

Job 26;7 Atlantic Lyman Conf.

by J.M. Davies

The sermon emphasizes the importance of trusting God for support and provision in our ministry, and living by faith in dependence on Him.

Duration: 1:14:57

Scripture: Romans 5:1-6

Topics: "Conference"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the radical nature of conversion. He explains that conversion is not simply accepting a truth or changing one's mindset, but rather a complete revolution in a person's life. The preacher highlights three discoveries made by the apostle in this chapter, with the final realization being that the flesh serves nothing but sin and recognizes no authority but the authority of sin. The preacher also draws parallels to the Israelites' physical journey out of Egypt and into the Promised Land, questioning whether believers today can physically escape the world or the wilderness to live with Christ in heaven. The sermon concludes with an exploration of freedom from sin and death through the Lord's Spirit of Life.

Transcript

I want to read with you the verse in Job, chapter twenty-six to begin with. Twenty-sixth chapter of Job, then we come to consider Romans afterwards. Job twenty-six and verse seven.

He stretched out the north over the empty place, and hangeth here upon nothing. Now it's the last sentence of that verse that I want to just read with you in connection with our service for God in southwest India. It may seem like a strange verse, but it was a verse which God gave to us with a promise.

During our early years in India, when on one occasion we were faced with a time of peculiar need, and I was before the Lord seeking for some guidance and help, seeking for a word from God to give some confidence as to the future, and this was the scripture that came to my mind. He hangeth the earth upon nothing. I could not tell you at the time where it was found, but I soon found out, because the scripture came to me with such force, and the way it appealed to me was this.

God can take a world up, fling it out into space, and keep it traveling in its orbit for all these thousands upon ten thousands of years that it's been rolling around in space. Then God can take up his servants, and he can fling them out into the far ends of the earth, and keep them going without any visible means of

support. Visible means of support, they are words which we heard very often in our early years in India.

Very often we had questions asked us by friends, have you any visible means of support? Or what are your visible means of support? We couldn't just understand the way we'd gone to India. I hadn't been brought up in assembly, knew nothing about them. I came to this country fifty years ago this last July, and went out to Montana, and then through the goodness of God there, I was brought into touch with a man who was a Presbyterian, who knew the Lord, and he was a preacher in a little village, the village of Potomac, near Missoula.

And through him, I was brought to understand a little more of God's salvation. I had professed to be saved before coming to this country, and I'd never had any teaching, I'd never had any ground put beneath my feet. And through his instrumentality, I went from there to Chicago in 1915, to study at the Woody Bible Institute.

That man was a graduate of the Institute. While studying at the Institute, I came into touch with the assemblies in Chicago. The late Gustav Friedrich Nietzsche was the first one I ever heard amongst, ministering the Word amongst the ten.

And in 1916, I was welcomed to remember the Lord in the assembly that then met in Austin. But how was one to serve the Lord? I had nearly joined up with a mission society to go to India, a faith mission society. And then one day in conversation, or rather as I passed by, I heard two young men conversing together about Acts 13, and saying rather sarcastically that when Paul and Barnabas went out, there was a mission society formed in Antioch to look after them.

That was about all I heard. And it was not intended for my ears, they were just talking together. But I have no doubt that God intended me to hear those words.

But when I went to the Scriptures, of course, there was no such a thing. Here were two men commended to the grace of God, and they went out to serve him. But then the question was, that was all right in apostolic days? Is it all right now? Is that which obtained then, is that possible today? We've had a good deal of exercise.

There was a man named Sutcliffe at the time in the Institute. He was a Presbyterian too, but was very fond of assemblies and very fond of coming to conferences. I had a conversation with him one day, and he said, David, go and join that mission.

And his own words were, stick to the brethren. With the tears running down his cheeks, those were the words of counsel he gave me. Some years later, it was my privilege to meet him out in Portland, Oregon, to remind him of the conversation, and to tell him that I wished he had carried out, taken the advice that he gave me to himself.

He was then teaching at the Multnomah Bible School. And so it was after a good deal of exercise with regard to what the Scriptures teach us to service that we set out for India in 1920. My father said to me, as we called our home on our way out, have you anybody in America that you'd care to write to, supposing you're ever in need? You won't join the Baptist Society? And you won't join the Faith Mission Society? Supposing you're ever in need when you get to India, have you anybody that you'd care to write to? Or anybody that you can write to? I said, well, there's nobody that I care, that I would care to write to, if you're ever in need.

And the Scriptures make it clear that he would not send forth soldiers at their own charges, that he would send forth, he would supply both feed to the store and bread to the eater. And on that promise, I said, we are going out to India. He looked at me and shook his head.

And he anticipated that before very long, there would be some SOS appeals for some succor and help from his son that had so foolishly gone out in this seeming foolhardy way out to India. During those first years, there was a time when God gave us, on one occasion, this verse. Many a time did one pray, then, that God would give us the opportunity to bear witness to his faithfulness, to his trustworthiness, to the validity of his promises, and to give us the opportunity of getting back to when people could bear witness to the fact that God is faithful.

