

Romans 6 - Part 2

by Zac Poonen

Zac Poonen's sermon on Romans 6 emphasizes the importance of understanding grace, sin, and the transformative power of Christ in our lives.

Duration: 56:47

Scripture: Romans 7:21

Topics: "Sanctification", "Overcoming Sin"

Description

This sermon delves into the struggles of Christians in overcoming sin and striving for sanctification. It explores the concept of unconscious sin and the battle between the desires of the flesh and the spirit. The speaker emphasizes the need for continual growth and repentance, acknowledging areas of un-Christlikeness and seeking to purify oneself until becoming as pure as Christ. The journey of progressive sanctification is highlighted, focusing on walking in the conscious areas like Jesus and striving to be like Him in all aspects until His return.

Transcript

Last Sunday we were looking, we finished up at around 6.14, so the talk is drawn at 6.15. But before I go there, I wondered whether you have ever thought how the early Christians met right at the beginning, almost up to the end of the 2nd or 3rd century. We are so used to meeting in church buildings almost all our life that we imagine that that's how Peter and Paul must have met in the early days. It's not true.

There were no church buildings at all for almost 300 years of Christianity. And those were some of the finest years of Christianity when people were willing to be eaten by lions just because they would not say, Caesar is Lord. They would say, Jesus Christ is Lord.

And they would be beheaded and crucified. And those Christians never met in grand church buildings. And they were not very rich.

One says, not very rich, not very clever. And if you're not rich, you don't have a big home. So therefore, I've deduced from that that the early Christians were poor, they had small homes, and therefore they would meet only in small groups.

And if there were hundreds of believers in a city like Rome, for example, they would meet in a number of different homes. And there were small groups of people. I wonder if there were more than 80, 20 people in

a home.

And there were many inconveniences. I thought of that when we used to be in our home for six years. Children crying, no mother's room, for them to meet separately.

And I've been in meetings where a child starts crying, and the mother, out of consideration for others, would want to take the child out. And I'd say, no, sister, I want you to sit here. You need to listen more than anybody else, because you're always taking the child out of every meeting.

The rest of us can learn to live with listening to children crying and not to play on message. You know, sometimes we can be so inconsiderate that the ones who need to be at a meeting the most are often given up. So, I try to use my mind to think, how did the early Christians meet? They loved one another, and they could bear with one another.

The other thing was, they were so diverse in their backgrounds. The Bible speaks about Greeks and barbarians. Can you imagine a Greek and a barbarian having fellowship? The culture that the Greek had, the crude ways of the barbarians, but they were all redeemed by the blood of Christ.

It's so wonderful to think of how those early Christians met. And what impact did they have on Roman society? They were not out there to change Rome. In fact, when the emperor became a Christian in Constantinople in 300 A.D., that was the beginning of the corruption of Christianity.

Not the development of true Christianity. Christianity started getting corrupt when it became accepted by the authorities and the empire and the kings. And if you read church history, you see how their own Catholics and even the Calvinists, Calvin and all of them, supported the state.

Even Martin Luther. They were protected by the state. And Jesus never sought the protection of the state.

The early apostles didn't. So, what influence did those Christians have then? In terms of society in Rome, nobody recognized the little groups of people meeting here and there. And, I don't know, catacombs underground, persecuted.

But God had a witness. That's the main thing. He had a witness on earth that he would point out the devil, that he would point out Job.

So, I'm always excited whenever I see that happening, seeing it happen in different parts of India. We have an influence of all of India on Christ. But I believe that God has a witness in different parts of India.

Small groups of people are like a light in the midst of the darkness. You know, some men and I travel in a plane at night. It's all dark underneath, but here and there you see a little light.

I see that's how God sees little churches in the midst of the darkness. You know, one family is where they have accepted Christian values. They love one another.

Or a group of people who are not very influential in society, but they love one another. It's a light for God. So, if our goal is to have everything that God wants and not just part of what he wants, many of these truths in scripture become very important to us.

You don't need to understand Romans 6 and Romans 7 to go to heaven. In fact, you don't even need to understand Romans 6 and 7 to live a bodily life. That's like saying, you don't need to understand your

digestive system for your food to be digested.

But if you understand it, it helps you. It helps you to know. For example, how do we know certain food is junk food? It's good to know that.

We know something about it. It can destroy your body. So, certain laws of the body, it's good to know.

