

# What Is Salvation?

by Robert B. Thompson

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*Salvation is a lifelong journey of overcoming sin and rebellion, and it requires understanding the nature of salvation as a process.*

**Duration:** 57:30

**Scripture:** Genesis 3:16, Matthew 6:33

**Topics:** "Salvation By Faith", "Spiritual Transformation"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of coming before God, taking His body and blood, and putting our trust in Him. He highlights that through this act, God's blood will wash away our sins and bring about a transformation in our lives. The preacher warns against delaying this decision and living a wavering life, as it can lead to a lack of strength and regret in the future. He also addresses the issue of moral corruption in society and how it affects all aspects of life, including the church. The sermon concludes with a discussion on the rest of God and the goal of entering into His rest, where our enemies are subdued and we can do His will without fear or self-condemnation.

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## Transcript

So this will be our responsive reading this morning. We'll be on the overhead, Romans chapter 8, verses 1 through 7. Now we've been talking quite a bit in the last three or four weeks about the rest of God, entering the rest of God. The rest of God is the place where your enemies are subdued.

That's something to write. The rest of God is the place where your enemies are subdued, where you're able to do God's will without the feeling that, boy, I blew it again, I blew it again, I'm never going to make it, I'm never going to get loose from the world, I'm never going to lick my sins, I'm never going to quit shoving around in my own will instead of listening to the Lord. And the rest of God is the goal of the Christian life.

It's what we're to be pressing toward. And it's a battle. It's salvation.

The rest of God is salvation. That's what salvation is. Salvation is a process.

When you accept the Lord, it's like opening a gate, or giving you authority to start out on something. Now, it's very important to realize, salvation is a process. It isn't a ticket that you get when you make a certain confession.

It isn't a change of mind. All of these may play a role, but salvation itself is a process. It begins when you accept the fact that Jesus is the only Savior, the Son of God, the blood atonement for our sins.

And then you enter on what Paul calls a race. It's an enduring, there's an endurance to it. Because it isn't always interesting.

Sometimes it's very boring. Sometimes it takes a lot of character to keep going. It's not exciting.

And there are things that are difficult. But there is in all of life, whether you're a Christian or not, life, there's three crosses on the hill, not just one. And so, Christianity is a lifelong situation.

Something you do every day, and you're trying to attain something. And that which you're trying to attain, is to overcome the things that are not pleasing to God. Which are roughly divided into the love of the world, and the things of the world, that's one thing.

That bothers some people tremendously. And then two, there are the lusts, and appetites, and passions that dwell in our flesh, like jealousy, and lust, and violence, whatever covetousness, the things that are in us, that are unique to our personality, that we've inherited or acquired. And thirdly, there's that will of ours.

Men, and mules, and angels, all have wills of their own. And bringing our will into subjection to God, is sometimes very difficult. I'm sure it was for Abraham when God told him to offer his son.

You can imagine how his will, Abraham's will, entered in there. How am I going to explain this to Sarah? Where's the heir going to be? Is this God? All kinds of things. That interferes.

We want to serve God, and God says, you know, do this or do that, and our will enters in. Anybody out there have a will? Our will enters in. I don't want to do it.

So we're trying to overcome our love for the things of the world, and the violence, and passions that are in our flesh, and the desire we have to be the captain of our own soul, and the master of our own fate. And of course, that's big in America, the person that's in control. So we're being said that all the time through the media, that it's a good thing to have freedom, meaning license, to have undisciplined freedom to say and do what you think.

In our nation, we put the rights of the individual ahead of the rights of society. And that's extremely destructive, because everybody loses, the individual and society. So we have problems, but one of them is rooted in this idea of, I've got to be me, and I want to do my own thing.

I want to be in control, and I don't want anybody telling me what to do. But God's kingdom all up and down the hierarchy. You get all kinds of people that are put over you, and if you're going to please God, you have to do what they say.

Well, that kind of runs against our American feeling. Authority is a very important aspect of the kingdom of God. It's extremely important.

It's difficult for us Americans. And that includes secular authority, as well as the authority that's in the church. The secular authority sometimes is despised by Christians.

That's why you can walk the catwalks at the jail and see the Christians in there reading their Bible. Because they don't think authority is that important. But the Bible says, be subject to the king.

And then people sometimes are appointed in the church, and you know them, and you know their frailties, and you know they're not better than you, and maybe not half as good. And you think, well, why do I have to do what they say? I'm anointed. I'm able to do things.

I don't have to do what they say. Is anybody in here having problems with that? Oh, glory. It makes wonderful preaching, but hard living.

But as I'm sure in the military you see a lot of officers that don't have their head on straight. But when they say something, you have to do it. Have you found that to be true? You have to do it.

Whether they have any brains, or they're reasonable, or what, you have to do it. Everybody ought to be in the military for at least three years. I was... It does snap you out of your civilian noise quickly, I'll tell you that.