And over the 45 years since we first went out, these are the words one would like to write, that God has been faithful, in spite of much unfaithfulness as far as we are concerned and our service is concerned. And the experience that I went through myself was an experience which enabled me to try to lead others into the same path when we got to India. With a large number of assemblies and a number of young men keen to serve the Lord, there wasn't always the spiritual apprehension of what the scriptural path of service is.

There were many who thought that possibly the missionary should support them. When we got there, the work had been started by a German brother. God had blessed his testimony and half a dozen or more assemblies had been brought into being.

And the first groups to the work had given themselves to the gospel and in those days the support of these brethren was a very small amount. Their cost was very little. And Mr. Nagle had fellowship with them in a very simple way as he served the Lord.

He was home in Germany when we arrived in 1920 and we found a number of Indian brethren who were then dependent as far as their support was concerned dependent entirely on what was received through missionaries. We found it rather difficult. It was quite a heavy burden.

Along with our own needs, very often the needs of other responsibilities. And here were brethren who were seeking to serve the Lord and they were a great help. And as the Henry Grove said, partial dependence upon man is better than an unreal dependence upon God.

An unreal dependence upon God can be a snare. Partial dependence upon man may be better than an unreal dependence upon God. And we came to the conclusion that as far as these brethren were concerned we couldn't bring about any change.

But as far as any new brethren going out to serve the Lord was concerned we could only encourage them to go out in the same way as we had gone ourselves. And as I was telling some brethren yesterday and today one young brother came who was anxious to serve the Lord. I was asked to interview him.

And after a long interview warning him clearly that he shouldn't depend upon us. If God helped us we'd be glad to help him. But we had not the slightest idea where our needs were going to be supplied from.

And if ever he was in need he must not in any way find fault with us. If God had called him then he must look to God to supply his needs. And he stepped out in dependence upon God into this place where there was no assembly.

He went there to live. He rented a house. There he sought to live and he sought to labor.

There were times when we were able to help him times when we were not able to help him. One Indian brother came to me one day. He thought that missionaries should support all creatures.

He said, Brother, I think we should think a little more about the needs of our brother so and so mentioning him by name. I knew this brother who was in fairly good way in business. So I said, Well, Brother, if you'll give me a tithe of your income I'll be very glad to look after him and look after many others too.

So he smiled and never said any more. But I hope that he thought to exercise his responsibility with regard to what God gave. But it hasn't been easy to teach Christians in India to give.

It hasn't been easy to teach them whatever responsibility it was. The support of Indian brethren who serve the Lord in the gospel. We started in 1940 or so to have the offering once a month given entirely to the furtherance of the gospel.

Not in connection with expense in our own area, but in other parts. And it has been very interesting to see how God has blessed that there is small beginning. We had mentioned the week before that the offering the following Lord's Day would be taken up for brethren whose names were mentioned in the second part.

And it was interesting to see the way the Christians responded to this appeal to give to the work of the Lord. And the blessing of God came upon that work. Today, in that area, and also in Bombay and further south and where we live, there are brethren, group of brethren, responsible brethren who give themselves to the work of distributing gifts received for the work of the gospel.

And we are very thankful for a number of men who are today seeking to serve the Lord in total dependence upon himself. We must remember the people in the country are poor. A great many of them the great majority of them never get as much as a dollar a day.

A dollar a day today would be a very high wage for the majority of the people. The great majority of them would get about 25 to 50 cents a day. Teachers in the day schools, they get about 200, 150 dollars, 150 rupees a month, maybe not that much, and that's about 50 dollars a month is what the school teachers would get.

We had about 20 of those. We had a day school with about 800 children. We had an orphanage with about 40 girls that we looked after.

During the last seven years we were there, and I was manager of this day school as well. There was no personal expense in connection with the day school, only it meant a good deal of responsibility with regard to the government. The government paid in full the teachers' salary.

There were other expenses, of course, in connection with it. The orphanage, of course, was something that was supplied and supported entirely by the gifts received from the Lord's people. But, this work has gone on, and we are very thankful to say that in spite of the poverty of much of the people there, the work has gone on with a good deal of blessing.

There are today some 30 brethren who have gone from our area. We are right in the southwest. If you get a map of India, we are right down in the, you see a little place called Cochin, C-O-C-H-I-N.

We are very near there. The Apostle Thomas is supposed to have labored in that area of India, and Christianity has been there ever since apostolic days. And we have, today, as I mentioned last night, about 200 assemblies of the Lord's people there.

Of these years, Pentecostalism has been a great difficulty. They have come along with tongues and prepared healings, and they, of course, are divided. There are six or seven brands of Pentecostalism there.

Sometimes, in a small village, you will have six or seven different and varying groups of Pentecostalists. But they're very aggressive, and some of them preach the gospel very clearly and see souls saved. But they're very disturbing in the way they preach and teach regarding tongues and healing.

And one has had to give counteracting ministry to that all over the past years. That's why I don't know if any of you saw the two booklets I have printed on tongues, on one on tongues and one on healing. I'm hoping that before a few months are over, there will be a book with a much fuller teaching on the subject printed now with the printers.

