

Freedom From Sin - Part 4

by Roy Hession

Roy Hession's sermon explores the believer's liberation from sin and the law through the death and resurrection of Christ, emphasizing the importance of living under grace.

Duration: 47:17

Scripture: Romans 6:14, Romans 7:9, Romans 7:24 - 8:2, 1 Corinthians 15:56

Topics: "Freedom From Sin"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the struggle between a person's self-centered nature and their desire to follow spiritual laws. The speaker emphasizes the importance of good intentions but also highlights the need for action and obedience. They explain that attempting to be a Christian solely through obedience to commandments can actually bring out the worst in a person. The speaker references the apostle Paul and Jesus' death as a means to overcome this struggle and emphasizes the need for genuine repentance and walking with God.

Transcript

Romans, chapter seven. Know ye not, brethren, for I speak to them that know the law, how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth? For the woman which hath a husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth. But if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband, so that then if while her husband liveth she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress.

But if her husband be dead, she is free from that law, so that she is no adulteress though she be married to another man. Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ, that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should be for fruit unto God. For when we were in the flesh, the Bible's version, the passions of sin, which were aroused by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death.

But now we are delivered from the law, having died in that wherein we were held, that we should serve in newness of spirit and not in the oldness of the latter. What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law.

For I had not known coverty, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet. But sin, taking occasion, or getting an opportunity by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of coverty. You have three

different English words for the same Greek word.

It was the glory of those translations of the authorised version that the English language was so rich you could use only sorts of different words to express one Greek word, and it is a rich language. But that policy of theirs has rather confused one or two important places, and here it is. It isn't coveting lust and concupiscence as one word.

And of course you get the meaning there. I had not known sin, but by the law. I had not known coveting, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.

But sin, getting an opportunity by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of coveting. For without the law, sin was dead. For I was alive without the law once.

But when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died. And the commandment which was ordained to life, I found to be of the dead. For sin, getting an opportunity by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me.

Wherefore the law is holy and just, and the commandment holy, just and good. Was then that which is good made deafer to me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, were it deafened me by that which is good.

That sin, by the commandment, might become exceeding sinful. For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, soul unmerciful. For that which I do, I allow not.

For what I would, that do I not. But what I hate, that do I. If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. Now then, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwells in me.

For I know that in me, that it is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing. For to will is present with me. But how to perform that which is good, when it comes to it, I find not.

For the good that I would, I do not. But the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

I find then the law, that when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the evil man. But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.

O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin. Now as we come into Romans 7, we see that Paul is developing his message and he's wanting to tell us that in the law of Jesus we're not only free from sin, but free from the law which gives sin its strength.

Have you got that conception clear in your mind? The law which gives sin its strength. Keep your finger in Romans 7, turn to 1 Corinthians 15 at the end of the chapter once again, and look at that verse. Verse 56 of 1 Corinthians 15.

The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. And that's more than one point of view, as we shall see. But we've seen one basic one.

We've seen that sin isn't merely the initial act, but that which gets built upon it. Its power, its chief power lies in its power and ability to condemn it. What gives sin its power to accuse? The law.

The law. This is what I ought to be. This is what I've done.

And the law gives sin and Satan its power to condemn. And the more you put yourself under law, the more you make your relationship with God dependent on your obedience to moral principles, the more you will be under the dominion of sin. For you've not measured up.

And you'll get the more accused. So the strength of sin is the law. And Paul sees that we must understand ourselves, as I say, not only to be free from sin, but free from the law which gives sin its strength, and live daily under grace.

In Romans 6, his theme is, in Jesus you have died to sin. In Romans 7, his theme is, in the law of Jesus, you have died to the law which gives sin its strength. And so we are really seen to be gloriously free.

