

Road to Victory

by Roy Hession

This sermon emphasizes the freedom and victory found in being dead to sin and alive in Christ through grace. It highlights the progression from being freed from sin's condemnation to becoming voluntary slaves of righteousness, resulting in a life bearing fruit of holiness. The message encourages repentance, rejoicing in God's grace, and living in the liberty that comes from being dead to sin and alive to God.

Scripture: Romans 6:7, Romans 6:18, Romans 6:22, Romans 6:14, Romans 6:11, Romans 6:6, Romans 6:2, Romans 6:12, Romans 6:23, Romans 6:16

Topics: "Freedom in Christ", "Living a Life of Righteousness"

Description

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Transcript

We all sense that our time together is getting warmer and warmer, because I'm conscious of more and more love. Of course there are some new brothers here, we're so glad they're here, but there's some of the older ones, old in the sense they've been with us, and I can't tell you how good it is to see the same smiling, eager faces before us, before me each day. And there is, love is flowing like a river.

I can see it amongst yourselves, and there's more relaxation amongst us, we're not frightened of one another, we've learned what we are. There's been a lot of very free sharing in these days, and that's helped no end. We needn't be intimidated, we're a bunch of Mephibosheth at the table of the grace of God.

You don't know who Mephibosheth was, well I tell you, he's just like you. He was lame on both his feet, and he belonged to the wrong house, like we do, the house of Adam, and yet David showed him amazing grace, and brought him to sit at his table as one of the kings. And so it isn't only one Mephibosheth, it's a bunch of them, and they're having good times together.

Just another little preliminary comment. I know we are human, and we cannot see all of the truth, and we see that in Jesus, which we're meant to see, and we share it. But the danger is we regard someone with a special emphasis.

You with your emphasis, me with mine. I think that's a little dangerous. A brother said to me, a young pastor in England, he said, you know, but you have a special message.

A special message? I said, if my message is special, what in the world are you preaching yourself? Well I know, of course, we, by the time the truth of God has gone through our own mental processes, we cannot but have our own way of expressing it. But that's at a very superficial level. I would like to feel we're getting back to the basic, and we're getting back to the original simplicity.

Of course, I have my special well-honed phrases. You can't help it. And then you hear somebody saying, as Roy Heston says, well I wish, I wish somehow we could avoid that.

We want to even get beyond the well-honed phrase, to the rugged essential truth that's been there all the time. And praise the Lord very much for the message we've just listened to. And it put me in a little quandary, because my mind and heart became so pollinated, and so many lovely fresh things came to light, that I could pursue in the second session, that I hardly knew what was the right line.

Pam only made it more difficult. She said, you know, don't you think that would be wonderful you'd follow? I said, oh don't tell me. I could show so many lovely things, because my heart was pollinated by my brother's word.

So praise the Lord for that. It's been a great joy to work with Manly as a team. We've had beautiful times together, traveling together, and in the next door motel room, and so on, we've been having.

It's been a very good time. And if God is blessed, as he has, I'm amazed. I'm as amazed as you are, because it isn't by might or power, or by a special message.

It's absolutely God himself, visiting his dear redeemed people afresh and anew. I think it right to turn your thoughts to a passage which I hardly dare mention, because I fear you'll say, oh, not that chapter. I refer to Romans 6. There you are.

Oh, not that chapter. Because you've worked so hard on it, so have I. But I want to tell you why I want us to look at this. As I said last night, I was for years in evangelistic work, before the Lord went deeper with me, and met me afresh.

And up to that time, I had a well-developed, deeper life message. God knows I needed it in my early Christian life. Now he's got it.

That's fine. I needed it, and I did come to know something, an experience of Genetians 2.20, identification with Christ. It is death that Christ might live in me.

And it was on the head of experiencing something of that, that the Lord called me from a London bank, into full-time evangelistic work. And the fruit of those early years was really based on the fact that I would seek to see myself as ended and not mended at the cross, that Christ might live again his life through me. And of course he did what I couldn't do.

And then after the passage of years, something went wrong. And I lost, it would seem, what I'd once known. Left it would be truer, rather than lost it.

And I found myself deprived of the life and the liberty I'd known in the work I was doing. And my service became a chore. I was still conducting evangelistic crusades.

And God was still being gracious, and there was some fruit. But nothing like it had been. And I had become so tense in my soul, and I'd really gone back to the old days of striving again.

Then it was that God sent back to England certain missionaries and certain African leaders, who had been involved in the East African revival, as it has come to be known, for it still continues to this day. And they came back not merely to have a furlough, but to share with us in England what they'd been learning in revival. They told us very little about any exciting scenes.