I haven't yet heard definitely that Erdman will accept them for publication, but I'm hoping that they will. But these thirty presidents that I referred to have gone to other parts of India. Many of them are graduates.

Many of them are men who could have good positions if they stayed in their home country as school teachers, government employees. And they've gone with their families, and they've lived and learnt the language and they're labouring and carrying on a witness for God in these very difficult parts of India. Some have seen a good deal of blessing in souls being saved and an assembly being gathered together where they are.

Others are largely still occupied with pioneer gospel work. Our son is still out in India. He went out this last January on his second for his second period out there.

He went the first time out in 1956. He and his wife, he has married a girl from Vancouver, and he has been connected with a hospital in Tiruvalla. And at present time they are very much in need of a nurse.

One of the nurses has had to leave. Of course, there are a number of Indian nurses. I'm speaking now of missionary nurses.

There are only two and one of them has had to leave. The hospital has about 300 beds, three branch hospitals, and I suppose about a thousand operations per annum. A very large work and a very heavy responsibility.

Along with that, of course, there is the privilege of preaching the gospel and ministering the word of God in the surrounding assemblies in connection with the convention. And we value prayer for death. Now we'll turn to the word of God in connection with Romans 6. We value prayer for ourselves.

It's what the future holds for us. We don't know, in the mercy of God, all our family are in Christ. We're all married now and scattered, seven of them.

Three boys and four girls. Two girls in Canada, in Vancouver, one boy in India, one son in Africa, and three in London, so we're rather a scattered family. But in the mercy of God, all are saved and all in a family fellowship.

Just what our future passes to be, we don't see. I don't see very far ahead at the present time. Now yesterday evening, we were looking at chapter 6, verses 1 to 10.

Pointing out that in this section, the apostle answers the question asked in verse 1. What then? Should we sin because we are in order that, should we continue in sin in order that grace may abound? The answer is given in verse 2. Very brief, very unequivocal, very definite statement. God forbid, how shall we who died to sin live any longer therein? Now that answer is explained and enlarged in verses 3 to 10. In verses 3, 4 and 5, we have the illustration.

Then in verses 6, 7 and 8, we have a reference to the believer's identification with Christ in death. And in verses 9 and 10, we have a reference to the once-for-all character of the death of Christ. The answer of the apostle seems like this.

For a Christian to continue in sin is a denial of what we have in verses 9 and 10. A denial of the once-for-all character of the death of Christ. Christ died unto sin once.

That's something that never will be repeated, and it never need be repeated, and never will be repeated. There is something that is final in its character. For a Christian to continue in sin after having died to sin would be a denial of the once-for-all character of the death of Christ.

In verses 6 to 8, he answers that it would be a denial of the once-for-all character of the believer's union with Christ in death, knowing this, that our old man was crucified with him. The believer's union with Christ doesn't take place in baptism. It takes place in crucifixion.

Baptism is burial, and death must take place before burial. They can't bury people alive. It must be death before burial.

And so, the union of the believer with Christ in death is what you have in verse 6. Our old man was crucified with him. And again, in verse 8. Now, if we died with him, the old man is the same as the first man in that he set a new covenant, we saw. He makes us a first oath.

The first covenant became old because a new covenant came into being. And the first man became the old man because God was brought into being a new man in Christ. And we have been, we have died with Christ.

And if, if we have actually died with Christ, then we have come under the judgment of God in the death of Christ. And having died with Christ, we are declared free. We are justified.

We are discharged from every charge of guilt, as it says in verse 7. Then in verses 3, 4, and 5, he gives it to the like of baptism. You see, in verses 9 and 10, as I said, it's the death of Christ and the death of Christ alone. In verses 6, 7, and 8, it's the believer's union with Christ in death and resurrection only.

But in verses 3, 4, and 5, it's the believer's union with Christ in death, burial, and resurrection, as illustrated in baptism. You see the different notes, an added note in each of these three. The death of Christ and love alone, verses 9 and 10.

The believer's union with Christ in death and resurrection, verses 6, 7, and 8. The believer's union with Christ in death and burial and resurrection, in verses 3, 4, and 5. Now, in verse 11, the apostle says, Likewise, reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus our

Lord, or in Christ Jesus. I want you to notice that changely. In chapter 5, all our blessings are through Jesus Christ our Lord.

In verse 1, for instance, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. In verse 11, we have joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ. And, verse 21, grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life by or through Jesus Christ our Lord.

But now, for the first time, we have this phrase, In Christ Jesus. And this is the phrase that is found from now on to the end of chapter 8. In verse 23, the gift of God, this eternal life in Christ Jesus. In verse 1 of chapter 8, there is therefore now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus.

Verse 2, for the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus. And we have the last verse of chapter 8, Nothing can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Now, here, it's not something we receive through Christ, but a position which is ours by virtue of our identification with Christ.

We are viewed as in Christ, identified with Christ. Now, how are we to reckon ourselves dead and to sin? In what way, in what way are we to reckon ourselves dead indeed and to sin? Are we dead to the temptations of sin? Are we exhausted here to reckon ourselves dead to the temptations to the allurements of sin? Or dead to the inward sense of inward sin? None of us are dead to the sense of inward sin. And none of us are dead to the allurements of sin.