Now he begins by stating the great doctrine of liberty from sin and the law, and illustrates it in a very helpful graphic way. That statement and illustration takes us as far as verse 6, verses 1 to 6. And then, verses 7 to the end, he tells us what it's like in experience to be under the law, and how utterly futile it is to look for peace or victory while under the law. And he doesn't only tell us what it's like in experience, I think it's right to say that he's giving us his own experience under the law, and the futility of trying to find God, merely by the obedience to moral principles.

You are available. At least not as God wants them to obey. And if your hope was to find God that way, you just never will.

And Paul is concerned to make that really clear. He gives us his own experience. A very easy way to say in the early days of this epistle, we have been justified by faith apart from the works of the law.

But everybody is a legalist by nature. All of us try that way. And it's not enough just to be told that God has decided that salvation is by grace and not by works.

We've got to perhaps sometimes experience what it is to try to get it by works. And we've got someone who needs someone to tell us what it's like to try, as Paul does. And then it is we're only too glad to appreciate this gratuitous salvation, this gratuitous justification which is reckoned of a man who admits he's utterly wrong and repents, and comes as a sinner to where grace can reach him, where Jesus can meet him.

Now, Paul gives us a very graphic illustration. We touched on it a bit yesterday. He says, now it's a known fact that the law of the land could only have dominion over a man as long as he's alive.

The laws of England do not apply to the people in the savagery. In particular, does not the law any longer apply not only to a man who's died, but who has died by the action of that law? In a double sense, the law can have no more claim on such a man. The law obviously in a double sense can't apply to a man who's been hung for murder.

Not only is he dead, but he's dead by that very action and the law can't ask him anything more for that crime but what's already been done. And that's what he said. So the only way by which you and I can get free from the dominion of the law and therefore from the dominion of sin is by death.

And this is the illustration he gives us of a married couple. Don't think they're very happy. And that woman has this difficult old man, this difficult husband and she's bound by the law of the land to him.

The law says he is your husband. The law says you are responsible for caring for him, for sticking to him and for taking responsibility for him. It's very difficult, but the law binds her to him as long as either he or she is alive.

And she's got nothing to do but to try and make the best of a bad job, try and get along with him and try to get him perhaps to improve some. But he seems to be incorrigible. He's a nasty old man.

He may not be old, but we talk about my old head, which is very convenient for the preacher because he's a picture of what the Bible calls our old man. Maybe she could conceive of a much happier life with somebody else. She might have allowed herself, as long as I'm sure, to have allowed her mind to go to somebody else.

But no, she's bound by the law to that husband. And she's not free to contract another marriage obligation as long as that husband's alive. One day, he does.

Never thought he would. And at last, she's free to be married to another. And there's just the other one, the right one, with whom she knows she can be gloriously happy.

And the wonderful thing she sees about this one is still her having to be responsible for the old man as before. This one is responsible for him, one of the great, great guys in the world. And sometimes in marriage, it's very often a man's fault.

I've heard women say, my husband won't take responsibility. I have to take all the responsibility. And men, if you ever complain of your wife bossing you, search your own heart.

If you ever complain of her not wearing the trousers, take me over, search your own heart. It may well be it's because we men don't rise to our responsibility. We don't rise to it, panning the family budget as we should.

We don't take the lead. We want to be considered the head of the house, but we don't rise to the responsibility. And therefore the wife has to do it.

And it seems to me that was the case in this first marriage. She had to be responsible for him. Ah, but in this new marriage, this new husband, he's a husband indeed, he is responsible for everything.

And the government is gloriously on his shoulders. And so she's free to be married to this other one when the first one has died. Now the interesting thing about the marriage relationship is the Bible says they train shall become one flesh.

They're two people, distinct people, and yet they are one person, according to God's view of marriage. And this is very interesting because the apostle Paul sometimes talks of himself as two people, sometimes as one person, just as you do, really, in that you talk about the Joneses. Sometimes you talk about John and Jane, two people, sometimes the Joneses, one person.