So, keeping that in mind, let's read Romans 6. Verse 15. What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? I don't know Greek and I have no intention of studying it. Because today with so many English translations by scholars who spent years researching meanings of words, I find if I read those translations, I usually use about 4 or 5 translations and paraphrases in English, that helps me to understand the meaning of a word better than if I ever studied Greek.

So, what I'm told is, there's a difference between verse 1 and verse 15. It sounds the same. Shall we continue in sin, verse 1? Shall we sin, verse 15? But the difference is, in verse 15, what it's saying is, First it's saying in verse 1, shall we continue in sin? But in verse 15 it says, shall we then sin even once? This message is for those who can answer that question.

Shall we then sin even once again in our life? You see, following on from sin shall not, verse 14, rule over you because you're under grace. But then, are we going to sin even once in our life? See, when people come to me for baptism in India, I ask them a question. I say, do you want to sin again? Even once? I'm not asking them, will you sin again? None of us can say, I will never sin again.

I can't say that. But, do you want to sin again? That, we need to have a right answer to. Do you want to sin anymore? Do you want to sin even once? Do you want to do something which you know is displeasing to God, even once? If you don't have a right answer to that, I say, you haven't understood the cross of Calvary at all.

You haven't understood what Jesus suffered for. If you can take a life, how did you do it sin? So that's a very important question. What then? Shall we sin even once? Because we can take advantage of God's grace? Maybe, never.

So, that is the attitude of mind which enables us to understand scripture. That's what I've found. God has written his word, not for us to find excuses for sin.

But to be free from sin. You know, when I find pastors falling into sin, adultery, and then going back to the Old Testament and say, well David also fell. And he was still king.

Actually, these guys are using the Bible not to overcome sin. They are trying to find an excuse for their sin in scripture. And God allows them to find it.

They usually find it in the Old Testament. Think of this verse in Revelation 22. It's quite an amazing verse.

You wouldn't think that there's such a verse in the Bible in Revelation 22. You don't. This is holy scripture.

What does it say? Let the one who does wrong, continue to do wrong. How do you like that? Do you find a verse like that a lot? Are you doing wrong? Continue to do wrong. Are you guilty? Continue to be guilty.

It's quite a word. I was puzzled by it for many years. I sought the Lord for a revelation.

What does it mean, Lord? Amen. Are you doing wrong? Continue to do wrong. Are you guilty? Continue to be guilty.

I got a scripture for it. It's there. And then I got life on it.

The meaning is, if you have read all these 1000 pages in this book, and you come to the last page, and you still want to do wrong, brother, just go ahead and do wrong. There's no hope for you. After reading 1000 pages in this book, you still want to be guilty, when you come to the last page, there's no hope for you.

Just continue to be guilty. That's the meaning of that verse. It's a profound verse.

It's as if God says, when you read my book and you still want to be guilty when you come to the last page, go ahead and do that. It's our attitude to sin that matters. I've had so many Christians written up with so many other things.

Yeah, there are many doctrines and scriptures, but if you don't see the centrality of Christ died to save us from sin, you should call his name Jesus, because he would save his people from their sins. And if I make that central, then I understand scripture. Otherwise, I won't understand scripture.

And I can even go astray in some other doctrines as well. But if I keep that as a central focus, the very first promise of the New Testament, you should call his name Jesus, Matthew 1.21, because he came to save his people from all their sins. Not just forgive their sins.

I often say this, that many Christians know Jesus as a forgiver, not a savior. It's true, they should not call him savior, because ask him, has he saved you from your anger? Has he saved you from your lust? Has he saved you from evil speaking? No, he hasn't. But don't call him savior.

Say, he's my forgiver. He keeps forgiving me, but he wants to be your savior. And the Lord said, you will seek me and find me when you search for me with all your heart.

When you're determined at any cost to get all of God's truth, you'll find it. But if you treat God like some 25 cent quarter that you dropped somewhere in the grass and you didn't find it, you're not going to seek for it long. And if you seek God like that, you'll never find it.

Okay, let's continue. Verse 16, Romans 6. Don't you know, when you present yourself as slaves for obedience, you are slaves for one who obeys, either sin without being dead or obedience without being righteous. The Bible speaks about obedience to the spirit out of the flesh.

Holiness has got two parts to it. One is God's part and the other is mine. You know, the tragedy is in Christians of being imbalanced.

