul was immersed into His death. Now what, what did the death of Christ deal with preeminently? Sin. And he said when God brought me into a relationship with His Son He took me into an experienced where I was immersed into His death. Now I don't think I am violating the scripture when I say, that's more to Paul than a theological position. I don't know what God did when He took him into the 3rd heaven, and I don't know what He did to Paul when Paul starts to describe that there were moments with God that couldn't even talk about. But I think one of them was that God says, Paul I want to take you and immerse you into the crucifixion of My Son. Because Paul I don't want you to ever get over what your sin did. I want you to understand the deepest emotions and dimensions of what happened what I did to my Son, when He was crucified. And not only that Paul says here we were immersed into His burial. If you were to go across the Christian community in its historical setting, some of the people whose lives have most profoundly affected the world in which they live, will quietly and sometimes almost with their shoes off, and almost beyond description will tell you there was a moment when the God of the universe took them into the burial of our Lord. And there they looked into the mouth of hell and there they saw what hell was like. And the record of their biography will tell you that moment, that only God could grant, and only God would grant it when He stood along side and enabled them to handle it. I believe when Paul said I was buried with Christ, somehow I believe that the Spirit of God helped him understand what happened when the Son of God was buried. What happened to that place called hell. How real, how personal, how awful, how permanent, how separating. Let me ask you has God ever even asked you to understand that? Could you ever be indifferent to sin if you ever saw that and knew what happened to the Son of God. Folks when you hear Paul, he just says, you were immersed with Christ in His death, you were immersed with Christ in His burial, and then God by His power reached in and brought Christ up out of the grave and defeated sin and death and hell and when He did He brought you up with him. And Paul could go and say in the 1st chapter of Ephesians, "and the same power which raised Jesus from the dead is the same power given to ever solitary one of us who believe." Power for what? Primary power over sin.

And so he says sin never again has dominion over you. I'll just read because we don't have time to deal with it. I want to read it, but now you have a bit of understanding. He then says, "if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this that our old man was crucified with Him. That the body of sin might be down away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. For He who has died has been free from sin.

Now if we died with Christ we believe that we also shall live with him knowing that Christ having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him. For the death He died, He died to sin, once for all. But the life that He lives, He lives to God. Likewise you also reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Jesus Christ our Lord. Therefore do not let," choice, "sin reign in you mortal body that you should obey it in its lust, and do not present your members of your body as

instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead and your members instruments of righteousness to God.

For sin shall have no dominion over you. For you not under the law but under grace. What then, shall we sin because we are not under the law but under grace? Certainly not! Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey you are that ones slaves whom you obey. Whether sin which leads to death or obedience leading to righteousness. But God be thanked, that though your were slaves of sin you obeyed from the heart. That form of doctrine to which you were delivered and having been set free from sin you became slaves of righteousness."

Now he says, Im just speaking in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members as slaves of uncleanness before you were a Christian, and of lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves of righteousness, for holiness. For when you were slaves of sin you were free in regards to righteousness. That is, when you followed sin as your master you had no freedom to practice righteousness. You served another master, you were not free to live righteously, you couldn't, you had no power to do it.

But then the says, "what fruit did you have then in the things to which you are now ashamed." Did you have any fruit for righteousness when you lived in sin before you came to know the Lord? Why you are ashamed of that way of life, now why do you continue to sin now that you have become a Christian? You remember what the old way was like, you couldn't even practice righteousness though you wanted to. But he says, "but now having been set free from sin," who set us free? the death of Christ, the cross of Christ, so that you never again need ever, to respond when sin calls.

When the enemy calls your free from him, I mean God defeated the enemy and when the enemy calls you do not have to quake, you don't have to tremble, He set you free from him and from sin. Sin can call all it wants! Nothing of sin from the outside can ever make you do anything on the inside. That was settled when Christ died and dealt with sin and set you free and when put you into relationship to Christ all the fulness of God is on the inside causing you to present your bodies to God as instruments of righteousness.

What difference does the cross make? All the difference in the world. Let me finish the paragraph, "but now having been set free from sin you have become slaves of God, and you have your fruit now in holiness and the end of that life is everlasting life, for the wages of sin is death but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

How then should we live? Oh, how then should we live! Are you walking in the Spirit so that when sin begins to make its inroads you don't make excuses, you don't say my culture, the television. Jesus said, nothing from without can affect your heart, but your heart can affect everything. So he said, I put you in union with My Son, and three guesses where all there is of God dwells, in your heart. And it is out of your heart where everything flows so when sin calls, you say no. When you have the flesh within you that says, "I have a right to be angry!" you look and anger is not in the fruit of the Spirit at all its in the flesh. And everything within you says, "you don't have a right to be angry, you don't have any right to be angry." "But don't you know what they have done to me?" Oh, don't you know what they did to the Saviour? And He dealt with that without sin. And He made it possible that you would never again live as a slave of sin. So now your free to present your bodies and that something you do as a choice you make. Present you body as an instrument to God for righteousness.