And Paul talks of himself sometimes as two people. There are two people in Paul, as in you. And this doesn't only relate to the same, but to the unsafe two.

There's first of all in man the moral self, the moral self. The man's got a part of him that's got a moral sense. The part of him that's got a conscience, that approves the right and condemns the wrong, and even condemns himself.

And there's also that will that is capable of responding to moral life, capable of wanting to do the right. In this passage, Paul talks about I, I myself, the inward man, the mind. Now, I don't think Paul is dealing with the psychological makeup of man.

He does in some places. He's got a very clear-cut definition of man's makeup, body, soul, spirit. But I don't think he's dealing with that here.

Just take him as you find him. We see two people. This first man, it would seem that Paul regards that as the truest man of him.

But there's another person in Paul. He calls this other thing in him sin that dwelleth in me. You see, it's no longer I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

Because there's an I that wants to do the right, but another thing in me, sin that dwelleth in me. Now, this sin that dwelleth in him, in-dwelling sin, are not sinful action, but the real treasure that produces them. It's not the manufactured goods, it's rather the factory that produces the goods.

And we must remind ourselves that the simplest definition seems to be contained in the fact that I is the central letter of the little word sin. S-I-N. Sin, the root, the factory, is simply that ever-occurring principle that I make myself the center of my life.

Self-centeredness is the source of sin. If you want to get a real array of human sins, get a dictionary. And simply go through all those compounds of the word self.

Self-interest, self-blogging, self-pity, self-indulgence, and doubtless many, many others. That sin, what's that great word in the general confession? By the way, you know, D.R. Davis wrote a book on the general confession, and he had typed it down, Peacock says. It's such a humbling confession of what we are.

It goes to the very heart of it. Well, there he says, oh, John, you'll have to give me this. You know your prayer book backwards in a way I don't.

I'm not always in attendance, or preaching in the Church of England church, or usually very often, but not always by long way. We have offended against thy holy laws. Because we've followed too much the desires of our own hearts.

That's the cause. The reason why I offend against his holy laws is that I have followed too much the desires of my own heart, and I've only got to do what I want to do. I'm only going to follow my own wishes, consider my own interests, and you will end up by breaking every one of the ten commands.

Self-centeredness is not polite. It's damnable sick. And it leads to every transgression from the most respectable to the grossest.

And I've got this other thing in me. There's a moral I that would approve the right, but there's another one there. He elsewhere calls it the flesh.

Now Paul's use of the word flesh is very frequent. He doesn't mean, on some occasions he might, but the great majority of cases he doesn't mean flesh, your body. Someone has said if you want to know what the flesh is in Paul's writings, drop off the last H and spell it backwards, S-E-L-F.

It's once again that nature which is incurably centered on its own rotten little self. It is that nature with which I was born. I was born with a nature that has its back to God and is centered on itself.

Now these are the two men that are important. They're in every man. They're in the unconverted, these two men.

The moral self and the flesh in Greg's literature. And they're in the same, except that in the man who's saved, something's happened in that moral self. He's been born anew.

He's not merely got a nature that can in other dimly approve the right, but he's got a nature to which the right is native. Born with God. But even that renewed nature by itself hasn't got power.

And therefore what we're going to read in the following verses applies both to the unsaved and the saved. There's been a great deal of discussion, as you doubtless know, as to whether Paul was giving his experience of a saved man or an unsaved man. Was he saved but not sanctified yet? Or not saved at all? I don't think it's on that tactic.

Either way. He's concerned to show what the effect of trying to live by the law is on the unregenerate and also on the regenerate. The only difference is that the sorrows of the regenerate of trying to live by law are about ten times worse than the unregenerate.

Because the unregenerate, well, it isn't too great a sorrow to fail to keep the promises you make. And if you don't measure up to the standards you espouse, but you're a regenerate. It's a misery indeed.

So I'm not sure that Paul is trying to teach a theory of sanctification. I think we've just got to keep right to the scripture. He's on a theme.