And there's not a single Christian that is dead to the temptations of sin. And yet, here, we are told to reckon ourselves to have died and to sin. In what sense, then, are we to reckon that we have died and to sin? Does it mean that we've got to reckon that we have died and to sin or reckon that we are dead and to sin even though we are not dead to sin? Does God call upon us to reckon upon something which is not true to fact? Would God ask us to do that? Could God ask me to reckon upon something as a fact which is not a fact if it's not a fact? No.

The answer to it must be found in two words. In verse ten, we are read that Christ died and to sin, or verse nine, knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more, in that he died, he died and to sin once. And then, in connection with that, we have verse eleven, the first word, even so.

Even so. That is, in the way, in whatever way we understand that Christ died and to sin, in that way, you could reckon that you've died and to sin. So, the way we have died and to sin, if we are going to understand that, we must know how Christ died and to sin.

Did he die to the allurement of sin? Of course not. Did he die to the temptations of sin? That would be blasphemous. Did he die to the inward sense of sin? Of course not.

He had no sense of inward sin. He was without sin. He was holy.

There's only one way in which we can interpret those words, that he died and to sin once. He died to put sin away. He died on account of sin.

He died to beat sin's penalty. That's the only way in which we can interpret those words, that Christ died and to sin. There's no other way in which we can interpret those words.

No other meaning can be given to them than that Christ died to put sin away. He died to beat sin's penalty, to beat sin's doom. Now, the apostle says, in that way, reckon you have died.

In Christ, you've died. Just as Christ died to sin's penalty, just as Christ died to sin's doom, you've died to sin's doom. God never asked any Christian to reckon that he's dead to the sense of inward sin.

God never asked any Christian to reckon that he's dead to the temptations of sin, nor to reckon that he's dead to the allurements of sin, for we are not. I've heard many people say, now, it means that you've got to reckon it. In spite of the fact that you are actually not dead to sin, in spite of the fact that you're not dead to the sense of inward sin, you've got to reckon that you are.

Well, it's a queer kind of reckoning. You've got no money in the bank, but you've got to reckon that you have and you can write other checks for a thousand dollars. Well, the policeman will soon be after you.

No, you can't reckon on something that is not a fact. But here is something which is a fact. We have died to the penalty of sin.

That's why it says in verse seven, he that has died is freed, legally freed, is discharged from the guilt of sin. We've had people in India teaching us, and I was taught it by a man in 1915, that it was possible to get rid of the flesh, possible to get rid of the old nature. It was a very tempting delilah, very attractive doctrine to dangle in front of a young Christian anxious to walk with the Lord, that it's possible to get rid of this old nature root and branch.

Any year since you've trusted Christ, you haven't got rid of that yet, have you? No. But I tried to believe that. And it was teaching given by Mr. Ross, as I mentioned last night, the Chicago Conference in 1916, that helped me to understand something of Roman faith.

But when I got to India, I learned something of the reason why God let me go through that school. Because I found some Indian brethren who had been taught this. One of the men who came to preach in our house, the Christians met in our home.

He began preaching this. He took, brought with him a little plant into the meeting. And he said, now some people believe it's enough just to take off the leaves.

Slip the leaves. Some people think they can slip the plants like that, level with the ground. But he said, I believe it's best to take it up roots and branches and throw it out.

And he threw it out through the back door. The next morning, I called an Indian brother who could interpret. And I tried to help him.

But he was beyond being helped. He had reached a plateau in Christian experience from which he could look down upon the poor mortals that were living in what he thought were the misty flats down below. But years later, I was over in his area.

And I was ministering on Romans 7. And he went to the back of the hall. I knew what had happened in the intervening years. He had learned that he hadn't got rid of the roots.

He had learned by bitter experience that the roots were still there. And then he acted. And I said to one of the brethren, tell him to come up to the house, will you? So he came up.

And as he came into my room, he threw his arms around my neck and he said, oh brother, if I'd only learned this if I'd only learned this two years ago. Though it's a it's a it's a a deceptive deliner that would lead a Christian astray to believe if he tries to believe that he's got rid of the old nature. Or to reckon that

he's dead to it.

We're not dead to it. And God never asks me to reckon that I'm dead to something that I'm not dead to. Now the next verse says, Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body.

You see, if I'm dead to it altogether and I reckon that I am dead to it, that the expectation of verse 12 would be of absolutely no purpose. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body. Here is a monarch that has been deposed, and he doesn't say don't let it dwell, for later in chapter 7 he speaks of indwelling sin.

But here he says don't let it reign in your mortal body that it should obey it in its lust over you. And then he goes on to the positive. Neither he'll be your member as instrument of unrighteousness unto sin, but yield yourselves unto God as those that are alive from the dead and your members as weapons of war.

So Martin puts it there as weapons of righteousness. The word righteousness used five times in this chapter is rather suggestive. It has to do with right character.

It's not merely righteousness in the sense of justification, but right conduct, right way of living. That's the word used here. And the apostle urges the believer to yield himself to God and his members as instruments for right way of conduct and right way of living unto God and to righteousness.

