

# The Gospel Is the Power of God

by Zac Poonen

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*The gospel is not just about forgiveness of sins, but about cleansing, justification, and being clothed in the righteousness of Christ.*

**Duration:** 1:01:35

**Scripture:** Romans 7:4

**Topics:** "New Covenant", "Holy Spirit"

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## Description

This sermon emphasizes the progression from the old covenant to the new covenant, highlighting the superiority of the new covenant in Christ. It delves into the importance of understanding the difference between the old and new covenants, focusing on the inward transformation brought by the new covenant. The speaker discusses the need for believers to fully surrender to God, experience the power of the Holy Spirit, and look to Jesus as the ultimate example of living a sinless life despite facing temptations.

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## Transcript

In this church we have often spoken about the new covenant and I believe one of the reasons why God raised up this church and many other CFC churches in India and in other places is to proclaim this particular truth that the new covenant is far superior to the old covenant. See, throughout the centuries particularly since about four or five hundred years ago, God has been restoring truth to his church which was hidden and buried for so many years. It began with justification by faith and then other truths that came up and there are different missionaries who come to India and proclaim these truths through the years.

I've been a Christian 54 years and I've heard almost all that most preachers preach in India. I've never in my life heard anyone in this country explain what the new covenant was and yet it's such a fundamental aspect of the Christian life. If someone were to ask you what is the difference between the new covenant and the old covenant, some of you who have been here many years, would you be able to explain it? You've heard so much about it but I've discovered through the years that until something becomes life in us we won't be able to explain it.

It's like something we heard and then over the many years we don't use it and then we forget it. If you don't use a truth, you forget it. It's like a muscle in your body.

If you don't use a muscle for a long time, you won't be able to use it. It sort of makes you like a paralyzed person. It's like people who lie in bed for a long time find it difficult to walk because their muscles have become weak.

They haven't used it. So truth that you don't use will be like an unused muscle. It'll be useless and that's why you may find that some of you who have heard so much through many many years, if someone were to ask you what is the difference, you may not be able to explain it even in simple words.

Basically I would say in very simple words, in the Old Testament the emphasis was on external sin and that's the only thing that God judged. You know things like idolatry, murder, adultery, theft, telling lies in court, not outside because God realized it's very difficult to keep man from telling lies everywhere. But he restrained them from saying it in court.

I mean you look at the Ten Commandments, that's what it is. But the Tenth Commandment itself was the only one which spoke about the inner life and nobody could keep it. In the New Covenant the emphasis is on inward sin.

You know Jesus spoke about to the people who were keeping the Old Testament law, you clean the outside of the cup but the inside is dirty. That was his emphasis and he came to clean up the inside. And so in very simple terms, if your external life is good but your heart is corrupt and dirty, you are a good Old Testament person.

You're a good Old Testament Jew. You're not a New Testament Christian really. I don't know whether you understood that.

A lot of people think the only thing is to tell people Jesus died for your sins. Well in the Old Testament too they could say that. Psalm 103, bless the Lord O my soul who forgives all your sins.

That's a thousand years before Christ. Sins were covered in the Old Testament. They were not cleansed.

When Christ shed his blood all our sins were cleansed. But that's not all there is to the gospel. A few Sundays ago I spoke on Romans chapter 1 and chapter 2 and part of chapter 3. I just want to continue from there to explain to you what the gospel is all about so that we understand it very clearly.

What Jesus came to do, much more than forgive our sins. And I often use the example of a billionaire father and you're his only child. He worked hard through 50 years to build up a fortune, slogged and worked hard, grew up in poverty and built a huge fortune and left it entirely for you with houses and lands and different places, bank accounts in many many places.

And he's written a will, willing it all for you. Would you be careful to ensure that you get all that? Some of you have probably got an inheritance from your parents. How carefully you watch over it, to ensure that you get all of it, to ensure that you enjoy all of it.