Showing that we can be free not only from sin, but from the law which gives sin its strength. Well, here's Paul. Now, the moral man is married to the flesh, to sin that dwelleth in him, to the old man.

He's bound by the law of God to it. It's you that's done it. You are responsible for the man you are.

You can't disclaim responsibility. You can if you like try and divide. It's not I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

It's not me that does it, says the woman about my husband. But then you're bound by it to your husband. And you can't get free from your husband.

And you're responsible for him the rest of the day. And that's how, what it is, the natural thing is. Moral principles, the laws of God, right and wrong, bind you.

And make you responsible for the things that have happened in your life and mine. You've got to care for that old man. You've got to seek to teach him.

You've got to seek to make him improve. You've got to seek to make him come up to the standard. But as in the illustration said with us, the old man is utterly incorrigible.

As it says in Colossians, no, Ephesians, the old man which is corrupted according to deceitful love. And so here is Paul responsible for this old man, for this other self. And yet it is himself.

He can't disclaim responsibility. Not only does the law of God and its commandments, not only can that other self in him fail to keep those ten commandments, but Paul says an astonishing thing in this doctrinal state. He says, we are delivered from when we were in the flesh.

Now that's another Paulian expression, in the flesh. The condition I have described is what Paul calls being in the flesh. Bound by the law to myself, the man that sinned.

Unable to disclaim responsibility for that man, in spite of all my good intentions. Married to the flesh, that's being in the flesh. Elsewhere he calls it being carnal.

The flesh, I guess, has nothing to do necessarily with sex, and a carnal man isn't a sex-ridden man necessarily at all. It's this self-centered principle which you are bound to. And so there is Paul.

I was going to say now, the law, not only can the old man not keep the law, but he says here in verse 6, the passions of sin which were aroused by the law. Now he just takes it as a doctrine, to see how it really is an experience. The ten commandments not only fail to improve the old man, but they seem to bring out the worst in him.

How futile to expect to be a Christian, by mere attempted obedience, to that which, when it's really applied to your heart, only seems to draw out sin, and never to suppress it. But Paul says, there has come a day when my marriage was dissolved by death. Well, Paul didn't die, but Jesus did.

And he did it for Paul. He did it as Paul sought to do. And we saw the other day that if one died for all, two Christians die, then we can reckon all died.

If he paid the price for me, it's as if I paid. And if the price was death, it was as if I died, as if I paid in my own person the due reward of my sin. Therefore the law can have nothing more to say against me.

And therefore he said, we've become dead. We've died to the law by the body of Christ. In that when he died, I died.

God reckons his death, mine. Jesus doesn't only die for me, he dies as me. And if he dies as me, then I'm to be allowed that I die.

God would answer, sir, I die. Not only did he put away my sin, but he put away me, who commits the sin. Judicial.

Not only is the putting away of my sins a finished work, and I can add nothing to it by my efforts to improve it, so the putting away of me is a finished work. Jesus said, it's finished. The judgment upon you is complete.

You're declared to be a man who's finished. I expect no more good from you. Please turn the cassette over now.

Do not fast wind it in either direction. And so Paul says he's become dead. He sees perdition.

And in the law, he's regarded as having died. And therefore he is free from that awful old obligation to try and improve himself. Try to improve that old man.

Try to make that old nature keep the laws of God. He's relieved from that obligation. As we said the other day, he no longer need go on putting good money after bad in the old Adam Improvement Society.

He's got no further obligation. And now he's free to then marry to another. Before, he was responsible for his sinful self.

But now he's in a true marriage relationship. He's married to the Lord Jesus. He that is joined to the Lord is one step, made part of him.

Scripture in source language is trying to tell us of this wonderful new union with the Lord Jesus. Yes, it's like the union of wife to husband. But that's not a good enough illustration.

It's like the union being a branch in the vine. They're one tree. And the sap of the vine is in the branch.