They simply told us what had happened to them, and of a simple Bible teaching on which what had happened to them was based. And I identified with it, because they told how dry they'd become, how tense, how lacking. And I said, well that's where I am.

And then they went on from there to tell how God met them. And that which they brought to us didn't sound like revival. It didn't sound like victory.

It certainly didn't sound like my deeper life message. It was something so much simpler. Just the old, old story of Jesus and his love for sinners, and the redemption that he'd accomplished for them, and our way of appropriating it as believers at deeper levels, but simply through repentance and faith.

And I couldn't tie in that which I was hearing, and that was meeting my need, with my well-developed deeper life message. And this held me up quite a time. My wife, my first wife, she didn't profess to be a one who was a theologian, and she had no problem at all.

And in that one of the first prayer meetings, she spilled the beans, as we say, and owned up before God in the presence of her brothers and sisters, of the way she was. So dry and defeated, and brought it all to Jesus and his blood. She didn't realize, as she herself said later, how significant that was.

Because the team were praising the Lord, that the wife of the leader had come through into blessing. She said, come through into blessing, all I've done is come to the cross. But she was to learn, that having come to Jesus, she'd come to Jesus.

And Jesus himself was the end of the struggle, for peace, for victory, for revival. But I was arguing with the team about how it tied in with Romans 6 and so on. And they said, Roy, don't argue, just repent.

And I found it very difficult when my wife joined the others in counseling me, and said, can't you see it? It was quite humbling to be counseled at all, because I was the one who's been counseling others. And here was the evangelist being counseled by these dear brothers. I'm so glad they did not take me for granted, because I was a preacher.

Thank God for Aquinas and Priscilla, who when they meet a mighty preacher like Apollos, got a burden for him. Had him in for supper, and shared their testimony, and taught him the way of God more perfectly. I hope you preachers will be willing to be ministered to by laymen, if necessary.

Because Aquinas was a layman, he was a tent maker, and his wife was one with him in spiritual vision. And so eventually I laid aside all my problems, and I simply did what Naaman did. I went down and washed.

Then went he down, and washed in Jordan seven times. And his flesh came again, like the flesh of a little child. And I found there was power in the blood of Jesus, and he restored that which I'd been losing.

I had much to learn, I made many mistakes. It meant a complete reorientation of my whole ministry. It took time.

Most of the certain things happened, which meant that many doors were closed against me. Tremendous controversy began to rage in evangelical circles, over this disconcerting message of the Bible. And I was caught in the middle of it, and I ceased to have invitations.

How good that was. Because it was so difficult. I know some of you can't avoid it, you've got to go through it.

Having to be ministering publicly, at the same time going through a very important process of reorientation. Well, you know, your people will see you move. And the new steps into new blessing will be patent to all.

And I believe that many in your congregation will praise the Lord. What's that verse in Isaiah 57? I will restore comforts to him, and to his mourners. And you might have some mourners.

And you're not only going to be comforted, but they're going to be comforted too. Amen. Praise the Lord.

We always knew there was something a bit lacking, and your mourners were going to be comforted. But I found myself not having to do the more public, larger scale, evangelistic crusade. But I found myself moving around the few churches whose pastors had made a like discovery as I had.

And that was wonderful. I was able to begin again. And God, who broke me down as a God self, began to build me up again, in Jesus, in a new way.

Now, with regard to that former ministry, I said, I know what I'm going to do. I'm going to park it. I'm going to park Romans 6, and such passages, that I've worked on, phrase by phrase, for so many years.

And I'm going to leave it. I know it's in the Bible. It's important.

It means something. But for the moment, I'm just going to go on with that which is coming to me fresh and new, and go on with my brothers in the same way. And I believe one day, God will bring me back to those scriptures, probably through another door.

And probably, I shall find it all means something much simpler than I've made it. And I want to share with you this morning, a few things that I feel God has led me back to. And it's exactly as I thought it would be.

So much simpler than I was making it. And so encouraging. I'm afraid my former conception was a bit complicated.

And it wasn't always encouraging. I was told the old man was dead, but the trouble is, he wouldn't lie down. Do I need to read the chapter? Perhaps we should.

Because I know many who know it so well. And I know, I still find it difficult not to read certain verses with all my preconceptions, and all that I've heard other people say. And we can only approximate to start afresh.

In a way, you have problems at first, I think, and only at first. All right, let's read this great scripture. He's established the doctrine of grace.