You see, Darby in his translation of the New Testament, he has verses one to eleven in one paragraph. And then verses twelve, thirteen, and fourteen come together. And he puts verses one to eleven as positional truth.

And then verses twelve, thirteen, and fourteen as practical outcome of that. That verse eleven deals with our position in Christ. Likewise, reckon ye yourselves that you have died indeed unto sin.

That's our position in Christ. Consequent upon that, he says, therefore, therefore, let not sin reign in your mortal body. And if sin is not to reign in the mortal body, then the individual must yield himself to God.

And his members must be yielded as instruments of righteousness unto God. But now, to go on to the remaining portion, look at verse fifteen. Verse ten.

Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? Perception grows out of the statement of verse fourteen. Sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace. Very well said the objector.

Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? He said, Paul, you are very wrong in not putting people under law. When Israel came up out of Egypt, God gave them the law, and he put them under law. And here, you're telling us we are not under law.

And these Gentiles saved from idolatry, you're not going to put them under law. You're only going to allow them to live a life of sin. You're giving them a license to live in sin by not putting them under law.

So, the apostle, he answers that in two ways. In verses 16 to verse 23 of chapter 6, he shows the fallacy of such an argument. And then, in chapter 7, he shows the futility of putting a person under law.

You'll notice the word in verse 16, know ye not. And again, in verse 1 of chapter 7, know ye not. So, in verse 16 of chapter 6, right to the end of chapter 7 deals with, they contain the answer to this question of, shall we sin because we are not under law, but under grace.

First, the fallacy, the folly of such a contention. Look what it says in verse 16. Know ye not that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are.

To whom ye obey, whether of sin and of death, or of obedience and righteousness, the apostle says here, what is virtually said by our Lord, no man can serve two masters. Service for two masters is an impossibility. It's not forbidden.

When the Lord says, no man can serve two masters, he's not giving, he's not forbidding such a thing. He's taking that such a thing is an impossibility. When the apostle says, you cannot eat of the Lord's table under the table of demons, that's not a prohibition.

That's a statement of an actual fact. It's impossible to have both. You cannot look east and west at the same time.

It's not a prohibition. That's a statement of fact. You can't walk forward and backward at the same time.

The thing is an impossibility. When the Lord says, no man can serve two masters, he's taking what is virtually is an absolute impossibility. Now that's the teaching which the apostle gives us here.

You say, a man, now because he's saved and he's under grace, he's going to sin because he's under grace? Well then, that shows that he's not under grace at all, that he's never known the Lord. Test him by the law of liberty. You've got lions in the zoo.

You've got all kinds of wild animals in the zoo. But they're not tested by the law of liberty. Some of them have never, never done any harm to anybody in their lives.

They were born in captivity. And they've been reared in captivity. And some of them lived to become old animals still in captivity.

And they've never bit from anybody. But that's because they're behind the iron bar. That's because they're tested by the law of liberty.

And then see what will happen to them. They won't be long before they'll show that they've got the lion nature there. Test him.

No, test him by the law of liberty. Let the, let the raven out. Test him by the law of liberty.

He doesn't come back. He's got plenty to eat outside. He's tired of having lived in the, in the ark for over twelve months.

Glad to get the chance to get out and feed on the carrion that was floating around. So Noah learned his lesson. And when he let the pigeon out, when he let the dove out, he tied a long piece of string to his leg.

He said, now here, I'm not going to let you go. I'll see that you come back, all right. And the dove goes.

And Noah gets a little bit afraid that he's not going to come back. He says, here. And he begins to pull in the kite.

Does he? No, no, no. Let the dove come free. Give it its liberty.

Give it its liberty. And it proves that it's a dove by the way it exercises its liberty. You see, that's the argument here.

No man can serve two masters. A man is either a servant of obedience, or he's a servant of sin. Either one or the other.

That's the first argument. The second argument is this. He says, you don't realize what it means to be converted.

God be thankful, he says in verse 6-17, that you were the servants of sin, but you have obeyed from the heart that mold of doctrine to which you were delivered. Not so much the mold of doctrine that was delivered to you, but that mold into which you were delivered. You've taken on that mold.

The doctrine which you heard has become formative of Christian character. And the mold, undoubtedly, is a reference to baptism, of death, union with Christ in death, burial and resurrection. That's the mold.

And you've taken on that form, the form of that mold. I've watched them in Ford factory, and they put a piece of hot metal upon that iron table, and they come down with a die upon it very hard, tremendous weight, and then in a few minutes they lift it and there comes out the handle of the car, of the car door out. And it's taken on the form of the mold.

Now that's what the apostle is here. Conversion is a very radical thing, says the apostle. You don't realize that conversion is not merely the acceptance of some truth, or merely the advent of the mind or something.

Conversion is a radical revolution in a person's life. It reorientates a man's life. He will take from the heart that mold of doctrine to which he was delivered.

There has been a real conversion. And when a man talks about liberty to sin, even though he's not under law, he is betraying the fact that possibly he's never had a real conversion in his experience. A real conversion.