Is there anything in your life that doesn't look like righteousness? If God has brought you into a union with His Son, His Son has placed over you all the righteousness of God. And now your life can be given to God, thoroughly, and completely, and totally. So when I struggle with some moments in my life where I know the Spirit of God is telling me its sin, I respond to Him. The enemy of your soul will try to convince you by raising up an argument against the knowledge of truth. Wish I had time to deal with that, I'm not going to. He just says, the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, they're mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds. Don't ever, don't ever read any books on strongholds, just don't do it! They are so far out in left field, look at the scripture it says, that the enemy always raises up an argument against the knowledge of the truth. And when he does you bring every thought and make it subject to Christ. End of discussion, that's it. Will the enemy always raise up an argument against every truth the Bible gives you? Yes! And when the scriptures says that those who have been born by the Spirit of God do not continually practice sin because God placed His seed, His Son, everything about Him in you. So you can't practice sin any longer. The enemy says, "Oh, you know you sin," your heart cry's out, "but I'm never again in bondage to sin. I don't have to, thank you Satan for reminding me, I need to go to my Saviour to get victory of this. I need to present my body as instrument of righteousness unto God. I can cover over sin with love. I can take those scriptures and live it out, so I'm going to trust the Holy Spirit to take the Word of God, and the Truth of God and keep me free." But remember every truth of God, the enemy is going to raise up an argument against it. He is going to say the opposite, is that not what he did in the garden of Eden? God said is you eat of this fruit you'll die, Satan came said, you'll not surely die. And Adam and Eve had to decide who was telling the truth. So the scriptures says, God's seed remains in you and you can not practice sin, you've been set free by the death of Christ. The enemy comes and says, "oh no you're a sinner at worst and at best. And you know that you will continue to sin." The only way to deal with that is not let your experience interpret the scripture, take that scripture and lay it over your experience, and bring your experience up to the Word of God.. Thank God through the death of Jesus Christ on the cross He broke the power of sin and I have to never live under its dominion and I will take him at His word and let Him do it. And I will immediately today present my body to God as an instrument of righteousness. It's a choice you make.

Well I want us to take a moment to pray together, but my prayer would be with all my heart that you would experience what Jesus said, "If you continue in My word, then are you My disciples indeed, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." Is there any area of your life where you are not absolutely free? In Christ, because of what He did on the cross and the implications for your life. Then release your life to the truth of God and ask Him help you understand it and live it out. That your life will be a demonstration of what God did on the cross to deal with sin, and the whole world will know by the way that you live, sin no longer has dominion over you. For you are free in Christ and He has your life. May God grant that the world will understand that truth by the way we live. Will you take a moment to bow in quietness in your own heart and take time to pray. Tonight did you hear the word? Did it read exactly as it read? Did it disturb you, does your heart seek after God to know the huge dimension of life in Christ? Never again does sin rule, righteousness rules. Not yours, but His, and in Him your life is more and more completely God's. Take a moment ....of quite... Kerri is going to play quietly.

All to Jesus I surrender,

All to Him I freely Give,

I will ever Love and trust Him,

And in His presence daily live.

Talk to God in two directions ask him to deal radically with your sin and ask Him to deal radically with His righteousness in you. Does the eyes of your heart see your Saviour? There He is dealing with all that sin could do in its worst in you. Do you see him being raised and now sitting at the right hand of the Father triumphed. Fill with life, and sin no more having dominion over you. Does your heart cry out, oh Lord, honour Your name in my life by reigning in righteousness in me. Could you quietly in your heart say, I surrender all, all my sin, all my rebellion and I surrender my life so He can shape it for His glory.

Prayer:

Father once again through the night speak to us. As you did last night many gathered and they wrestled with what they heard and they released themselves to you, for they knew it was you they meet. And today they got up with a whole new sense of life, in Christ. Oh, Father may there not be one who does not have victory over sin. And whose life is not now radically turned and given to you as an instrument of righteousness. Help us to know what that will mean. Holy Spirit be our teacher in our minds and then to our hearts and then to our life, then through our life to our families and churches, communities. Oh Father, may we not have received your grace in vain. But may the great work of the cross be worked out in us. With great victory in every increasing measure over sin. And may that draw many a person who is going down because of their sin to see how they could be set free. Tonight give us a night rest, thank you for the Lord's day. Oh how different this day is, how full of your presence when we set it aside for you. Gives us a night rest, but if we still have sin don't let us rest, for it will be our undoing. But bring us to wholeness and then a peaceful night's rest we ask it in Jesus name, Amen.

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