Verse 21 of chapter 5, he says that, like as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life, like Jesus Christ our Lord. This is the day when grace reigned. There was a day when sin reigned and got its strength to reign through the law, and issued only in death.

But that day has changed, and since the death and rising again of our Lord Jesus Christ, grace reigns. I'm not sure I'm right in that. Grace has always reigned.

This has always been the character of God. And you know, I find I can preach these sort of sweet, encouraging messages just as easily from the Old as from the New. There in the Old, the supreme element and the divine character is revealed, that Jehovah, our God, mercy and grace is always reigned.

Law only came in as a parenthesis for the fuller revelation of grace in Jesus Christ. Then we go on. What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? It would seem you can abuse the grace of God.

What are we going to do about that? God forbid. How shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein? Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death? That like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection.

Knowing this, that our old man, I think we can regard that as the man of old, the man of old, the man I used to be, has been crucified, judged with him, that the body of sin, we can keep it simple. Some people think the body of sin is the end tale of sin. No, it simply means sin's body.

Your body was sin's body, but the ownership has changed. And your body, as sin's body, should be destroyed, done away, as sin's body. That henceforth we should not serve sin.

For he that is dead, or literally he that has died, is freed from sin. Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him. Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead, dieth no more.

Death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once. But in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.

Likewise, reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin, but yield yourselves unto God as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God for sin.

Shall not have dominion over you, for you're not under the law, but under grace. What then? Shall we sin because we're not under the law, but under grace? God forbid. Know ye not that to whom you yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey, whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness.

But God be thanked that ye were the servants, by the way the word servant is slave, do not, that ye were the slaves of sin, that ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the slaves of righteousness. I speak after the man of men.

Because of the infirmity of your flesh, for as ye have yielded your members slaves to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity, I believe, by the way, that Paul is thinking about sexual sin. That's a little extra light. That word uncleanness always means the same thing in Paul's writing.

Of course it isn't only limited to that, but it's a very helpful chapter when we're trying to help somebody over addiction, to impurity. Anyway, I'll just pass that on, incidentally. As ye have yielded your members slaves to uncleanness and to iniquity unto further iniquity, even so now yield your members slaves to righteousness unto holiness.

For when ye were the slaves of sin, we were free from righteousness. That's a very quaint way, he puts it round the other way. You're completely free from righteousness, weren't you? He says you can be as free from sin as you were once free from righteousness.

It's really quite an astonishing way of putting it. How free from righteousness a man feels when he's off to the underworld is like that. And we're given the opportunity of exchanging one slavery for another.

You're never going to avoid slavery. The only way to cease to be a slave of sin is to be a slave of righteousness and of Jesus Christ. But details of that in a moment.

What fruit hath ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death. But now, being made free from sin and become slaves to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness and the end everlasting life. Therefore, the wages of sin is death.

But the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. Well, without puzzling your head about too many details, it makes good reason. And you know there's something sweet and helpful in it.

I think that the best way of sharing with you is to zero in on verse 40. And look at the chapter as it spreads out from that great verse. For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you're not under the law but under grace.

It is a wonder that this chapter does sooner or later attract the attention of the earnest Christian as he goes on with the Lord. That verse itself is suggesting something very desirable. To be brought to a place where sin no longer has dominion over us.

And then, three times in this chapter, you get the phrase, free from sin. Why, that's what I need more than anything else. To be free from sin.

And this is what the chapter's about. I was not supposed to have been dead, was I? Yes, but you should be. Hello.

What a beautiful thing. Oh, no, beautiful. I was not alive to them at all.

And it's little wonder that sooner or later we give this chapter our earnest attention. I did as a young Christian. I thought there was a second blessing and this was somehow the clue to it.

And I remember saying, oh God, I'm going to pray tonight. I'm not going to get into bed until I've received this second blessing that the books I've been reading have been talking about. And so I got down on my knees.

I'm afraid I eventually did go to bed without getting that coveted experience. I had many wrong conceptions to get rid of before I knew what this was really talking about. And I did have some sort of experience along these lines.

But, as I said, it went dead on me. I said, and I was in great need and God brought a new, well, the simple message of grace and only later, as he led me back through another door to this chapter. Let's start then, as I say, with this great text.

It first of all speaks about the dominion of sin. Now what do you think the dominion of sin consists of? Well, I used to think that it consisted in sin fascinating me and me yielding to it and doing it so often that this and that had become a bad rotten habit. And I was caught.

I was under the dominion of sin unable to stop doing those things. I don't think that really is what the dominion of sin is. Maybe part of it.

But the basic dominion of sin is the guilt it always brings with it. An inner guilt. An experiential guilt.