You know, a real conversion is a marvelous miracle, isn't it? It's wonderful to see somebody really, genuinely convert. A brother older than I was converted when we were on our way out of India, and I was staying a few weeks at home. And he was very genuinely converted.

He worked on the farm, and every once in a while, they'd miss him. And they'd find him sitting by the halyx reading his New Testament. Carried a New Testament in his hip pocket.

Why, for years, he wouldn't have looked at a Bible for anything. Stepped into the open air, into the little town where we lived, and there on his own, carried on a gospel meeting. I wish he would do the same today, but he's not doing that now.

He's a respectable Baptist preacher today. But a congression is a wonderful change, a complete reorientation, a complete change in a man's character, in a man's life. And when a man talks about, shall we sin because we're not under law but under grace, why, he betrays the fact that he's ignorant of the real power of conversion, of true obedience from the house.

You notice that it's not so much faith that the in the epistle to the Romans. And the word is used in a variety of ways, in very many variety of ways. But here it is used of that which characterizes the weakness.

It's not so much the wickedness, but the weakness, the moral weakness, that characterizes the people to whom he was writing. They've lived a proselygate life. They've lived a life such as is pictured and portrayed for us in the first chapter.

Saved out of idolatry in Rome. And the life lives like that. When they once got converted, there's only one cure, there's only one way to go on for God, and that's by keeping going on.

When Israel came up out of Egypt, we are told there wasn't a feeble person amongst us. Not a feeble man amongst us. They all kept that.

But after a while, there was some feeble person. And they began to lag behind in the Amalekite gospel. The Amalekite gospel.

Such as were feeble amongst us. And it's when the children of God begin to lose their spiritual vitality and their spiritual vigor that the Amalekite comes behind and trips them. And they leave and go somewhere else.

Says the apostle, there's only one secret in connection with the Christian life. In view of the infirmity of your flesh, in view of the weakness of that flesh, in view of the tremendous strength of that flesh to take you back into a past life, there's only one path, he says. Yield your members.

Don't yield them as instruments of unrighteousness to iniquity unto iniquity. But yield them, he says, yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness. You see, there is a word in verse 18 that we should look at.

It's used again in verse 22. But being made free. It's the second time we have the word freedom in this epistle, in these three chapters.

Five times people talk about the five freedoms. There are five freedoms in these three chapters. The first in chapter 6 verse 7 is freedom from the guilt of sin.

But here is freedom from the power of sin. Being made free. Being made free.

Here is the work of God. Here is the person that's been liberated by the power of the gospel. Being made free.

Not that you freed yourself, but being made free. God liberated you by the gospel. You became the recipient of the power of God.

God worked in your life, and God gave you that liberty. The individual is made, he's spoken of here as being passive. Not that you, you became free in that sense, but you are made free.

God set you at liberty. God broke the shackles of sin. Then you read in verse, in verse 22, the other great argument that the apostle brings before us in that thing.

He views the future, the far distant horizon, the land of far distances. And he says here in verse 22, being made free from sin, and become servants unto God, you have your flute to the holiness, and the end is everlasting life. The believer, of course, is in possession of eternal life now.

But on the other hand, Romans always views everlasting life as the end of the journey. It's the end of the road. The end is everlasting life.

Here's the glorious conservation. What marvelous arguments the apostle brings to bear upon this question. Then can we sin because we are not under law but under grace? Well, if you say so, it means that you can only serve one master, either sin or righteousness.

You obey the one or the other. And if you say so, it means that you don't realize what true conversion really means. And if you say so, it means that you've never known what true consecration is.

And if you say so, it means that you don't realize the end, the consummation of it all. There has been something very lacking in your experience, if that's the way you look at it. And the apostle, his message would urge them, anybody who'd held such a view, such a low view, to really examine themselves to see if they were not reprobate.

Now, we come in chapter 7 to view the futility of such a statement. Not the fallacy of it, but the utter futility of putting a man under the law. And chapter 7, which should occupy much more than the time I want to give it tonight, you have it in three sections.

You have it in verses 1 to 6, the law and its authority. He says the law has power over a man as long as he lives, as long as he lives. Not until a man is in the mortuary, and his body is in a coffin, ready to be buried.

That's not the idea. But until he finds his place with Christ in death. You see, look what he says in verse 4, Therefore, my brethren, ye are become dead to the law by the body of Christ.

It's only until a person has taken his place with Christ in death, it's only until then that the law has authority over him. But the moment a man takes his place with Christ in death, that moment the law teaches to have any authority over him. It teaches to have any dominion over him.

It cannot condemn him. It cannot curse him. It can do nothing with him.

He is dying. Now, from verses 7 to 13, here we have the law and its ministry. It's a ministry of condemnation.

Now, I want you to notice the verbs here. They're all in the past tense. Look at verse 6, verse 7, I had not known sin.

I had not known lust. Sin wrought in me all manner of lusty. Verse 9, I was alive.

Sin revived and I died. Verse 11, sin took occasion by the commandment, deceived me and slew me. You see, all those are in the past tense.

Here is Paul's unconverted experience in his unconverted days. Here is Paul's experience with the law before he was converted. You say, well, that's different to Philippians 3. He says there, concerning the righteousness that was in the law, blameless.