What about your spiritual inheritance? When Christ died on the cross and rose again and sent the Holy Spirit, there's something he purchased for us. It's far more than any earthly inheritance you can ever get. And it was a tremendous price he paid for it.

But if you only take forgiveness of sins from there, it's like taking 1% of your inheritance and letting the other go to some crooked lawyer who cheats you. In this case the crooked person is the devil who wants

to cheat us of our inheritance. And this is what we have battled for all these 37 years that this church has been in existence.

To enable Christians to possess their inheritance. And in order to teach Christians that that is far more important than money. That's the reason why, one of the reasons why in this church we never take an offering.

That's why in this church no preacher is paid one rupee for his services for 37 years. To emphasize one thing, that spiritual values are more important than material things. If you're gripped by that, you'll find the greatest truth of all.

Now, if after all these years here you haven't been gripped, I want to say to you, you may enjoy the blessed fellowship there is here, but you missed out the most important thing. And one day when you stand before Jesus Christ, as you will, you and I will, we will discover what our loss was. And I don't want you to suffer loss.

We're not here to criticize other Christians, other churches, but I have no hesitation in saying I disagree with much that is preached in many churches. Most of them are only interested in your money or in your membership. We are interested in neither.

We don't have a membership list. And as I said, we don't take your offerings. And those who want to give because they want to give to the Lord, there's a box in the back they give voluntarily.

But the emphasis in this church from the beginning has been on dealing with sin. Jesus came to deal with sin. And every book in the New Testament is written to deal with sin.

If you read all the sayings of Jesus, the messages that he spoke, it's all dealing with purity and sin primarily. There are people who have asked me, Brother Zach, why don't you preach on physical healing? I say you show me one sermon that Jesus preached on physical healing and I'll do it. You show me one chapter in any of the epistles that the Apostles wrote where they talked about physical healing, I'll preach it.

You show me one sermon in the Acts of the Apostles which the Apostles preached on physical healing, I'll do it. What they don't do, I don't do. Jesus healed thousands.

The Apostles healed many, but they didn't preach on it. They actually did it. Today we have so many sermons and books on healing, but actual healings, very, very few, most of them fake.

It's not that we don't believe in healing. I myself always pray for healing when I'm sick. And anyone who asks for prayer, I always pray for them.

And we've seen some remarkable healings as well, but that's not our main message. I often think of the story of the Canaanite woman, you know the story, who came to Jesus once, not who came to Jesus, Jesus went to her. And it's one of the only times when he went outside Israel.

And she had a demon-possessed daughter who was sick, and she wanted healing. And Jesus said, I can't give the children's bread to the dogs. And she had such an attitude of faith, she said, that's fine Lord, even if I'm only a dog.

The crumbs that fall from the table, can't the dogs eat that? Just give me one of those crumbs, my daughter will be healed. So what is healing? A crumb from the table. What then is the children's bread? That's what we speak about.

Not prosperity, not healing, but freedom from sin. The most wonderful life that was ever lived on this earth, was the life of Jesus Christ. He demonstrated on earth how God wanted Adam to live.

And God made man, he said, let's make man in our image and let them rule over everything. The only one who manifested that was Jesus Christ. He had authority over everything, especially over sin and over the devil.

He wasn't afraid a single moment of Satan, and he conquered every sin. And there by his life, he demonstrated my brothers and sisters, how you and I, if we call ourselves Christians, are supposed to live after our sins are forgiven. How our home life should be, as husband and wife, both living like Christ.

Now if you're not living like that, and you're not ashamed of it, and you're not longing to live like that, then there's something wrong. If you're not living like that, we all have to acknowledge none of us have become like Christ. I haven't yet come to the place where I love my wife like Christ loved the church.

I've still got a long way to go. I'm not walking in every single area like Christ walked, but it's a lot better than it was 50 years ago, and even a lot better than it was last year. It's progression.