Not necessarily, we're not thinking about guilt in the books of God, but how I see it. And I feel myself accused and condemned by what I am and what I've done. It doesn't necessarily mean that I'm repeating that sin.

A man can commit a particular sin just once in his life and never repeat it and yet be under its dominion for twenty years if only by the fact it's still condemning him. The passage of time does nothing to minimize the dominion of sin over a man. Here's a cup of coffee, you've drunk a cup of coffee before you went to bed.

You were too tired to wash it up and you left it. The next morning you saw the cup, the coffee was gone, but the stain was left. So you say it's quite simple, I'll leave that for a few days.

This is when your wife's away and you hate washing those dishes. But after a few days the stain's still there. Leave it a week, it's still there.

Leave it a month, it's still there. And the passage of time does nothing to remove the stain. And the passage of time does nothing to remove this basic hangover of sin.

And it can be there, spoiling your fellowship with God, hindering your service. Indeed, when we're under the dominion of sin in this sense, a little demon from hell seems to sit on our shoulder. And even if we're preaching or trying to counsel somebody, that demon is saying, hypocrite, hypocrite, hypocrite.

Do you get on very well when that's happening? Do you enjoy liberty in sharing with others? No. And we hang down and we're weak. And I want to say, this is one of the new things I've seen.

That is the dominion of sin. And so often when Paul talks about sin, he doesn't only mean the unethical act. He means all that follows it.

I think if we had time we could look at some of Paul's use of the word sin and you could see it's more than the one unethical act or the several. It's this thing that always accompanies sin. It has power to accuse it.

Now when we feel in that state of sin, our first natural thing is to resort to the law. And if this verse speaks about the dominion of sin, it also talks about the law. Sin shall not have dominion over you, for you're not under the law.

And the natural thing for all of us is to try and improve our spiritual condition by doing more. Promising more. Extending our devotion.

Or being more devout in this way and that. That is all variance of the law. Of course the law in Bible times had two parts.

The ceremonial law and the moral law. And I believe Paul means perhaps both. Because for the Jew, the way by which he would hope to be, his relationship with God restored or improved would be a closer adherence to the ceremonial law.

And we evangelicals have a ceremonial law too. Every denomination has its own ceremonial law. There are certain things that are considered the way to improve things amongst the Baptists.

The Presbyterians may have something a little different, another group, but it's all of the same order. By the doing of this or that, and the adherence to what I'm told should be done, this is going to change and improve the situation. And the natural thing, unless we're taught otherwise by the Spirit, is having come out of Egypt and finding we're in a desert, we go to Sinai.

And that's the way of moral and spiritual increase. And then there is the moral law. That is never abrogated.

That is an expression of God's holy character. But what has been abrogated, that the moral law is not the way to peace with God. Indeed, its intention in being given to us was that by it we should come to the knowledge of sin.

The moral law let down from Sinai was like a great mirror let down from Sinai in which people saw what they really were. And that really was the main purpose. It was an expression of God's character.

But the giving of the law was meant to convict men, to show them what they were, and to show them their inability to keep that law. Trying to get peace with God by the works of the law is like pouring water on, have I got this right, lime. Or is it slate lime? As you pour the water on, it fumes.

Oh for goodness sake, get some more water. And the more water you put on, the more it fumes. And that is the effect of the law upon our form and nature.

It doesn't subdue them, it seems to bring out worse. And that is exactly really what God originally intended in giving the law. Now he says, you're not under the law, but as I say the natural thing is for us actually to go to Sinai.

Now it's not as obvious as that. But really and truly so many things that are considered so important for us to do are subtle variants of the law, of the way of the law. I mean these how-to books which are coming out, how to do this and how to do that.

It assumes you've got the power to do it. All you need to know is how to. But I haven't got the power to do it.

I just can't do these things. But there it is. This is the way.

If I could only do it with the aid of a how-to book, I would get what I need and I would be used of God. But actually all these attempts, and only God can show you what is an incursion of law into your Christian life

and service. It differs with everybody.

Sometimes it's very subtle. It's a mercy when the Spirit of God says, that's law. That's mere works by the doing of which you hope for spiritual increase.

In actual fact, however, the law is never any help for the Christian. Indeed, it always makes the situation worse. The law, rather than minimizing the dominion of sin, increases it.

Because it gives the law, it gives sin more to accuse me of. Had I not embraced those higher standards. Had I not made those promises.

Had I not said, I'm going to spend so long in prayer, so long, this, that and the other. I wouldn't be able to be accused of not doing it, when I don't. And you don't.