Some people emphasize God's part, some people emphasize man's part. If my becoming holy was entirely dependent upon God, entirely, I would be like Jesus right now. And all of us would be like Jesus.

Because God doesn't care. If it was entirely up to me, I'd be defeated by sin every single day. But remember the word of Jesus, take my yoke upon you.

And we see that frequently in India, two bullocks with a yoke upon them. And both have to do that part. And that is, everything is like forgiveness of sins.

Christ did that part for us on the cross, but yet 95% of people in the world, their sins are not forgiven, even though Christ died for their sins, because they haven't done their part of repenting and receiving that forgiveness. So even the very first step, think of the many years that went by in our life without our receiving forgiveness, that we didn't do our part. So remember this, that the Bible speaks about God's part and my part and if something is not fulfilled, it's not because God didn't do his part, it's probably because I didn't do mine.

So he says, present yourself as slaves. In the same way, just like you did once as slaves to sin, now you will be a slave of righteousness. Thanks be to God, verse 17, even though you were slaves of sin once upon a time, you became obedient from the heart to that particular form of teaching to which you were committed and having been freed from sin, I'll tell you something, verse 17, it says a particular form of teaching or what we would call doctrine, you became obedient to a particular doctrine which we preached and the result is you were freed from sin and became slaves of righteousness.

So that teaches me that the right doctrine is that which leads to freedom from sin and makes me a slave of righteousness. If I have not become free from sin and become a slave of righteousness wanting to do right whatever the cost, I haven't understood the doctrine properly yet. Maybe I've understood part of it.

That's good. Because if I understand the doctrine fully, I'll want to be totally free from sin and I'll be willing to pay any price to do what is righteous, and that's the meaning there. And he goes on to say I'm speaking in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh.

Again he repeats it, just like in the olden days you presented the members of your body as slaves to impurity, now present your members as slaves to righteousness which results in sanctification. Because when you were slaves of sin you were free in regard to righteousness. What benefit did you have in those days? Things which are now a shame.

Now verse 22 is a very interesting verse. It says here about certain steps. First being free from sin and then becoming a slave or a servant of God.

I've often spoken on that verse if you want to be a servant of God you need to be free from sin. Even if you don't know much of the Bible a lot of people think they are sort of Bible school to be a servant of God. No, you need to be free from sin to be a slave of God.

Being free from sin and then slave to God you derive your fruit. What is the fruit of our being a servant of God? It's not souls. It's not ministry.

It's not a lot of what people call service. It is sanctification. Being free from sin I become a servant of God and the fruit I get is not as I said so many people getting converted but sanctification in my own life.

And that's been a very helpful verse for me because in my service in all the service I do whether it's preaching whether it's bringing people to Christ whether it's leading them to God whether it's running the whole preaching and sermon running churches anything I know I'm doing it right if I'm getting more and more old in the process. If my service for God whatever it is is not making me more sanctified it's not really service for God. It can be what the Christian world calls ministry.

Helping the poor running churches writing books and television programs and all that. There's so much that's called service for God today. If it does not mean the sanctification it is not really service for God.

I would be serving myself and finding some satisfaction thinking that I'm doing God's work. So this didn't help me to know whether my service is really what God accepts or service for Him. Every service that I do for God should lead me to greater holiness in my own life.

He said that's the fruit that you get freed from sin you become a servant of God and here is the fruit that you get sanctification greater holiness and the final end eternal life. And then he says even this eternal life verse 23 is a gift. Now many people know Romans 6.23 but they don't know Romans 6.22. If someone were to ask me how can I have eternal life? I'd say the average person would lead that person to Romans 6.22. I'd say eternal life is mentioned in verse 22 and verse 23.

Why is it we take only verse 23? And this is how we can get wrong teaching. Eternal life does not mean living forever. People go to hell live forever but they don't have eternal life.

Because we get the definition of eternity wrong. We think eternity means having no end in terms of time. No.

Eternity means having no beginning and no end. That's eternity. So eternal life is not a life that never ends.

But eternal life is a life that had no beginning and no end. You and I don't have it. So eternal life is another phrase for the life of God.

Nobody else has eternal life except God. Because He's the only life that had no beginning and no end. And that is a gift He gives us.

It's the very life of God whether you believe it or not. That He gives us. Now we're not thinking in terms of quantity of life but quality of life.

It refers to a certain quality of life. A life that's eternal that's in Hebrews 7 it's called indestructible life. A life that cannot be destroyed.