But anyway, or work in an institution like the public schools or something. If you've never worked within the structure of an organization, such as the public schools, or a large company, or the military, you're at a tremendous disadvantage in the church, because you're used to kind of flying the way you want to fly. And you can't do that in a public school.

You can't do it in the military. You can't do it in a large corporation. You can't do it.

And the pressure of that upon people is a very helpful thing. It teaches you to work in an organization, and the church is an organization. And so when people are appointed that are your friends, and you know them, and you know their shortcomings, and of course jealousy enters in, because we're only human, and so on, and you say, well, I don't have to do what they say, or I've got a way to get around this, or Lord, give me wisdom to manipulate my way out of here, or whatever.

All you cause is static. You won't get anywhere, and it harms the church. So even though we don't always see the sense of it, just remember that God loves authority.

He institutes it. He never does anything without authority and structure. And if you can find it in your heart to accept the rules that are laid down, God will bless you even if they're stupid.

Somebody tells you to do something simple, I don't think that's going to happen. But God does things in the way he does, and he cannot work when people are doing their own thing. Isn't that wonderful preaching? So we have three things that we're overcoming.

What are they? The love of the things of the world, and our own sinful nature, and the pride of life. I've got to be me. Nobody's going to tell me what to do anyway.

They're stupider than I am, and I have a better way, and I'm going to get around this thing. Well, the rest of God, the goal toward which we're pressing, is to gain victory through Jesus Christ over these three dimensions of sin and rebellion, because they keep us in unrest. See, they keep us agitated.

And God knows what he wants done. He finished everything in six days, and he's resting, and he knows how he wants everything done, and everything is done under authority, just the way God wants it. We're told in the Bible to strive to enter into that rest, so that you're not in an uproar in your own personality, trying to work out the love of the world and so on, and fighting against God.

Isn't that wonderful? That's the rest of God. We've been talking about that for some weeks now. It's found in the fourth chapter of Hebrews.

Strive, labor, to enter into that rest. And I'll bet as sure as I'm standing here that most of us this week had problems with one of those three areas. And how do we get victory? Pray and obey, for there's no other way to be happy in Jesus than to pray.

There's a trust and obey. Okay, so I got something else wrong. Trust and obey.

Alright, but if you throw a few prayers in, it helps the trust, doesn't it? Alright, now, we're in the book of Romans this morning because Romans is a masterpiece, and it tells us how to enter the rest of God. It doesn't use that term, but the eighth chapter of Romans is telling you how to enter the rest of God. Alright, now, in chapters one through five of Romans, chapters that all my students are writing, I see one drawing pictures.

Chapter one through five of Romans tells us that we're not under the law of Moses anymore, but we have been saved by another way that God has through the blood of Jesus Christ. Alright, now, what does chapter one through five of Romans tell us? Well, that is excellent, Larry. I tell you, you'd go home.

You've got it. Alright, now, that is a bomb. That is a bomb.

Right there. Because the Christian scholars, not being Jews, have not interpreted Romans that way. Chapters one through five.

I'm not into eight yet. They have said that Paul was contrasting righteous behavior and the grace of God. Not the law of Moses, but righteous behavior.

That simple misunderstanding has destroyed the church. It has destroyed the church. Because we have been taught that we're not saved by works.

To a Gentile, which most of us are, that means telling the truth, being faithful in your marriage, being morally clean, not swearing, not being a wild, violent drunk, and so on. That's what it means. We're not saved by straightening up.

But we're saved by something called grace, which spins out in the average mind as being an unconditional forgiveness that lasts from now into the unknown future. Now, what this distills down, what it trickles down into, is that I ought to do good, but whether I do or not, I'm going to go to heaven when I die because I'm saved by grace. Now, that sounds right, but it is abysmally incorrect and destructive and wrong and unscriptural.

Because it makes the grace of God an alternative to righteous behavior. Well, that's the opposite of what God wants. God didn't come with a covenant that He says, well, I couldn't do anything with people, they wouldn't do what I said, so, therefore, I'll join them and I'll take them as they are.

And this is what is believed to be the grace of God by the Evangelical Christian Church throughout the world. And it's a monumental misunderstanding. Now, some of you are yawning already, but I'm telling you this, it is that misunderstanding that accounts for the fact that we're willing to put a president into office again even though we feel his character is impeachable.

Because we just simply don't care anymore. Because the church believes it's not by works but by grace, and the only moral light the secular world has is the church, and the American church is talking about grace and rapture, neither one of which has anything to do with straightening up and living like you ought to, and this is the only moral light that our government has. Consequently, we're going to have four years and by the end of that time, we'll be fortunate if we aren't talking either Chinese or Russian.