And it's the fruit of the vine that the branch produces, not its own. And if that isn't enough, the union is likened to that between the head and the body. Drawing all its direction, all its life, all its movement from the head, part of it.

And at Calvary, not only was I severed from the old obligation to try and make myself better, I've been joined to the Lord Jesus. Vines, you know, are tied to stake. And my vine was tied to the stake of Calvary.

And I was grafted into him. I was married to him. He became my head.

And I became his members. And we're married for life. And here I'm under grace.

I'm not doing things now merely from duty. But I find I've got the life of the Lord Jesus in me. And I find that's a wanton, not merely an oughton.

And that is what Paul means when he says, but now we don't serve in the oldness of the letter, but in the newness of the Spirit, keeping the letter of the Lord, doing the bare minimum to keep on the right side of God. And always with a bad conscience, he hadn't even done the bare minimum. Oh, there's a lack of spontaneity when our Christian life and our walk with God is conditioned by law, conditioned by rule.

It's dead. A quiet time is merely dear to, as respect from the Lord, a promise you've made, you never get anything out of it. Carry on, by all means.

But you have to get into a new place for that precious word to live. If you're only doing it as a matter of duty, thinking if you do it, then you have a good day, if you don't, you have a bad day. That's law.

And of course, you've only got to slip up with your quiet time and you go to work as you're trashed by the devil. Aren't you? The strength of sin is the law. You fail.

The oldness of the letter. But I like this phrase. I'm the greatest.

The newness of the spirit. Newness. Refreshing.

Spontaneous. Suddenly want you. Suddenly it's great.

Oh, my, what a pity. I don't even know half of that. This is terrific.

And so perhaps you take it in the trainwreck. I tell you, after I was saved, there was one epistle I went through again and again and again. And that was Epistle to Rome.

My mother used to laugh. She'd say, all you do is read Romans. And I did most of it in the London underground.

Travelling up to a London bed. I had a nicely... I wasn't ashamed to be seen reading my Bible, but I had an edition of about eight volumes. And it was without verses.

Lovely edition. So it just read like a book. And I don't mind it.

I want to be seen. I don't want to be known. But you don't quite constantly remember I was looking at you reading your classic edition.

Because you're the accredited. I don't mind. But I thought I'm better with this edition.

And I wanted to. The paper was really uninteresting. And other times when these other things begin to assert their power over us again.

This is inhuman. This is terrible. And testimony to other people.

No moral sense that you've got a bad conscience unless you do. I think we do a disservice to the unsaved. We make them the means by which we get rid of our bad conscience.

Why should they be made to serve in that way? And when you talk to them just to get rid of a bad conscience there's no sweetness in what we say. I know that's not the law. Unless I do it, I can't feel right with God.

My rightness with God is mine as I repent. If there's negligence, I repent of it. If there's negligence, it's my quiet time.

I repent of it. Negligence is regardless. I repent of it and then I'm under grace.

Without all that I've got to do. No, no, no. You've repented of negligence.

What do I do now? You're forgiven of that negligence. And now all I've got to do Oh no, you don't. All you have to do is walk with me.

I'll show you when to do it the next time. No, but you've not repented. This is unremovable.

If you squeeze it on your hand you'll find it'll be great to give to somebody. And you're not doing it now to get right with God. You've got right with God through the blood of Christ with the newness of the Spirit.

There are two ladies there have been other mornings they're not here now today. Two dear saints of God have been coming in from Bristol and they were separated. They worked together for the Lord.

They were separated. One wrote to another I've been convicted of prayerlessness these days and I decide to get up an hour earlier every day. The other said I too have been convicted of prayerlessness and I've repented.

And what? I've repented. And what else? I've repented. But aren't you going to get up an hour earlier? I have repented.

I've gone to Jesus. And I've seen the roots of my negligence and there's still a lot of calmness in my heart. She went in.