They tried to destroy it when Christ was on earth. He couldn't destroy it. He just came out of the grave.

That's the life God gives us. It's a wonderful thing the life of Jesus something that nothing can destroy it. Satan cannot destroy it.

Sin cannot destroy it. It's eternal life. So it's a gift that God gives me when He sees that I want it with all my heart.

The wonderful thing about God is He doesn't force Himself on anyone. One would think that at least He would force people to go to heaven. He doesn't.

Think of the hundreds of thousands of people who died in the last 24 hours. God doesn't force anyone to go to heaven. They had to make a choice.

In the same way if you don't make a choice you're not going to be holy because God won't force us. If He doesn't force people to go to heaven He's not going to force anybody to go to hell. But you might choose and say Lord I want this.

I want to be totally like Jesus in my thoughts words and my attitude to people. I want to love my enemies like Jesus and not like Jesus. I want to be pure in my thoughts not pure as Jesus was.

I want to have the same attitude for money that Jesus had. I want to be forgiving patient like Jesus was. Even if it takes time it will take time but God sees that I really want it at any cost.

I want to be obedient to everything that the Word says like Jesus was totally obedient to the Father. God will give it to you. There's no doubt about it.

He's a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. He's always been a rewarder. I'm not here to judge other Christians.

That's not my business. The Bible says judge not. God is their judge.

But for myself I know that anything Scripture has promised can be mine if I seek and diligently. So eternal life the life of God can be ours. The wages of sin is death.

But the free gift of God is eternal life. We must link it with verse 22. Be free from sin and be on the service of God and get sanctification and the outcome is eternal life which is the free gift of God so I can't take any credit for it.

It's a free gift. So we move on from there to Romans 7. In Romans 7 1-4 he speaks about marriage. Spiritual marriage.

Don't you know brethren that the law is jurisdictional over who the person's mother is? A married woman is bound by law to her husband while he's living. But if her husband dies then she's released from the law concerning her husband. So if while her husband is living she joins another man she's called an adulteress.

But if her husband dies then she's free from the law but she's not an adulteress and now he's not talking about divorce and remarriage here. He's applying it to our marriage to the law. Therefore my brethren you who were married to the law have been made to die to the law so that you can now be married to Christ.

So that you can bear fruit for God. So now you read Romans 6 about the old man and the law and Christ. I picture this as three marriages.

My thinks of pictures and that helps me to understand Scripture. Just like Jesus would use pictures of salt and wine and flowers and words to illustrate truth. I see this as three marriages.

So let me explain. I was once married to a person called the old man. Now you see I'm the bride in all these three illustrations.

In all the three marriages. First I'm married to the old man. And the old man is a evil person.

This is the thing I thought about. He always wants me to do something wrong. He's like a husband who always made his wife do something wrong and harassed her and made her do things she didn't want to do and I got sick and tired of it.

And one day my husband died. That's Romans 6. And I'm happy. The old man is happy.

This wretched man who was troubling me making me sin. Aren't you happy the old man died? You don't want to sin anymore. So that's the first marriage.

And now I want to be married to a good husband who doesn't ask me to do all those wrong things. And I marry someone who I think is Christ. I see someone who's upright and never does anything wrong.

Never asks for anything wrong to be done. I say this is the one I want to marry. And I discover after marrying him that it's the law.

The law is different from the old man. He never asks me to do anything wrong. Never tells me to do anything sinful.

He always asks me to do only what is right. Well he says shouldn't you be happy with such a person? Well hang on. But he's very demanding when he says breakfast must be ready by 8 o'clock.

It must be ready by 8 o'clock not 8-0-1. 8 o'clock. The shoes must be polished perfectly.

The clothes must be washed without a stain. Then I discover that though he never asks me to do wrong, life has become such a burden. Everything must be perfect.

The house must be slim and must be strong. He's a very demanding husband and the worst part of it is he doesn't help me one bit with any of his work. This is the law.

The law is good. There's nothing wrong with the law. God's law is perfect.

And now you wonder, boy, I didn't want the old I was a wretched husband, but have I gone out with a frying pan into the fire now? Married to this guy who is so demanding and my life is so miserable and unhappy. There are persons like this. They are married to the law.

And they try to get other people married to the law too. And they are hoping that this husband will die. But he doesn't.

The law of God never dies. There is no blood pressure, no diabetes. He will live forever.