You don't. I remember years ago, I was hearing a pastor give his testimony of these lines. And he told the people, apparently, before our meetings.

That God had told him he was going to spend so much time in prayer. And he invited the people to make similar promises. That he was going to give a double time.

And everybody thought they ought to do it. And many other things. And he announced it, not merely to get me well thought of.

Although I don't suppose he objected to that. But the others might feel they ought to do the same. But he got up and gave a testimony and said, I told you that.

I didn't tell you something else later. I never was able to do it. And I just left you with feeling you ought to.

And you weren't able to. And it only added to this sense of condemnation. And this is what Paul means when he says in 1 Corinthians 15, 56.

The strength of sin is the law. It doesn't say the strength of sin is temptation. But the strength of sin is the law.

What does that mean? It gives sin more to accuse me of. And it brings me more quickly to a place of despair. Which isn't too bad a thing.

Because it can mean the gateway to something better. This is what Paul meant in Romans 7. The commandment which was ordained to life, if I could keep it. In actual fact, I fell to the undead.

And this in turn gives Satan his power over me. Not only under the power of sin, because it now has added power to accuse me. But of course it gives Satan, above all, his power.

He points to the promises we've made. He points to our consecrations. He points to our fresh starts.

And he's more to accuse us of. He is called the accuser of the breadthrift, as you know. And this in turn leads to more sins.

You're so dull. You feel so out of touch with God, that really nothing is to be lost by a little more sin. And the devil dangles certain baubles in front of you.

You're so dull, come on, indulge. And so, it's the law that adds to the dominion of sin. It has these effects upon us, and it leads us to further sin.

Think of the tablecloth which mum puts on the table on Sunday. Lovely clean tablecloth. And everybody's very careful not to upset coffee or produce any stain.

That's on Sunday. But by Wednesday, there's so many stains that a few more don't matter. They're simply part of the general pattern.

And we can get to that stage, when there's so many stains, we feel so wrong and out of touch, that a bit more wrong isn't going to make much difference. And it's right. I'm amazed where the Holy Spirit has been working in revival.

One man, cherishing a wrong attitude to another brother in the church, can hinder the whole work of the Holy Spirit. Whereas in another church, there's already so much more, so much of it, that a little bit more doesn't make any difference. It's only because that first church has been cleansed by the blood of Jesus Christ.

They've become sensitive. And one such thing can have very tremendous results. And the repentance of it opens the floodgates again.

Whereas the repentance of that one thing in another church doesn't seem to make any difference, because there's so much already that's never been seen. Now this is something then of what it means to be under the dominion of sin, and how the cost of the law only makes things worse. But we are told good news.

Sin need not have dominion over you in that sense. For you're not under the law which would only accuse you the more. But you're under grace.

Grace is the most beautiful element in the divine character. It's not merely love. It's undeserved love.

If it be of works, if it be of grace, it is no more of works. Otherwise grace is no more grace. Grace, I'm telling you of course what you know so well, is God doing things for men on the ground that they deserve nothing.

There's a difference between love and grace. All grace is love, but not all love is grace. I think you can regard the sunshine as a picture of the love of God, bathing everything in its beauty, willing good for every man.

And it's beautiful. But there's something more beautiful than sunshine, and that's the rainbow. And what's the rainbow? It's the sunshine still, but sunshine shining through rain on dark thunderclouds.

And then that light is split up into its component part and becomes the most beautiful phenomenon in nature. And grace is the love of God shining through tears, and remorse, and failure, and loving it just the same. Working on your behalf as if there was nothing amiss.

Indeed, finding its opportunity in all that which is amiss. This is grace. Amazing grace.

Not amazing love. That John Newton, the converted slave, knew he deserved nothing but hell, but he received heaven and much else. Amazing grace, I'll speak this out.

And this is the day of grace. When grace is on the throne, when God is acting in this one direction, that which might have hindered grace has been settled by Jesus on the cross. The demands of justice against the sinner have been met in the person of our dear beloved substitute, and grace now reigns.

It was always there. It was grace that gave him to take our place. But now it's enthroned in a way as never before, and God can be just, as you know so well, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus.

To send his son. God did not, thou didst not spare, or the hymn says, thou didst not spare thine only son, but gave him for a world undone, and freely with that blessed one thou givest all. Would you give your son? That boy you love so much? I think you'd rather kill the other person than let him touch him.

You might love other people, but not to that extent, but God did. God so loved, a world was spared to him, that he did not spare his only son, but gave him up for us all. And gave him up, not only to live on earth, but to take the sinner's place upon the cross.