So what I want to ask you is not are you walking like Christ? Are you in deep sorrow that you're not walking like Christ? That your life in this whole year, which is almost over, has not become better than it was last year? If there's no sorrow about that, if that doesn't bring you a deep repentance, then it is sad. And then I want to tell you the next year won't be any better. Ten years from now it won't be any better.

I hope that some of us will come to a repentance to see what Christ purchased for us and not despise what he gives and go after what the Bible calls garbage, money, honor, position, greatness in the world. It's not garbage. It's very useful, but compared to the riches of Christ, it is definitely garbage.

So let's turn to Romans chapter 3. I mentioned that man has two problems. One is the guilt of our past sin, where we've all committed sin, and the other is our nature, which is corrupt, which leads us into sin continuously. So there must be something that deals with both these problems.

One, not just covering our sins like the Old Testament, but cleansing so that the guilt of it doesn't weigh on me all the time. The book of Hebrews says that in the Old Testament when they offered sacrifice of sin, there was a constant remembrance of those sins. And if there's a constant remembrance in your life of sins in the past, then you need to understand what the blood of Christ does.

If you have really turned and you're sorry for what you did in the past, you can do nothing about it. Some of those things you cannot even rectify in any way, the mess you made of your life and other people's lives. The Lord says, I'll forgive you.

I shed my blood for you. I died on the cross to take the punishment for all the mess you made in your life, the way you ruined other people's lives. I'll forgive it.

In a moment, and not only I'll forgive it, He says, I will not remember it anymore. Isn't that wonderful? I will not remember it anymore, and you don't have to remember it either. You don't have to live in guilt about all

that, because it's cleansed away.

It's blotted out, and He says, I won't even tell anybody about it. Isn't that good that God doesn't tell other people about all the evil things we did in our past life, which we are so ashamed of? I think we should all be thankful. That's how we begin our Christian life.

That's forgiveness. It's more than covering our sins, cleansing. And so, I want to say to you, don't let the devil torture you with memories of what happened 15 years ago, or what happened 20 years ago.

The Lord says, I won't remember it. If you do remember it, which we can't forget, you know, I have no power over my memory. I remember all the wrong things I did all my life.

As far as back, I can remember. That's my memory, but I don't feel guilty in my heart. So, don't bother if it comes back to your memory.

When it comes back to my memory, you know what I do with it? I say, Lord, that just makes me grateful, more grateful for what you've done for me. I've been forgiven much, so I've got to love you much. And the second thing it does when it comes to my memory is, Lord, you've forgiven me much.

Let me be merciful to other people who do wrong when I come across them, or when they do wrong to me. In that way, we can use the memory of our past failures to love Jesus more, and to be more merciful to others. That's good, but we must never allow the memory of past sin to make us feel guilty, because that will be like going forward in the Christian life with your foot on the brakes.

If you drive a car or a scooter with your foot on the brakes, it's gonna wear out your brake linings, and after some time your brakes won't work. So, that's how we know this memory of guilt, guilt, guilt, guilt. It's like driving with your foot on the brakes.

It'll destroy you. You've got to settle it, and if you have confessed it, the Lord has heard you. He's got good hearing.

You don't have to keep on telling him ten times. If you're turned, and you're sorry for what you've done, be sure he's forgiven you. The blood of Jesus cleanses.

We overcome Satan's accusations by the blood of the Lamb. It's a great verse in Revelation 12, verse 10 and 11, that Satan, when he accuses you, accuses you, accuses you, you overcome him, not by saying, I Jesus Christ has cleansed me from that, and Satan, you can't torture me with guilt anymore. So, once we get past that, we come to this truth of justification.

You know, we saw what it says here about forgiveness of sins, Romans 3 and verse 20, 25, God displayed publicly Jesus Christ as a propitiation in his blood through faith. This was to demonstrate his righteousness, because in the forbearance of God, he passed over the sins that were previously committed, finished. But then, we move on to this truth of being justified.