And you lose all hope of saying, Lord, my life is going to be miserable to the end of my life. Because I am married to this person called the law. And then God does something wonderful.

He doesn't kill the law. He kills the wife. He kills you.

You die. And when you die, like it says here, when she dies, she stays for life. So I have died.

I died to the law. And my marriage to the law is broken. Verse 4. You were made to die to the law.

The law didn't die, but you died. In the previous person's marriage, the old man died. Now the wife dies, but that's not the end of me.

God raises me up. But my old marriage is broken now. And now he says, you can marry Christ.

Now is Christ less demanding than the law? Are his standards lower? No. The law said you should not murder. The law said you shouldn't even be angry.

So Jesus also says, breakfast must be at 8 o'clock. Not at 8-0-1. But here is this lazy guy, wife like me, who can manage breakfast only by 11 o'clock in the morning.

What should I do? The law says, never mind. We'll work at it together. And he helps me in the kitchen, and with great effort, in a year or so, I manage to make breakfast by 10 o'clock.

Another year, and it makes 9 o'clock. I'm working towards the perfection the law demands. And one day, the law says, breakfast is at 8 o'clock.

I manage it. But the difference between Christ and the law is, he was a husband who helps me. He never asks me to do anything.

He says, let's do it together. Wouldn't you like to be married to such a person? That's marriage to Christ. You know, this is a perfect picture of how a lot of Christians live.

They live under the demands of the law, and life is such a burden. And another person, who is living according to all the demands of the law, his life is so free. Because he is married to Christ.

He has somebody who helps him in everything, through the Holy Spirit. So that's the picture here. You're made to die to the law, verse 4, so that you can be married to another.

Him who was raised from the dead. And we were raised up with Him. So this is the truth here.

If you meditate more on that, I don't know if I have time to go into more detail, you'll see what a wonderful thing it is to be married to Jesus Christ. In everything in life, His demands are perfection. But He doesn't sort of condemn me because I haven't attained that.

He says, we'll make it. You and I will make it, He says. It may take time, but you and I will get there.

We're going to get there. Don't be discouraged. So that's right.

I'm glad I got free from being married to the law. And I hope all of you will be free from that, to be married to Christ. Some people think being free from marriage to the law means trying to go back and sin again, commit adultery like David, etc.

No. It's completely different. So here we understand what it means to be free from the law.

And then he goes on to speak about how it was in the old days when we were in the flesh. Our passions aroused through the law. We were reduced through to death.

But now we are released from the law. Again, the same thing. I died to that husband to whom I was bound.

So that now I said in newness of the spirit, I'm doing the same thing, but it's not like a heavy burden. You know, a lot of people read the commandments of God in the New Testament. They say, oh, what a burden it is to do that.

What a burden it is to do this. And whenever I hear any Christian thinking that some New Testament command is a burden, I say, brother, you've got a guy with his own husband, of course, and you get married to Christ, who will make the same demand of you, but it won't be worth it. That's the thing.

You'll not get through it. And this is what makes the difference between a truly spiritual Christian and a religious legalist. And we've got to be careful here that we don't get married to the law.

All these high standards. And that we don't lead people to that type of marriages, but to be married to Christ, where we serve in the newness of the spirit, not in the oldness of the letter. It doesn't mean we don't keep the commandments.

I do the same thing, but not according to a strict legalistic code. I do the same thing, but in newness of the spirit. Because I, you know, if the scripture says that I shouldn't lust after a woman, it's not because of a heavy burden, or I'm not supposed to do it.

It's freedom. I'm glad to be able to live like that. Okay.

Then he speaks again about our relationship with the law. And he speaks particularly about the Ten Commandments in verse 7. Now, if you read Exodus chapter 20, where the Ten Commandments are listed, you'll see that neither of them dealt with our external life. Only the last one, you shall not desire your neighbor's wife, was an inward thing.

You shall not desire your neighbor's house. You shall not desire anything that's your neighbor. Your neighbor's daughter, for example.

Every woman who walks on this earth is your neighbor's daughter or your neighbor's wife. One of the two. And you must not desire her.

That was the commandment that even the Apostle Paul found very difficult to keep, and which you and I also find difficult to keep. So we can say, why did God give nine commandments that had to do with the external life, and put this tenth one at the end, which he knew nobody could keep? I mean, you must estimate. How many people will be honest and say, Lord, I can't keep all the Ten Commandments.