He accepted responsibility for what I and you have done. More than that, he became an effigy of us, in the likeness of the man who'd done the trouble. And God judged him on the cross, as if he was responsible for our sins.

God wasn't judging the son as the son so much, but as the one who was judging the one whose likeness he was wearing. I've paid my penalty, indeed. If you owe a debt and someone pays your debt for you, as far as the creditor is concerned, you've paid it.

And if one died for all, then all died. Now the moment Jesus Christ took our responsibility, he became subject to our judgment. But the moment the blood had been shed, and he said it's finished, God raised him from the dead, for there was nothing more to be done.

And of such value was the blood he shed, that sin lost its power to condemn it. If there are other worlds discovered, on which human life is, and where sin has occurred, what happens on this earth is going to occur over the whole vast universe. He died unto sin once, and sin has no longer any power to condemn him, though the sins for which he's responsible may be the sins of millions worlds yet undiscovered.

He cannot die again, it's enough. Once for all, he lives unto God. And it says here, sin no more has dominion over him.

And because sin has no more dominion over him, has lost its power to accuse him, I'm sorry, because death has no more dominion over him, sin will have no more dominion over him. If it's lost its power to condemn my subsidy, it's lost its power to condemn me. I can be no more condemned than my saviour can be.

He's finished it. Because death has no more dominion over him, death can't claim him again. He's dealt with that which caused the death fully, completely.

Sin can have no more dominion over me, in the sense where he's speaking of the world. If, of course, you think you've got to come to a place where you'd have no more consciousness, no more solicitations to sin, that's another matter. But that's not what's talking about here, as I understand it.

And do you see how it really makes sense of that verse? If you're thinking of being dead to the solicitations of sin, then sin shall not have dominion over me in that sense. What does that next phrase mean, for

you're not under the law but under grace? People have wrestled with that. Andrew Murray came up with the most helpful thing, because whereas under law, self is asked to do its utmost, under grace we're appointed for Jesus to do all.

And that's helpful. But it doesn't really quite satisfy me. But if I see the dominion of sin is its ability to condemn me and get me down and put me down, then the next phrase means everything, for I'm not under the law which accuses me of my sins, but under grace where everything's been settled by Jesus to the satisfaction of God, and where the work is finished.

This is a wonderful word of encouragement. You needn't be down. You needn't be flogged.

You needn't be thrashed. For any longer than it takes you to get to the feet of your dear Lord Jesus. You need not be under the dominion of sin.

Always dogged with the sense you're not good enough and you're not making it. Always dogged with the sense you can't get to part-time working as they should be. You can't get the message.

You needn't be dogged. For any longer than it takes you to admit your lack as manly with sin. You can't be accused any longer of the fact you're not seeing fruit.

Any longer than it takes you to get to the cross and it's true. I'm barren. All right, stop there for a moment.

What about my future? You needn't be forgiven for being barren. And you don't need to get to a place where you're no longer accused of being barren. If there's any fruitfulness in any case, it's not going to come from you, but from Jesus in you.

And I come into freedom. Sin shall not have dominion over you. For you're not under the law which accuses you, but under grace that's done it all.

There's a little bit of dondrell that I've quoted so many times. But I want to do it again because it fits in here. I picked it up in some book on Romans years ago.

Under the law, with its tenfold lash, learning alas how true, that the more I try, the sooner I die, while the law cries you, you, you. Under the law with its tenfold lash. You know what that means, tenfold.

And they lash you. You've been lashed, I have. Under the law with its tenfold lash.

Learning alas how true, that the more I try, the sooner I die, while the law cries you, you, you. Hopelessness still to the battle rage. Oh, let it ban my cry, and deliverance I sought, by some penance bought, while my heart cried I, I, I. Then came a day, when my struggling feet, and trembling in every limb, at the foot of the tree where one dies for me, my heart cried Him, Him, Him.

And that's liberty. Yes. And I think we've got to keep it simple, and regard the dominion of sin in that sense.

It can be over you for a long time. Ages. I remember my own son, who's had a very checkered spiritual history, and at the moment is away from God.

But there was a time when he was, well, he was having battles. He was at boarding school. And we had reason to write approvingly to him about something.

And he took this very hard, because just before the letter came, he had repented. And you know, he expressed himself, it was so hard, he says, I wasn't in sin, when the letter came. You see, he saw that while it was unrepented, he was in sin, under dominion of sin.

Well, we were so happy to know he had, and the letter seemed to cross, but I thought, that's interesting. He didn't really say, I was no longer in sin, I was no longer doing it. He would have been in sin if he wasn't doing it, if it hadn't been confessed.