But you see, you notice the commandment, the apostle draws attention to here, thou shalt not covet. It's not what he did, it's what he was. It's not what men saw that he did, it's what he was inwardly.

That's what the law pointed out. Here was an x-ray that reveals to him a covetous nature, showed to him what he was, showed him clearly what a nature he had. We'll never understand Romans 7 unless we emphasize the words here.

Paul was up against the fact that he was always wanting to do the wrong thing, and he groaned because he wanted to do the wrong thing. Now, I suppose we have confessed having done the wrong thing, but I wonder how many of us have groaned because we wanted to do the wrong thing. Because we have coveted something, and we've looked at a man's car, or a man's house, or we've heard of something that he has, and we've somehow or other said to him, we've said, my.

And we've never said, my, that's the old nature again, covet. It's what we are. It's the simple nature that we have.

The wrong desires that this nature has. The law of sin engraved upon our members. That's what he speaks of in later in the chapter.

It's a ministry of condemnation, a ministry of death. I don't know how some dead men get on with Romans 7 at all. Some people try to say that it's not the law of Ten Commandments here, because in verse 1 and in some other verses, you have the word law without any definite article.

Just the term law without any article, and therefore it's just the principle of law. But then we have the definite article several times, and we have the law of God several times, and we have six times the commandment, the word the commandment. There's not a doubt here that the law of God, the Ten Commandments, are before the mind of the apostle.

He quotes the one of them which I've referred to, thou shalt not covet. And he says, by that law, I die. It flew me.

It put me to death. It's a ministry of condemnation. That's the law in its ministry.

What a futile thing, then, is to put a Christian under a law like that. Now look at verses 14 to 25. Here we have the law and its inability.

The law and its inability to help the Christian. And I want you to notice the change in the tenses of the verb here. Verse 14, I am God.

That which I do, I allow me not. If then I do that which I would not. It is all the present tense.

Now, a great deal of discussion and arguments and treatises have been written on Romans 7, 14 to 25. And a great many people have said it's not the experience of a Christian at all. It's the experience of the unconverted.

It's not the experience of a believer. He says, for instance, I am carnal. How can a believer say, I'm carnal? How could Paul say, I am carnal? Sold under sin.

How could Paul say in verse 24, O wretched man that I am? Can a Christian say that? Are words like that true to a Christian's experience? Well, the answer to that is very simple. The word carnal here is different only by one letter, but it's different to the word used in 1 Corinthians 3, where the Apostle says, you are carnal. Carnally minded.

Paul is not saying here, I'm carnally minded. Paul is merely saying, using the word that he uses in 2 Corinthians 3, the fleshy tables of the heart. I am of flesh.

My body is still of flesh, and I am sold under sin. The body is not yet redeemed. That's the simple explanation of what we have in verse 14.

The Apostle recognizes that his body is still unredeemed. Chapter 8 goes on to tell us that he's waiting for the redemption of the body. Then, verse 24, O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death? That's the third reference to the body in these two chapters.

There are four in chapter 8. Now, the picture there is the picture of a man who has committed a crime. He's killed a man, and he's got the dead body of his victim tied to his shoulders, and he's walking around with that corpse tied to his back. And he says, O wretched man that I am, I've got this corpse tied to my back.

Who shall deliver me from this body of death? You see, Paul is not looking merely for deliverance from the law of sin. Paul is looking for deliverance from the body. He's looking for deliverance from this body of death.

And as I shall point out briefly, chapter 8 is the answer to that. Three reasons or four why I believe we have, what we have got here, refers to a Christian's experience. First is the, what I've already referred to, is the present sense of the verse.

It's not some experienced way in the distant past. It's what I am, what I do. The law of sin is in my members.

It's a present experience all the way through. The second, he says, that I delight in the law of God after the inward man, in verse 22. Now, the inward man is an expression which you only find twice elsewhere in the New Testament, in Colossians and in Ephesians, and undoubtedly refers to a believer.

The inward man, the inner man, which is renewed in righteousness and true holiness. No unconverted man has what they call and what the Scriptures speak of as an inward man. Our outward man perishes, says the apostle, but the inward man is renewed day by day.

That's a Christian who has the inward man. And the third, you have in the last sentence, or the last verse, so then with the mind I serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin. Here is this confusion.

He comes to this conclusion. Here is the final discovery. He makes three discoveries, three or four discoveries in this chapter.

The last conclusion he comes to is this, that the flesh will serve nothing but sin, that the flesh will own no master but sin. And the same is said in chapter eight. He owns that the flesh will recognize no authority but the authority of sin.

It's enmity against God. Let me illustrate. In the Old Testament, we have Israel in Egypt, and we have Israel in the wilderness, and Israel in the land.

They literally and physically came out of Egypt into the wilderness, didn't they? Literally and physically, they got out of the wilderness and into the land. But do we literally get out of the world like they literally and physically get out of Egypt? Do we? Did you go say over 50 years ago, did you literally and physically get

out of the world? No. Do we literally and physically get out of the wilderness to live with Christ in the heavenly? No.