We're in a problem in America, a moral problem, and everybody knows it. And the polls are showing that people don't care if the president is an adulterer or a thief or a liar or what he is, just as long as there are jobs and money. People know it.

The editorial, the pundits are writing about it all the time, but everyone is helpless to do anything. Well, the answer is the misunderstanding of Romans chapters 1 through 5. Maybe you still don't see the problem. The law of Moses is what Paul was talking about in Romans.

You'll even find it here in the verse we read that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us. If you will read Romans chapters 1 through 5, you will find constant reference to the law. Paul was not talking about righteous behavior.

If that were the case, then the Christian gospel of grace is an alternative to righteous behavior. The reason God gave a new covenant was because people were ungodly under the old. So God did not give us a new covenant so it's okay if we sin.

So we've misunderstood the thing. I just got through writing another book. I wrote 89 kilobytes of text in two days.

It came that fast. Just... It's called Grace and the New Covenant. Mark Overton has it now.

Ready for a galley proof. We don't understand the Bible. We don't understand what Christianity... Let me give you an example.

How do we know the Bible says the woman shall be saved in childbirth? There's a verse that says that. Did anybody in here ever read it? You know how people speculate what that means? Well, it must mean that the woman was saved because she gave birth to Jesus Christ. Or something else.

The reason we come up with these concoctions is because we don't understand the nature of salvation. What it's saying is that God has given women the authority to issue in new citizens of the kingdom. And if she does the job and does it right, it will result in her salvation because through raising children, you'll learn to enter into the rest of God.

The woman is saved in childbirth. But you see, if we don't have that perspective that salvation is a process and you might be getting saved through some ungodly situation you're in that is bringing pressure on you, not that children are ungodly. They're not.

They're a joy. They're little wonderful creatures. But they will result in your salvation.

Do you see? It isn't saying you can't be saved if you don't have children. We've got to learn to flow with God. Man! Oh well, anyway.

It's just saying that if you're a woman and you have a child, if you do the job right, it will result in your salvation because in there you will learn all kinds of things from the Lord. That's what it means. It means

just what it says.

Surprise, surprise. But you see, we've got to reconnoiter here and see that salvation is a process that you are in and I am in. Brother G., we are being saved.

We are working out our salvation. And what is our salvation? It's to get rid of the worldliness and the corruption that's in our flesh and our self-will. And that's what salvation is.

And when you get that all out of your system and it doesn't happen overnight and you can't do it by willpower, it has to be done by the Holy Spirit and the body and blood of Christ and the help of the ministry and everything else and childbearing and tribulation and persecution and in 1 Peter 4, he that has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin. So suffering in the flesh is part of the thing. What we're doing is getting ourselves saved.

Paul said to Timothy, do these things and you'll save yourself and those who hear you. Do these things. He's talking about righteous deeds.

Do these things and you'll save yourself and those who hear you. He that endures to the end shall be saved. If you get off the bus halfway through because it's too rich for your blood, you're walking out of the plan that God has given to make you a citizen of the kingdom.

Hey, that ought to be plain, but it somehow has got lost. It's no small accomplishment of Satan to divorce the grace of God from righteous behavior. That was no small achievement, but he's done it.

He's done it. So that in America, we think that the grace of God is an alternative. Now let me go through this once more.

Chapters 1 through 5 of the book of Romans are contrasting the law of Moses. I speak to those who know the law. Romans 7. And what? The grace of God through Jesus Christ.

Okay? We have interpreted those five chapters to mean what? That's right. That he is contrasting godly behavior. Well, the law of Moses includes the Ten Commandments.

It includes dietary laws, laws of leprosy, laws of pots and pans, laws of how you treat somebody that breaks into your house, laws of slavery. It's got a multitude of statutes, including the feast days. Okay? Paul is saying we're not under that anymore.

We Gentiles read that and we say, oh, it doesn't matter if I commit adultery. You see the difference? We're not understanding why if Paul understood, if Paul knows today how his Romans chapter 1 through 5 is being presented to mean that we Gentiles ought to try to be nice, but even if we do, it doesn't matter because we're saved by grace. The man would probably look up to God in dismay and say, give me another shot at this.

Because that is not. We have misunderstood the Bible. Now, that's 1 through 5. Now, can any of you young people explain that to anybody? It's not difficult, really.

There's a difference between the law of Moses and righteous behavior. The law of Moses inculcates righteous behavior, but it includes a lot of things, like you can't eat crabs or lobsters, shellfish. Okay? But that has been changed, hasn't it? Because somebody let down a bunch of stuff in a net, in a sheet, to Peter, and I suppose there was a porker or two in there.

If there wasn't, I sure have not been kosher for most of my life. I like sausage. And Bill Brown, you know that guy, you know what he was doing yesterday morning, waving a sausage in front of me, taking a bite out of it, waving it in front of me.

That's my friend, Bill Brown. He knew what he was doing. I'll get back at him sometime.