That's what she did. She came to Jesus. What about her quiet time? I tell you that one would have a glad heart and her mouth would be watering for the Word of God.

What time she gets up I don't know. How long? And that's not the point. She would have it all right.

It would be the newness of the Spirit for her. The other I fear the oddness of the letter and she'll probably both get up an hour earlier maybe on some occasion and then she'll be absolutely fresh. And so are all these implications.

There's just a few of them. Not in the oddness of the Spirit but in the newness of the Spirit. The oddness of the letter but the newness of the Spirit.

Well now we come to Paul telling us what it's like in experience. And somehow for him to lay that foundation we don't need to go into every last detail. Now he's trying to tell us now see this is what it was like when I was in the flesh when I was at Paul and Robert Jameson to make that man better and to keep the law and get right with God that way.

Now he says this I had not known coveting except the Lord had said thou shalt not covet. Now I'd assume your familiarity with this next verse. He says there was a time when I was alive without the Lord.

But there was a time later when the law came when the commandment came sin revived, I died. He says without the law sin lies dormant. That is last phrase of verse 8 without the law sin was dead.

Revised says lies dormant. The Revised Standard Version. And sin there was a time lay dormant in Paul.

And while sin lay dormant Paul was alive in the sense that he felt good he felt confident he felt he was really getting somewhere making progress a man on his way to heaven. He was alive without the law because without the law sin was lying dormant. But he said there came a time when the commandment came.

Now he suggested Paul might have been referring to a very specific time. I think I'm right when I say that in the Jewish community when a boy reached 12 years old he became what was called the son of the commandment. He was really received into the religious community the synagogue or some such thing.

And then I take it there was a time when the law was really recited and Paul felt he had let it up pretty well. Number one commandment no other god but him that's okay that's fine all these I kept for my new son. No ideology no ideology yes fine all these that I kept for my new son.

Sabbath? No one can be more strict than I am. Okay it's fine it's as Paul said. Son of the commandment measuring up honour your father and mother I have fulfilled my obligation not committed adultery I'm so glad to say I never had.

Not stealing not false witness anyway getting on fine until they came to the last one. All these other commandments were related to outward life action. This to Motik false intention.

The last one is not you shall not steal what belongs to another man but you shan't even covet what belongs to another man. You shan't even covet that young woman who's been married to that other person wishes you'd got there first. You shan't covet is Motikah.

You shan't covet his house. And the smile went off Paul's face. Say I never knew it was wrong to do that.

I would not know him coveting except the Lord said thou shalt not covet. Not only did it reveal that what Paul had been doing was a sin which he didn't recognise but after that he seemed to do nothing else but covet. It seemed to be popping up everywhere.

Some people say since I've read it I'm going to walk in the night I don't speak to him Well the light in some way has this effect. It shows you what God requires. It shows what you didn't see before.

And if you're depending on yourself it will almost seem to provoke it the more. And so he says verse 9 I was alive without the Lord but once but when the commandment came sin revived but I collapsed. I died as to my hopes of heaven hopes of relationship with God that way.

Oh that last commandment was a shocker. But it's not only the commandments that came from Sinai what about those that came from that other mountain the Sermon on the Mount None of those seem to apply to action or to being with men. You shall not commit adultery but I see you shan't even hate you shan't even lust when a man really messes up to the commands of God and what's really a commandment he'll die.

He'll just sit he'll melt. If you think you're satisfied with yourself my friend it's because you're not taking things seriously. You take the moral demands of God seriously and you'll see first of all that what you thought wasn't sin is sin and you'll find thereafter it's popping up as if it never did before.

And your hopes of being right with God that way are ended. And the commandment came sin revived I died. And then he says the reason then nothing wrong with the law nothing wrong with the ten commandments moral principles are moral principles they are still an expression of God they are still an expression of what he requires from human life.