I can keep nine of them. But when it comes to the tenth, I shall not desire, I shall not covet, I shall not lust. I just can't keep them.

But I want to keep them, because I know this is your standard. That's what God was looking for. How many people in Israel will recognize, this is God's standard, and will recognize, I'm not able to keep it, but Lord, how can I keep it? I think there were very few.

One of them was Paul. But he's very honest. He said, I can keep all the law.

In Philippians he says, according to the righteousness of the law, I was blameless. That means the nine commandments. When Jesus asked the rich young ruler, if he can't keep the commandments, he never mentioned the tenth commandment.

Have you noticed that? In Mark chapter 10. He only told him the commandments of 5, 6, 7, 8, 9. He never told him the tenth. But he said, I can keep it.

And Paul says here, when he came to the last commandment, it said, I shall not covet, sin, mercy, taking opportunity through the commandment, producing me, lusting of every kind. Look at the honesty of this great apostle. He says, I lusted.

That's the meaning of, lusting of every kind was in my heart. You know, when we were still defeated in that area, we were afraid to confess that we were like that. Paul couldn't speak about it because he had become free from it.

But he was honest enough to say it. And that's an encouragement, to know that Paul is in the same pit that we are in. God put him under that, and God can put me under it.

He says, it produced in me, lusting of every possible kind in my heart. And he goes on to say, this law, which is supposed to give me life, produced death. I felt more miserable when I saw God's standards.

And that's how a lot of people feel when they hear the standards we preach in the church. Boy, we feel more comfortable in some other church where they don't preach those standards. Then we don't realize how sick we are.

It's like, I sometimes think, the true church of God is a church that's got a proper scanning machine that's working properly, that gives you a correct report of what's going on inside. A lot of other churches have got a defective scanning machine that you feel comfortable with. It gives you the impression you're okay.

It's like that joke I heard about the man who said, when the doctor, my doctor was so kind when he knew that I couldn't afford the surgery, he just touched up the scan so that it doesn't look like I'm sick. That's exactly what a lot of preachers do. You touch up the scan so that you don't realize how sick you are.

So the law showed me how evil I was, and I wanted to be free from it. So that the law is holy, verse 12. Let me just go down to this important section, verse 14-25.

We know that the law is spiritual, that I am a flesh, soul, and an abundance of sin. Now here's a very important sentence which describes this whole section. Verse 15.

That which I'm doing, I do not understand. You can say that's the heading for this whole section. So, it's referring to sin, which I don't understand, and also, which I don't want to do.

Something which, verse 16, I don't want to do it. So remember this when reading this section, he's talking about sin which I don't understand, verse 14. And verse 15, which I don't want to do.

Now, Paul is speaking about an overcoming Christian, who's understood Romans 6, to be free from sin. Who's understood Romans 7, to be free from marriage to the Lord, to be married to Christ. But still, he finds himself at times, doing things which he didn't want to do.

It's very honest, I like the honesty of the Apostle Paul. Very few Christians are absolutely honest about this, in this area. Either they go to one extreme of saying, oh we've got to keep on sinning, or they pretend that they never made a mistake and never sinned at all.

Both are wrong. So, what is Paul talking about here? I believe he's speaking about one unconscious sin. That which I'm doing, I don't understand.

There are areas of my life, where I'm not like Christ. But I don't see it yet. You know, sometimes we can be thoughtless, and we don't realize it's sin.

I remember in the early days, when we were meeting in our home. And you know, there's a lot of inconveniences when you meet in a home. Inconveniences with the people who live in that home.

We found that, and a lot of burden would fall on my wife. Because we have so many people with small children at home, and all these folks coming. And we used to have three meetings a week in our home.

And many of the folks who came, I think they were wonderful brothers and sisters. But they were a bit thoughtless about the inconveniences they were causing, by a certain thoughtlessness in relation to the inconveniences we were facing when having the meetings in our house. I don't believe they were sinning.

I think it didn't occur to them. That they were not consciously trying to harm us in any way. But they were a bit thoughtless.

I mean, they think that we've got to clean up after they all leave. I don't believe they were sinning. That's just one example.

Sometimes we can do, you know, in relation to others, do certain things when we don't realize how, whether we make it inconvenient or awkward or difficult or something like that. So, it's referring to those areas where, I remember, I'll give you another example. I once visited a home, a very God-fearing sister.