But that's the law of Moses. No, we're not under that. We're not under that.

If you want to eat sausage, go ahead and eat it. I'll see you over at Scripps. Under the big camera.

Okay? But it's nothing with God. He said to Peter, what God has cleansed don't call common. You see? You see the tremendous difference from when Paul gets over and starts talking about sin.

It starts talking about adultery and murder and gossip and slander and witchcraft and things like this. He's not talking about the law of Moses. He's talking about a higher law, the eternal moral law of God, of which the law of Moses was a small, negative, abridged form that served for a time until Messiah came.

But you see, you think, well, you're drawing a long bow on this or setting up straw men. I'm not. You read any commentary you want to.

Taylor's wonderful on this. In Romans chapter 5, one of the verses, Taylor says, but now God has shown us a better way to get to heaven, not by doing good or anything like that. I mean, I'm not making this up.

This is why we're going to have the same president for another four years, probably. I mean, these things have practical consequences. They're not academic.

They have destroyed this one misunderstanding. And if you don't think that the churches believe that grace is an alternative to righteous behavior, you go tell some of them that, you know, the apostles said that if we're full of strife and clamor and these things, we can't inherit the kingdom and see what their response is. They'll tell you, ah, but I'm saved by grace and you're preaching works.

It's the word works that is at issue. When Paul uses it, he means the law of Moses. When we use it, we mean righteous behavior.

That's a single misunderstanding. That's one through five. Did you get that, Grace? Do you have that salt in your eyes? Now, when we get into chapter 6, Paul issues a disclaimer.

The whole chapter of Romans 6 is a disclaimer because Paul knew that people, even in his day, were misunderstanding what he was saying and were saying, oh good, this grace is wonderful, therefore I'll go out and sin and grace will abound. And Paul says, what, their damnation is just or something like that. But anyway, in Romans 6, he says, what then? In other words, what are we to conclude from these five chapters? Shall we sin? And he goes on and he says, speaking to Christians, in the sixth chapter of Romans, he said, if you choose to sin, you're going to die.

This isn't the conclusion that you're free to sin. In fact, he says, the wages of sin is death. And that's not talking about the unsaved.

It's talking about Christians. If we Christians choose to serve sin, we die spiritually. If we choose to be the slave of righteousness, we gain eternal life.

Romans 6, read it. That's what it says. Very plainly and in several verses.

Okay, that's Romans 6. Romans 6 is a disclaimer. What is he disclaiming? He's disclaiming the idea that what he's teaching means you can sin and get away with it. And he tells you in Romans 6, if you sin, you're going to die.

And he doesn't mean physically. He means spiritually. The wages of sin is death.

Everybody dies, whether they're righteous or sinful. So he's not talking about physical death. He's talking about spiritual death.

And it's true. If you as a Christian continue in sin, you will die spiritually. You will slay your own spiritual nature.

You will slay your resurrection. You're going to reap what you sow. Man, if there's anything that needs to be broadcast in the church today, it's that God's people are going to reap what they sow.

You sow sin, you're going to reap corruption in the day of resurrection. And you see, all these verses are waltzed around by teachers that say, yes, but that can't apply to Christians because Christians are saved by grace. Therefore, it must be applying to the unsaved.

But that makes no sense because the epistles are written to the saints. But that's where we are. That's where we are in American theology.

Those things that Paul wrote about, you're going to reap what you sow, cannot apply to Christians because we're saved by grace. You see the immense confusion? That's why that sword of judgment is over America because we are in a sinful nation. In 2 Chronicles 7.10 it says, My people, which are called by my name, My people, not the Democrats, My people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves and pray and seek my faith and turn from their wicked ways, I will do what? I'll heal their land.

I will heal their land. But why are we in America not about to do this? Because we're saved by grace. Humble themselves and pray and repent.

But they're doing it in spite of their theology. If they got their theology together with their action, how much more effective it would be. But while they're down there humbling and praying, they're thinking, well, even if I don't, I'm still saved by grace.

Woo! It's murder. It's kind of like somebody discovered the world was round instead of flat. It's that kind of thing.

It's a major, major problem in our country. And it affects all of us. Because when God's judgment comes on a nation, it affects the economy, it affects education, it affects art forms, business, every area of life is touched by moral corruption.

And we Christians are hurt along with everybody else because our nation is sinful. And it's sinful because the church has been deceived. Satan has done a number on us and we've been deceived.

All right. So much for chapter 6, which is a disclaimer. And you know what that's about.

Okay, it'll be on the tape anyway if it's too fast for you. All right. Now, chapter 7. Chapter 7, and it starts off, Paul says, I speak to those who know the law.

See, Paul's talking all the time about the law, the law of the law of the law. He's talking about law. When he says works, he means works of the law of Moses.

That's where the man was coming from. Picture the apostle Paul. This is where he was coming from.