But he had, and he said, I wasn't in sin. And that was just a boy, he didn't seem to, wasn't instructive, but he was reaching for words to express it. And we're right.

And you are in sin. The sins are still accusing you. They haven't been settled.

But Jesus has answered every claim against us in his body on the tree, and is, and this is implied, this is implied in saving faith, the admission of wrath. I take sides with God, I go into a witness box against myself. And that means God and I are saying the same thing about that man.

And it's over. That's what the battle was about. He was waiting for us to be willing to do that.

And we tell God. I've heard some people say some tremendous things against themselves. In prayer.

Oh my goodness. But they've got a glimpse of grace. This is what the effect of grace, of the message of grace is.

I can afford to admit the worst and tell the worst to God. Sometimes he says, well you'd better share it with somebody else, they were involved as well. OK.

If they think I'm a terrible man, they think they're through. And sometimes I've felt so terrible, and something I've done, and in fact I've talked to my darling wife in a sharp way, and it's awesome. What will people think? Well they'll think that man's a humbug.

He writes that book and then he can talk sharp. And I've been comforted I believe they think that. They think they're through.

God, that's all I am. You know sometimes we can run around, try to put things right with other people, merely to reinstate ourselves in their eyes. It can be that.

Sometimes it's very important to do it, but sometimes. And I've found rest, well if they think that's me, they think that's what I am. Here am I saying we must be open, we must be known as we really are, and I betray what I am.

OK. I agree with God. And I agree with anybody else.

I say that wasn't the right thing to do. That's right, brother. Let's see them.

You see, all this hard work trying to justify ourselves. And being reprieved from that hangover. And you cannot be more right with God than what the blood of Jesus makes you.

Now let's go quickly on. Now this gives us an understanding of this three times repeated phrase, being made free from sin. Now that would seem to be a high degree of sanctification.

To be free from sin. But once again I think we're importing into it the wrong name. Because you know you get your new convert to sing it.

I do believe, I will believe, that Jesus died for me, that on the cross he shed his blood from sin to set me free. Are you suggesting he's entering into a very rarefied atmosphere of holiness? So he's free from sin, in this sense. Sin's condemnation is over in God.

Jesus alone knows how. And it occurs three times and there's a lovely progression in it. First of all it says in verse seven, he that is dead is freed from sin.

Well who's dead? I am. In the person of my substitute I'm reckoned as having died. My judgment is over because he's been paid.

Actually by Jesus, but in God's reckoning you did it. And I can't be accused by sin for that which has been paid for, which, if you like, I paid for. Years ago in Britain there was a shocking scandalous case that told the newspapers of a certain politician and certain other people who were engaged in immoral practices.

And a certain doctor was head up and the technical term was he was living on the earning of prostitutes. And prominent politicians, alas, were involved in this. Of course that was meat and drink to the media and I'm afraid the whole country followed the trial with tremendous interest.

And he was declared guilty of this crime. And the judge said I must have days to consider what is the right and proper penalty to impose. So he decided he'd leave it at least for the weekend and then he would give the, not the verdict, that had been given, but the sentence.

And so the man went back to jail for those days. But over the weekend he committed suicide. He'd smuggled in poison and he killed himself with it.

He was never sentenced. For he that had died was free from the sentence of the law. This is what is meant.

First of all then, he that is dead, this has happened to him in Christ and it has happened to us all, is freed from sin's power to go on to death. And when you apprehend your death with Christ, which is indeed said to be a clear-cut historical fact, it is for me, you are free from the dominion of sin, free from sin in that sense. Then it takes us over a further step.

The next place where it occurs, this phrase, free from sin, is verse 17, verse 18. Being then made free from sin you became the slaves of righteousness. You've been made free.

You've been to the cross. You've lost your bones. You now become the slaves of righteousness.

You don't escape slavery. It's either sin or righteousness. But this is voluntary.

I cannot work my soul to save. For that's my Lord has done. But I could work like any slave.

The love of God's dear Son. It reminds us of that old Hebrew ceremony. He had a slave.

In the seventh year he was going to let him go free according to the law of Moses. And the slave said, I don't want to go free. I've been so happy here.

I've got a wife here. And then he would say to his master, I love, I love my master. I will not go out free.

And then the master would take him to the door and bore his ear through in a little ceremony to the door for the moment. That would be the master. And that's how it is with us.

He that forgives a master and sets free from a master loves a master. And voluntarily I want to be the slave of the one who's done it for me. And so grace gets holiness from a man in a way the law never does.