Already gripped by the message we preached. And it was many years ago. And I visited that home and I spent one hour there.

And she spoke for 54 minutes, and I spoke for about 4 minutes, and her husband spoke for about 2 minutes. She never gossiped, she never backed it, she never did anything. But I think there was a little disproportionate amount of what each of us was talking about.

And there was not a single sinful thing she spoke about, or gossip, or backbiting, nothing. She was just talking about the wonderful revelations she got from this verse and that verse, and the other verse, and it was 54 minutes out of one hour. You know, I never said anything.

Because I say it's unconscious. She's sincere, she loves the Lord, but she doesn't realize how much you dominate the conversation. I went to that same house some years later, and it was so different.

She had not liked it. And now she would take so little time. And there I saw the development.

Was she sinning before? No. But she was not Christ-like. I can't imagine even Jesus dominating a conversation so much.

But it would take 95% of the time. So, that's just a couple of examples I used just now to show how there are areas in our life where we're not consciously doing anything wrong, but as we walk with the Lord, we say, Hey, I just want Christ. This is sanctification.

I use sometimes the example of a cube of ice. You put a cube of ice in a glass of great things or something, 90% of it is in this one. That's an unconscious part of our life.

We don't even see it. But there's a top 10% that we can see, that we don't consciously see. And if I could slice off that top 10% of the ice cube, you know what would happen? A little bit of ice underneath would come out.

A little bit of that 80%, 10% of that would come out, and I'd get some light on that. And if I slice off that, a little more comes. This is sanctification.

So, at all times, we have to acknowledge that however holy I may be, there is still some sin in me. The Apostle John, in the age of 95, says in 1 John, chapter 1, 1 John 1, verse 8. If we say we have no sin, we're deceiving ourselves. I'm not talking about committing sin.

I'm talking about having sin. Whereas 1 John 3, 9, it says if you're born of God, you don't practice sin. Many people don't understand that.

That means I'm not consciously committing sin, John says. But even though I'm 95 years old, and I walked with God for 65 years, I'm still not totally by Christ. There's some areas in my life, I haven't yet got the light on.

And he goes on to say in 1 John 3, verse 2, we will be like you early when He appears. That day I'll be completely free from sin. So till then, I have to humbly acknowledge that there are areas of unchrist-likeness in me which a more guardian brother will be able to see.

But I can't see it yet. And that's why we must be patient with one another. When I see somebody doing something wrong, I say it's wrong for me, so that I'll get light on it.

But it's not yet wrong for that person, because he hasn't got light on it. So that's Romans 7. I do the very thing that I do not... So that's one area, unconscious sin. And the other thing is, it's something I don't want to do.

For example, you're determined to overcome anger completely in your life. You're serious about it, because you know God hates it. You know, Ephesians 4.31 says, put away all anger.

And you come back from work one day, and you say, today I'm not going to be angry. I hate it, and I don't want to be angry. And you have little children at home, and something goes wrong.

You say something in anger, maybe to your wife, or... You didn't want to do it. You didn't come from office, driving down, saying, I'm going to get angry. You knew how to do it.

You hated it, you didn't want it. But it just came forth, and immediately you feel so bad. That's the other type of thing described in Romans 7. I'm doing the very thing I don't want to do.

Verse 15. I know the law is good. So if it's like that, then it's no longer right, Romans 7.17, but sin that dwells in me.

I know one thing, that in my flesh dwells nothing good. Now there's a difference between flesh and heart. The heart is deceitful above all things.

That's an Old Testament verse. Don't forget that. But God cleanses my heart.

And my will is set on God's side. My heart is not filthy. My heart is clean.

But my flesh is impure. My flesh is all these lusts that seek to come into my heart. If I'm not careful they come in, then I have to confess my sin.

But in the flesh there dwells nothing good. So, I want to do what's right, verse 18, but the doing of it, of the good is not. I wish it, but I can't do it.

The good that I wish, verse 19, I do not do. In other words, like I said, I want to be totally free from anger. 24-7, every day, 365 days of the year.

That's not bad. But suddenly I slip up. Or I'm totally free from even the slightest thought of impurity.

I hate it. But boy, in that moment of weakness, I slipped up. I didn't want it.

I hated it. Now this is different from someone who's you know, deliberately going and buying a pornographic book or deliberately going and clicking on some pornographic site in order to enjoy pornography. Not talking about that.