He was raised an Orthodox Jew. And here God tells him the circumcision's out, the feast days are out, it was Sabbath day and all the rest of it was one of those feast days. You're not under that.

You're under something different. Can you imagine that one man within his personality was able to make this kind of a turnaround? None of the other apostles did. Peter was messed up and the rest of them just left him alone.

One man made the, and an Orthodox Jew with that, made the transition from Moses to Christ. So naturally he's talking about it all the time. But in the epistles he kept saying if you keep on sinning, for example Ephesians he says a covetous man, speaking of Christians, will not inherit the kingdom of God.

Well, the devil comes along and says thou shalt not surely die. But I'm here to tell you, if you don't get the victory over covetousness, you're not going to inherit the kingdom of God. Why? Because there's no covetousness in the kingdom of God.

If you're a fornicator, you're not going to inherit the kingdom of God. That's what the Bible says. I didn't make it up.

Satan says you will not surely die. It won't happen. It's not like that.

God is love, and you're saved by grace, etc., and so on, all this stuff. The Bible says if you fornicate, you will not inherit the kingdom of God. And that's written to Christians.

That's not written to the unsaved. The unsaved aren't going to inherit the kingdom of God in any case, whether they fornicate or they don't. It's obviously written to Christians because otherwise the implication is hey, unsaved person, quit fornicating and you'll inherit the kingdom.

See, that's the implication if it were written to the unsaved. It's written to Christians. As a Christian, if you want to enter the kingdom, stop your fornicating.

Stop your lying. Stop your gossip. Stop your slander.

Stop your agitation. Stop your party loyalty. Stop your hatred and your murder and your drunkenness and your witchcraft if you want to inherit the kingdom.

You'll be saved if you do these things. Are we saved by works? No. We're not saved by doing them.

Let me see if I can explain it. When salvation comes to you, you don't say well, now let me see. I'm going to get myself all ready.

I'm going to quit drinking. I'm going to quit chewing. I'm going to quit doing these things and I'll get saved.

I'm not saying that. That's not right. You can't haul yourself up to heaven with your own bootstraps.

That's not the way it works. The way it works is you come to Jesus Christ as you are. It's a come-as-you-are party.

Okay? You come to Jesus Christ as you are. Just as you are. You don't wait until you get your programs straightened out.

You come just as you are, sin and all. Okay? And you come to the Lord and you say, Lord Jesus, I thank you for shedding your blood for my sins. I accept the forgiveness that comes through the blood and I repent that I have lived this way in the world.

It's been wrong and I realize that and I'm sorry and I come and I receive the forgiveness through the blood. Okay? And what does God do? Say straighten up and I'll save you? No. No.

He does not do that. He washes you in His blood and accepts you as you are. You're baptized in water as a sign that you have quit the world and you're going to enter the kingdom of God.

Are you saved? Yes. As of that moment, if the Lord were to come, you will not be destroyed because you believe and you are baptized. And that's plain and simple and anyone can understand it.

What's gone wrong is what's next. What's next is the Lord begins to work with your personality. The Spirit begins to lead you in paths of righteousness.

Now, if you walk in the light of that leading, the light, then you have fellowship with God and the blood of Jesus Christ keeps on cleaning, keeps on cleansing you. If you sin, you confess your sin and the Lord is faithful to cleanse you from all unrighteousness. That's what we call growing in grace, growing in the Lord.

The Lord is doing it. But the results, people can see. They say, oh, there's a new creation coming forth.

Well, are you saved by works? No. You're being saved by the Lord. Does it work out in righteousness? Absolutely, because it's the righteousness that is itself the salvation.

What are we saved from? Saved from the world. Saved from the works of the flesh. Saved from our self-will.

That's what salvation is. So, if we say, well, I've accepted Christ, but I'm certainly not going to give myself over to a program like this, then what you have done is say, I'm not going to get saved. Now, that's a little subtle, but it's not so subtle you can't understand it.

We don't save ourselves by acting righteously. The process of salvation causes us to act righteously. If there's no change in us, we are not being what? Saved.

Now it makes sense. He that endures to the end shall be saved. She shall be saved in childbirth.

Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. In so doing, you will save yourself and those who hear you. It all makes sense.

But it doesn't mean that we start off without Jesus, without the Holy Spirit, and earn our way, and that's what the Jews were trying to do with the law of Moses. If I keep the law perfectly, God is obligated to save me. And so Paul says the salvation, then it would be by debt.

God would owe it to you. But it's a gift. You see how it comes together? It's not impossible to understand.

We don't save ourselves by works. The salvation produces the works. If it doesn't produce the works, there's no fruit.

If there's no fruit, what happens? We're cut out of the vine. And it's consistent through the Gospel. It's consistent from Genesis to Revelation.