You see, Israel were in the three at different periods, but the Christian is in each of them at the same time. We are in Egypt, we are in the wilderness, and we are in the land at each and the same time. We never literally get out of Egypt, we never literally get out of the wilderness.

We are in Egypt, protected by the blood of the Lamb. We're in the wilderness, provided everything provided for our journey. We're in the land, we're seated with Christ in heavenly places.

Now, Romans 7 is the wilderness. Now, what did God teach them in the wilderness? He said, I left you to hunger and to thirst in the wilderness, in order that you might learn what's in your own heart. Now, that's what Romans says.

That's the wilderness. That's the lesson of the wilderness, is to teach us what's in our own heart. He says here in chapter 7, he says, I discover that in my flesh, in verse 18, that dwelleth no good thing.

I've learned that lesson. I've learned that lesson. Not only have I learned that, he says, I've learned that sin dwells in me, and I've learned that the flesh will serve nothing but sin.

That's the lesson of the wilderness. Now, for the cry of chapter 7, 24, will you pardon me, Mr. Newman? It's too important to let this go, I think. Otherwise, I feel if we let it go here, then much of what follows will be lost.

Paul always brings his arguments to a conclusion, and immediately from the conclusion, he starts something else. Now, here is the conclusion. Oh, wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

And, chapter 8 is the expansion of death. Chapter 8 is the exposition of death. Chapter 8 is the full development of that doctrine.

In chapter 8, he shows how the coming of the Lord will deliver us from this body. He shows, first of all, of course, in chapter 8 and verse 2, that the law of spirit of life has made me free from the law of sin and death. That's the fourth freedom.

The first freedom, chapter 6 and 7. The second freedom, 6 and 18, and 16, and 6 and 22. The third freedom is freedom from the law, in chapter 7 verse 4. But, here is the fifth, the fourth of them here, in chapter 8 verse 2. They're free from the law of sin and death. Here is a book in my hand, and that law of gravity is still operating.

But, because the law of life has come in supersedes it, it keeps the law, keeps the book from falling. Now, that's the picture we have got here. The law of the spirit of life sustains the believer, keeps him, enables him.

Or, if you take a flower, and you watch it grow up and up and up and up, through the frost, sometimes it comes up, because it's got life in it. Sniff it, it'll fall immediately. It's the law of life that enables it to overcome the law of gravity.

That's the picture we And, if you get the Revised Version, the English Revised Version of 1881, you'll find that the Apostle, that the argument of the Epistle of chapter 8, is divided into five paragraphs. The first

ends with verse 11. There, you've got a reference to the quickening of the mortal body.

The second ends with verse 17, where we are going to be glorified together. The third ends with verse 23, or something like that, and there we have the redemption of the body. And, the fourth ends with verse 30, where we are conformed to the image of Christ.

You see the four paragraphs? Just like the four Gospels, each ends with the resurrection of Christ. Each covers the same ground. This eighth chapter is a most wonderful, a wonderful portion of the Word of God.

Last week, in going over it to Goodwill in Chicago, I was very interested to see, I looked up Darby's translation, and I found that he divides it into three paragraphs. He ends the first with verse 17, he ends the second with verse 30, and then verse 31 to the end is the last. When I followed his division, I looked up the word flesh, and I found that the word flesh comes in the first paragraph, verses 1 to 13, and you'll find it some 13 or 14 times there.

Oh yes, in Romans 8, the flesh is still there. Some people think, oh, let's get out of Romans 7 into Romans 8. It'll be alright if we get into Romans 8. Well, brother, the flesh is still there. Get out of the wilderness into the land, the Amalekites will still be there.

They're still there. When you come into the second paragraph, there's no reference so much to the flesh, but to the suffering, the opposition of the world. When you come to the last, it's the devil, and the roaring lion, and the howling wolf.

We are counted as sheep for the slaughter. Here are the three enemies that you have in chapter 8, the flesh, the world, and the devil. And the last of the liberties I refer to, you find in verse 21 of chapter 8, because the creature itself shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God.

I want you to notice that change, please. It's not the glorious liberty, as if it was a pleasant liberty. It's the liberty of the glory of the children of God.

It's not any pleasant liberty that we have, but it's the liberty that is going to be ours when these bodies are going to be taken, when these bodies are going to be glorified, when these bodies are going to be redeemed, when these bodies are going to be conformed to the image of Christ. Then we shall enter into the liberty of the glory of the children of God. Surely, this is a wonderful salvation that God has for us in Christ.

When he said, O wretched men, you shall deliver me from this body, he's looking on to the coming glory, the coming of the Lord. And he says, thank God this body is going to be quickened. Thank God it's going to be glorified.

Thank God it's going to be redeemed. We're going to be conformed to the image of his Son. That's why he says, thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

There's a day coming when the body is going to be redeemed. Let the God our Father in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, we pray thee bless thy worship, help us to enter into its meaning and to its message. Bless it to our hearts and remember the ascending.

Remember those unable to be with us tonight. May thy blessing be upon them. Remember the ascending at Atlantis, and all who are at the conference.

Bless thy word to them all through Jesus Christ our Lord.

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