It's not like someone who's lurking around somebody's house to go and have an immoral relationship with a woman. It's not talking about that at all. Some Christians can use that to justify adultery and tell you lies and all kinds of things.

This is not talking about something which you plan and go and do. It's something which happened in a moment when you never wanted to do it and you just slipped up and got out of it. So, we need to understand this.

And that's because we have this flesh. And evil is present in me. Verse 21.

It wants to do good. Verse 22, I joyfully concur with the law of God in every man. A true born-again Christian says that.

Deep down in my heart, I really want to do God's will. But I see another law. See the honesty of the apostle that encourages me so much.

A law in the members of my body which is always warring against the law of my mind which wants to do God's will. Oh, wretched man that I am. Verse 24.

When will I ever be free from this body of death? Thanks be to God. Through Jesus Christ our Lord, I hope. I have the hope that one day I shall be completely free.

But until that day comes. Verse 25, last part. With my mind, I keep on serving the law of God.

But my flesh, until I get rid of it, will only serve the law of sin. But that does not bring condemnation to me. Chapter 8, verse 1. Chapter 8, verse 1, you can see is the conclusion, as it were, of these verses.

Therefore, there is no condemnation because my mind is set on doing the will of God. And as I seek to walk in the spirit, which speaks in the first quintal verse of chapter 8, I can come into that life where increasingly I become free, more and more free from sin if I get light on it. And even from these occasional falls which I couldn't get victory over earlier.

Let me show you Paul's testimony, 1 Corinthians 4, verse 4, where I spoke about conscious and unconscious sin. 1 Corinthians 4, verse 4, Paul said, I am conscious of nothing against myself. Here was a man who had complete victory over that 10% of his life that he could see.

The areas in his life which he knew to be sin. He had complete victory. I told you about that sister who didn't realize that dominating a conversation is un-Christlike.

But she was living in conscious victory over sin. But one day she got light on that unconscious part and said, hey, it's not right. It's not Christlike to dominate a conversation with other people sinning around.

And she cleansed herself. That's progressive sanctification. I'm conscious of nothing against myself, but that does not mean that I'm acquitted.

I can't say I'm totally free from guilt because the one who examines me is the Lord and he sees that hidden 90% within me that I don't see. But if I'm faithful, little by little God will give me light on it. And I can be progressively more and more Christlike.

This is the meaning. Let me show you this verse in conclusion. 1 John chapter 3. First of all, 1 John 2.6. If I say I'm a Christian, I must walk in the same manner as Jesus walked.

Walking is a conscious act. I don't walk when I'm unconscious. Walking each step is a conscious act.

He's saying, in my conscious area, I must live by the same principles that Jesus lived by. That is to walk as Jesus walked. But, 1 John 3.2. To become totally like Christ, even in my unconscious area, that has to wait until Christ comes again.

When He appears, then we shall be like Him. So, I must walk like Him now in my conscious area, but to be like Him in my unconscious area has to wait until He comes again. But until then, what shall I do? Verse 3, 1 John 3.3. I have to keep purifying myself in the areas where God gives me light until I become as pure as He is pure.

This is Christian growth. So, if I had the hope of becoming like Him one day, then, verse 3, I would purify myself. I cleanse myself from these hidden areas in my life there.

If I'm not So, in conclusion, let me say, if I'm not getting light on areas of unchristlikeness in my life progressively, say year by year, then I'm not growing at all. If I'm still being, living at the same spiritual level year after year, it's like a child who's always in the second grade. He gets 100%, but he's always getting 100% in the second grade.

He gets A+, in second grade, year after year after year. That's not a good thing. He should be going on to third grade.

And, progressively, maybe he starts with a B or a B class or something and finally works up to an A+, in the third grade, then moves on to the fourth grade. This is progressive sanctification. So, I, for myself, I I, this is the way I examine myself.

Am I getting light on areas of unchristlikeness in my own life, which I never even knew about last year or five years ago? Am I seeing something? Am I becoming more considerate and thoughtful about other people? Am I more careful in my speech? Am I becoming more free from the love of money or attachment to things of earth? Am I more careful in what I read and what I look at? Is there a progression? And, is it leading to a repentance in my life? I find that, as I start to walk this way, my life has become a life of continuous repentance. As I discover, hey, I wasn't right from where I turned from to where I am now.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/zac-poonen/romans-6-part-2/>

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