There's no change in God's goal for man. The difference in the covenant we're under is that the demands are stricter, but the grace is more abundant. The Jews had a certain amount of demands on them to observe the Sabbath day.

God says to us, abide in me all the time. We abide in the Lord all the time. See, the demands are greater.

He that commits adultery, I will attend commandment. Okay, but under our covenant, it's if you look at somebody in the wrong way. See, it's a greatly increased demand under our covenant for righteous behavior, but there's greatly increased virtue from God through the body and blood of Jesus, the Holy Spirit.

And the ministry, the testimony of the apostles, all these things, the born-again experience that the Jews did not have. So the demands on them were much less than what they are. So this is a better covenant because the law is written in the heart and in the mind.

It wasn't written in the heart and mind of the Jew. He had certain things which he was to do. It kept the Orthodox busy, I'm going to tell you that, washing their hands and preparing their meals and all these things.

Everything had to be done according to the law. God had His way of keeping their minds on Him. But as a Christian, we feel, oh, I'm free, I'm free.

No, you're not free. You're married to Christ. The Jew was not, he was married to God in a kind of a way, but we have an intense marriage, an intense union with the Lord Jesus Christ, so much so that all of our thoughts and all of our words and all of our conduct is to be conducted in His presence and in union with Him.

So it's an infinitely stricter covenant with infinitely increased grace. It's a better covenant based on better promises. But the goal of God from the time He created man was that man would be in His moral image.

So God never gave us a covenant with a different goal. The goal of the covenant under the old covenant was that man do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with God. The goal under the new covenant is that man love mercy, live righteously, and walk humbly with God.

God does not change His expectations concerning man. But you see, we have changed the goal. And we have said God's not interested in that anymore because that's worse.

Complete misunderstanding. Now, what is chapter 7 saying? In chapter 7, now remember, Paul has said, Jewish brothers, let me tell you something. We have another covenant.

Moses is out. Christ is in. Believe it.

And he bases it on Abraham. Chapter 6, realizing that he could be misunderstood, which he has been on the grand scale, he said, don't translate what I'm telling you into the fact that you're free to sin because if

you choose to sin, you're going to die. Because the wages of sin is death.

That's addressed to Christians, not to non-Christians. All unsaved people, whether they sin or not, they're dead spiritually. They're already dead spiritually.

So how could it be applied to an unsaved person? It's talking only to Christians. Alright, in chapter 7, here we go. Are you with it? No? Okay, so here we go.

Alright, now, chapter 7, what he's doing is calling to their attention, to Jews. I speak to those who know the law. Chapter 7, he's talking now to Jews.

I speak to those who know the law. And he begins to tell us that, alright, so we know we're not supposed to be the slave of sin, but we have a law of sin in our members. And he's saying to the Jews, you recall, you know, you're not supposed to be covetous.

The law says not to covet. But then the law comes to me, and what does it do? It just makes me more aware of sin. And all the law, instead of helping me, it kills me.

Why? Because the law said, thou shalt not covet, but it didn't give us any way to overcome the coveting. It just put you on notice that you were under condemnation because you were coveting. Now you could get out your goat or your bull and go up to the tabernacle and have it killed by the priest and make an atonement for your sin, but next week you're out coveting again.

And that's what Paul is saying. Who will deliver me from the body of this sin and death? I'm going nuts here. I want to do right.

I've got a law in my mind that I want to please God. I've got this desire not to covet, not to commit adultery, not to lie, not to steal, not to be going against God's will. I've got all this, but I find something else in my body that's saying, do it, do it, do it.

That's Romans chapter 7. Think you can repeat that? That's the I don't want to do it, but I'm doing it chapter. The I don't want to do it, but I'm doing it chapter. Okay? Someone asked me one time, in fact it was Brother Cloud who asked me one time, he said, is that chapter applying to Christians or non-Christians? And I had to do some thinking about that, but that chapter, Romans 7, is applying to everybody.

That's true of everybody. Whether you're saved or not, you've got sin in your nature, and if you're a Christian, in particular, you don't want it there, but it's there. And it's there in everybody.

And accepting Christ doesn't leave you without a sinful nature. How many have found that to be true? Accepting Christ doesn't leave you without a sinful nature. I mean, you still, when you come down off the honeymoon stage, you realize, whoa! That same old Irish temper is still there.

That same old deceitfulness is still there. That same old covetousness. Isn't that so? Or did you have a different experience from me? Is that what happened? Well, that's the way it is with me.

I've been battling it for a while. But thank God, it's not like under the law a hopeless battle. And that's what brings us to chapter 8. Now, chapter 8 is the resolution of all this that's gone before.

Paul is building now on the fact that we're not under the law but under grace. And that does not mean that we are free to sin. And we have a sinful nature.

He's building on this. And so he says in Romans 8, there is therefore... What am I going to conclude about this? I've got the sinful body. I want to be delivered from it.