The thing that's wrong is sin and sin appears sin by the action of the law upon us. And so Paul says nothing wrong with the law but the trouble is this the law is spiritual I am calm I'm a man who's wedded to a depraved nature.

And so in this chapter what you've got is a calm man trying to keep a spiritual law a man who's wedded to that thing in him which is so self-centred but he's got good intentions and he approves of that law he agrees with every one of his commands he agrees it's right to be unselfish he agrees it's right to love his neighbours he agrees it's right to be meek and gentle and long-suffering but there's another thing that does exactly the opposite wonderful intention you have I have to win this present with me but how to perform that which is good when it comes to it I'll find out a calm man and once again calm has nothing necessarily to do with sense it's this special sense the flesh this foreign nature and so Paul gives us the story we begin to go through it in great detail the good that I

would and don't do and the evil that I would and the evil not that I do there's no good thing in me I see well there's a good intention I'll grant that I've got good intentions but that's about all and you've heard it said that the road to hell is paved with good intentions good intentions don't count with God it's what you do and again and again we act in the opposite direction to our good intention and so he says he delights in the law of God of the inward man but he finds another law in his members warring against the law of his

mind another man and bringing him into captivity to the law of sin which is in his members now that is the experience of everyone who seeks to live his life and get into relationship with God and remain in relationship with God merely by obedience to moral

principles you'll end in despair there are two reasons why God has decreed that salvation can be by grace and not by works first the way of works is so awful as we've heard a substitute for repentance what God wants is not trying to turn over a new leaf he wants you to repent you're begging the issue you're trying to be better you're hiding I'm hiding too God says stop trying let me deal with the real thing but the way of works is always hypocritical why the very phrase turning over a new leaf means that you hide the past but what God wants is truth in the inward path says David in Psalm 51 I don't want your sacrifice I don't want your new efforts I don't want you trying to be better I want truth first of all but under works all we do is try to offer him something better without any real

repentance and secondly he's decreed it this way because he knows that the way of works the way of trying to get back with God to obedience to the Lord always leads to despair and he loves the sons and men and he weeps to see them trying so hard and condemning themselves and trying again and condemning themselves maybe you have felt perhaps in our evening meeting that God's been going very deep with us talking about sin and after that talking about sin again asking one thing and one thing only a humbling repentance so what's the alternative to that way striving a future attempt to try and be a better man in the future which attempt is doomed to fail before you start oh no it's God's life for us that he's decreed this way the way of grace is always the way of repentance grace reaches the

man who has asked and then having come and acknowledged God says now at the cross not only did Jesus die for you but he died as you you have died to that law that was condemning you you have died to any further responsibility of improving your life there's a new man there's Jesus God doesn't expect any more good from me now his expectation is from his son who lives in him and I am to deal as God has dealt with every expression of that other servant judge him or rather accept God's judgment someone has said what we've got to do is to pass the sentence of death every time that old man pops up and trust God to carry out the execution to set you free and he does and you take him back in prayer oh but even then it's not in you oh no you're married to another who's responsible whose bank

balance spiritually speaking is at your disposal and as a grace for everything the Christian life is not me doing it for him it's me letting him do it for me and through me with my cooperation yes but not depending on my own resources the man who sent him with his servant is judicially ended in death and to count on that fact and act it out in a judgment of every time that thing comes or rather accepting the judgment that's been passed upon him already and as I do so progressively the life of the Lord Jesus is known I have a piece of this in mind joy, gentleness as I attend to love as I attend to resentment as I attend to what is mine and see it as something that's already been crucified I then am made a partaker of what is here yes we may quarrel with the message of repentance you say

this has been too much those infirmities relent but what's the alternative this oh wretched man that I am it's so difficult to live a Christian life I never seem to make it I don't seem to get the joy that others you never will you're under the law if you don't repent but a coward as soon as repentant are set free delivered from the old condemnation delivered from their old self-image and Jesus becomes to them as they trust him all that they need

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