You can't stop a man who sees the glorious redemption of which he is. There's nothing too much to do. No sacrifice.

Young people offer themselves for the mission field, giving up. Great profession. And the world says, what in the world's happening? You've got to do this.

No, I haven't got it. Well, why are you doing it? Because I want it. Because I love that one who's done so much.

And you know, the only sorrow for those young people is it has taken such a long time to get to the mission field. They had to have so much training, so many qualifications. And now, the day of going has come.

And those who don't know what they know will mourn. They're not there praising. They've become the willing slaves of God's dear Son.

Being made free, he becomes free. And that's not once for all. It's a process.

And as I know, in forevermore, in each new situation, this blessed freedom through the blood of Jesus Christ, my devotion to him, it's part of this blessed liberty that grace has for us. It's part of it. It brought me in that moment a third time.

And this is in verse 21. Verse 22. And being made free from sin and become slaves of God, you have your fruit under holiness and the everlasting life.

You see the progress. He decided free from sin. Being therefore made free from sin, you become the voluntary slaves of the one who's done it.

And having become the voluntary slaves, you're free. Free. It's obvious in your life, the fruit of the Spirit is free.

And fruit in your service. There's an outcome. It can't be hidden.

Fruit under holiness. I want to tell you amongst my dear friends that I know and love so well and have been in fellowship with for years, and we've walked together this way. We're always at the target scene.

Ignoring one thing or another, they find it no hardship. They know something of what Wesley called the mystic joy of fellowship. They find Jesus so precious.

All have, like, a fruit of grace and holiness. They don't see it. They're always somehow running as good as they, coming to Jesus with all their emptiness and need.

But I see it and others see it. I want to tell you, I've seen holiness walking about in freedoms. And it's achieved this way.

In a way that the market never achieves. Now I've got one last thing to say. May I also put it in before? What does this mean about being dead to sin? Well, I remind you that this passage tells us that Jesus died unto sin.

He didn't die only for it, but he died unto it. And what it meant for him will help us to understand what it means for us. He died unto sin to condemn it and rose free victorious.

And that's what it meant by being dead to sin and letting ourselves dead. It isn't that I get to a place where I am not conscious of sin solicitation. That is, as I say, I have a hundred and one new motivations to have done with it.

Let not sin, therefore, reign in your mortal bodies. But I don't think it means trying to think, I'm dead to this, I'm dead to this, I'm dead to it. Then you know you're not.

What I think it means is this. You're down. You're blaming yourself.

You're no good, you feel. No. Letting yourself to have died to sin's power to go on and repent of it.

Jesus died to it. So potentially you have to repent on it. Repent, yes, but that's not enough.

You must come into freedom. You must come into liberty. And then the man used to write me a letter and send it, yours, repenting and rejoicing.

It's not enough to be repenting to it and repenting and rejoicing. You sing Jesus, these loveless songs, I sing Jesus full of grace and truth, I wonder how you sing it. Because I'm on the receiving end of this grace.

And so there is something of it. I don't suppose I've elucidated all the phrases in this chapter we know so well. I think I yet to need to look again and again and try and disabuse my mind of some of the thoughts I've had for so many years.

But it is good news. And this is consistent with the same blessing of grace. It's the same sort of gospel by which we were first saved.

It's really not sanctification as a special department. It's an extension of justification. It just flows on.

It does mean, having died to sin's power to be in me, I have died. That is, I am to keep myself as such. And I'm to take up a moral attitude to sin, consistent with it.

Let not some devil reign in your mortal body. If you've got any motivation, so to do. And you're going to receive mighty aid from heaven, so to do.

I should say this, especially if you're trying to counsel somebody who has problems with their impurity. And who doesn't really have, in one way or another, problems. This has helped me very much.

The reason why the devil trips me up, in one way or another, is not merely that I should do something unethical. Or engage in a completely inexcusable fantasy. And I have my problems sometimes in that way.

It's in order that heaven calls me, and my heart responded to you, who then has the opportunity to feel it. That's what he wants. Not the deed, but what he builds on the deed.

And sometimes the superstructure is much greater than the foundation in which it's built. But it's that foundation that Jesus deals with. By the blood, by the cross, as I confess it.

And the old superstructure comes tumbling down. And I who was ever satisfied with the faith, blessed with what? A sinner's testimony continues, which brings him glory. It's a lovely thing when we're saved.

I prepare to share that sinner's testimony with one another, who gets the glory, as they share their new experience of freedom. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Does that help you, brother? Yes, very much.

It helps me. I don't know the most objectionable passage I haven't touched, but that helps me. Praise the Lord.

Amen.

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