I've got a sin nature. I know if I follow it, I'm going to die. What do I conclude? There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.

Now, let me explain the difference between condemnation and conviction. Or do you already know? Do you already know the difference between condemnation and conviction? Would you know one from the other if it happened to you? Alright. Condemnation operates like this.

And I don't think you hear too much condemnation in this church. If I get up here and I preach and I say, look, all you people, you're all adulterers, you're all liars, you're all this, you're under the wrath of God and you better recognize it. What is that? That's condemnation.

Because it's unrelieved. You see? It's unrelieved. You go on and say, man, that's right.

He got me right. Boy, my destiny is not great. I better watch television or do something else.

I don't need that. But if the preacher gets up and says, look, according to Romans, the first chapter, gossip is worthy of death. This is gossip and slander.

They would do such a thing and they're worthy of death. Okay. And we say, God does not want that in His kingdom.

He does not want gossip and slander in His kingdom. Why don't we... We're going to be taking communion this morning. We have gossip and slander.

Why don't we come down and tell the Lord about it? Okay? Now, let's say that you're sitting there and you're saying, oh, yesterday I was on the phone for half an hour and I ran down seventeen saints of the church to my very best friend who I know will never tell anybody else. Alright, they all woe is me. Now, which is that? Now, you were told about gossip and slander that Romans 1 says they would do such things and they're worthy of death.

And you think, man, I did it. And, you know, oh, you know, is that condemnation or conviction? Nobody's condemning you. They're opening up the fountain of release for you.

Now, if somebody gets up and they say, you're okay and we're saved by grace and don't worry about it, good old Jesus will take care of it, what do you call that? That's right. That is his monkey business. That's just trying to make everybody feel good so they'll come back to church and give a lot in the offering.

That's what that is. So, please, don't get, if you are in Christ Jesus, you could be as full of gossip and slander. Maybe God has never brought that to your attention.

But you just, everybody knows if you want to get the dirt, who to call up, you know, and that's you. You're not under condemnation until God points it out to you. You're invited to come and get rid of it and you say, it's so much fun, I wouldn't know what to do if I couldn't talk to the girls at the laundromat, you know, or whatever, or on the phone.

And you willfully say, I know it's wrong, but I'm going to do it anyway because I like that so much. It means more to me than any old Bible. Then, you're beginning to walk out from under the blood.

Because it says in 1 John 1, 7, if we walk in the light, and you see, light has come to you then. Oh, that's sinful. I didn't realize that.

Light has come. And if you, that still didn't put you under condemnation. But it might have put you under conviction.

So please, make a difference between, in your mind, between condemnation and conviction. If you feel bad because of the preaching, because you got nailed on something, here's the altar, here's the fountain that's open for sin and all uncleanness. Here's the way that God has made for you.

And if you come and take advantage of that, there's no condemnation. There may be conviction. You can come and walk out of here on hinds feet, washed clean in the blood of the Lamb.

That's what God has made. But condemnation is when somebody says, you're a bad person and what you're doing is bad and you're going to go to hell. Then they have offered you no solution.

It's a form of judgment on the person doing it. They're not the same thing at all. But don't expect to come to church if someone is preaching in the Spirit and you hear something that you know you're doing wrong.

If you don't when you go to church, something's wrong because that's what it's all about. We're supposed to be finding out what we need to do to press into the rest of God. Alright, there is no condemnation as long as you are in Christ Jesus.

Now that doesn't mean that ten years ago you went through the four steps of salvation. It doesn't mean that. It doesn't mean at one time you said, I believe Jesus is the Son of God and that He was raised from the dead.

That isn't what it means to be in Christ Jesus. To be in Christ Jesus means that you are living today right now in the presence of the Lord. As far as you know, you're doing what God wants you to do right now.

That's what it means to be in Christ Jesus. And if you are doing what you believe to be God's will for you this morning, as far as you know, then you are in Christ Jesus and there's no condemnation. You're not perfect.

You're not totally free from sin and self-will. But you're without condemnation according to the Word of God. Because God does not want you condemned and full of guilt because the joy of the Lord is your strength.

The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus, and I'm almost through here. The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. What does that mean? It means we're under law for one thing.

What's the name of the law? The law of the spirit of life. How does it set us free from the law of sin and death? How does it do that? First of all, what is the law of sin and death? I'm almost through, kids. The bell will ring in a minute.

We'll be out for recess. No, we're not. We're going to take communion.

That's right. Well, that's another kind of recess. All right.

Now, what is the law of sin and death? It's the law of Moses working together with what? The sin that's in your flesh. The sin that dwells in me. That is in my flesh.

We're talking about a sin that dwells in the flesh. All right. The law of sin and death is the law of Moses working together with the stuff that dwells in your flesh.

You can call them demons or chemicals or whatever you want or whatever they are. They're there, right? All right. Now, why is it called the law of sin and death? What? Right.

That's right. But think about what Paul said in Romans 7. How does it work out in you for death? The law of Moses working together with these unclean things in your flesh. How does that work out in you for death? And what's the result? Yeah, you die in the sense, you remember like Adam and Eve did.

They did not want to get near God. See, the law, they ate of the tree of the law, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, which is the law. They got the knowledge that they were doing what they were doing was wrong and the inevitable result was they're ashamed.

And so, it keeps us away from God. And if you're here this morning, and I don't know all of you, if you're here this morning, God does not want you walking in condemnation. If you know something you should be doing and you don't do it, then you're kind of like this with God.

Boy, I hope I don't die because if I do, I don't know what I'm facing, this kind of thing. I hope the Lord doesn't catch up with me. God does not want you living that way.

You don't have to live that way. You can live with the knowledge that you are pleasing God perfectly. Let me emphasize that.

You can live with the knowledge that you are pleasing God perfectly. There's no other way for a son of God to live. The church has been under condemnation and they've taught themselves that as long as we're in the flesh, we have to sin.

They've taught themselves that nobody does God's will. Well, the day for that lie is over. God's will is perfectly plain and within your grasp to do if you'll do what you're supposed to do.

God does not want you or me living with the idea that there's stuff I know I should be doing, but I'm not. That's a crazy way to live. You can't have fun in the world and you can't have fun in God.

You're miserable in both realms. You're afraid of hell and so you can't really go out and tie one on like you might like to. I don't know.

Days are gone for me. I wouldn't want to do that if I had the opportunity. But let's say that you're just lusting to go over and spend three weeks in Las Vegas and just go crazy.

But you're afraid, oh man, then I'll go to hell. But you're afraid also of being too close to God because you're afraid of what He might say. That is no way to live.

That's miserable. You're not happy in God and you're not happy in the world. Now look, there's nothing in the world for you.

You don't want to go out and sin and be caught dead in the middle of it, drop dead in the middle of it and then face the Lord and the Lord said you didn't use your talents or something. You don't need that. You don't need outer darkness.

You don't need to be saved by fire if you were going to be saved because you have no idea of the terrifying experience that being saved by fire is. It doesn't mean you get a two-story mansion instead of a three-story. It means your character is truncated.

You find yourself in some lower cell in the spirit realm being instructed by angels maybe for a very, very long period of time. You have to start life over again because all your maturity and all your accomplishments in this world are stripped away. I'm talking about those that are saved.

I'm talking about being saved just by fire. And your memory's gone and you start over again as a little child. This being saved by fire is just that.

It's a terrifying thing. And you don't want that. You do not want that.

Take my word for it. God wants you to walk out of this church this morning with the understanding that you are right in His sight and if He were to come right now you can look up to Him with a clear conscience and if you're not that way you need to get that way. Today, this morning, we're going to be taking communion.

When you get down at this altar, if you've got something that is keeping you from a clear conscience before God, then take the communion at the altar. The ushers will serve you at the altar. And you tell the Lord Jesus that you're ready now to shell down the corn.

There's enough of this fooling around half in, half out, neither fish nor fowl, not serving the Lord, not serving the devil. You're not hot. You're not cold.

And your only thing is to be spit out of the Lord's mouth. The Bible means what it says. God wants you in the center of His will and you can be there.

It's no big deal. It's no big deal. That's a message God gave me for the church many years ago in a dream.

He wants all of His people to be overcomers. It's no big deal. The water's only waist deep.

You don't have to be an Olympic swimmer to make it. People are drowning spiritually in water that is only waist deep. If you'll just put your feet down on the Word and say, Thank God I receive You, Lord Jesus.

And I mean if you're a Christian. Christians need to accept Christ. I want to be in You, Lord.

And here I am. I'm a mess. Do with me as you will, but I love You and I receive Your salvation.

If you'll do that this morning, you'll walk out of here just as righteous as anybody in the house in God's sight. I didn't say you were perfected. I didn't say you were perfected.

I said you did what God wants. Because God has the power to change you. You cannot change yourself.

God has the power to change you. All that He asks of you is that you present yourself before Him, take His body and blood, put your trust in Him, and His blood will wash you from all sin. And He will change you.

Not overnight, but He will change you. But if you never come to that point of decision, you're going to fool around, waver your way through life until you end up in a nursing home and you don't have enough personal or emotional strength then to do anything at all. You're just waiting and hoping the Lord won't be too hard on you.

Hey, that's no way to live. And you don't have to. It's possible to live in the center of God's will.

It's not hard at all. Praise the Lord. That's all the teaching.

I was going to go on now for another four hours, but I decided not to because I think there's people... When I get wound up like this, usually there's people that need help. I'm going to ask Andy to start getting the communion ready now if he will.

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