Justified means being declared righteous. That is more than being forgiven, and I want to just emphasize that a little more, that it's not that I have only been forgiven. That itself would have been great.

But to stand before God, completely righteous, with Christ himself as my righteousness, with the righteousness of Christ clothing me, that's amazing. I have to see myself like that. It's very important.

I may have been a wretched sinner, but I'm clothed today with the righteousness of Christ, not only forgiven. They couldn't have this type of justification in the Old Testament, because Christ hadn't died, he hadn't risen. There's a parable that Jesus spoke once.

It's found in Matthew's Gospel in chapter 22 of a feast that a king arranged for his son, a wedding feast. And he sent out invitations. I mentioned it briefly before.

Let me mention it again. And the people who were first invited did not come. That was the nation of Israel.

They didn't come. They had many excuses. Then he said, go into the highways and get all the beggars and tramps and all the people sitting on the wayside, homeless people.

That's you and me, by the way. He gathered us in, said, bring them into the feast. And at the door, at the gate, because we were all in rags, torn, filthy, you can't get into the king's presence and sit at a feast like that.

Everybody was given a white robe and the beggars were delighted. Because, hey, this covers all my rags. Now nobody will know.

And then one man comes along who's very nicely dressed. He's not like those beggars. And he says, I think my dress is pretty good.

I don't need your dress. And he goes and sits in the wedding feast. And when the king comes and looks at the people at the feast, he spots a man.

We read in verse 11, you know, everybody's dressed in this white robe. There's one man who's come in, maybe some fancy suit. He says, how do you get in here? He couldn't say, nobody offered me a dress.

And he was, says he was speechless. He thought he could come in his own clothes. The picture there is of thinking that I can come before God in my own righteousness.

That means I'm proud of some good thing I have done. And I feel that that makes me acceptable before God. You know, be careful, because it's, it can be there in the back of your mind sometimes.

I know even after being a Christian for many years, once after serving the Lord for a number of years, I was asking the Lord for something or some need we had in our family. And I said something like this. I said, Lord, I've served you for so many years.

Can't you give me this? And the Lord said, no, you're coming in your own name, in your own goodness and what you have done. And I suddenly saw that my righteousness is like filthy rags. That day I understood what it means to come in Jesus' name, to pray in the name of Jesus.

That means when I come to the Lord, I'm saying, Lord, I'm not glorying in this dress I have, this fine good deed I did. I want the robe to cover even my good deeds. I want to be clothed in the righteousness of Christ.

And in Christ's name I come. Then I can get what I want. But if I come in my name, I won't get it.

And I'll tell you this, the great danger here is for those who were brought up in God-fearing homes. That was good. And you did not commit the gross sins that some other people committed.

You are in greater danger of coming to God with your own righteousness. The adulterous woman, the woman divorced five times like Samaritan woman, the thief on the cross, they're glad to take the role because their own garments are stinking and filthy. But those of us who lived good lives, I'm not saying we should have lived bad lives.

We are the ones in danger. Does it mean we have to commit sin in order to feel that way? No. One of the most righteous men in the New Testament was the Apostle Paul.

He could say from childhood, I have lived with a good conscience. He could say at the age of 65 to a judge in a court, imagine a man who was so, never murdered anybody, never committed adultery and kept the Ten Commandments, such an upright life from childhood. That man towards the end of his life, he says, when I look at my life, I feel in the light of God I'm the chiefest of sinners.

So he could never despise anyone. So there we have an example of a man who was more righteous from his childhood than any of us and yet who felt that he was the chiefest of sinners in God's eyes. He couldn't despise anybody.

But there were other Pharisees exactly like Paul who had lived a very upright life from childhood who couldn't feel like that. They didn't want Christ because they said our life is pretty good and they despised others. They looked down on adulterous women.

They looked down on people who were sinful, even a crooked tax collector, they would look down on because they felt they were so righteous. So it's the ones who have lived a good life who find it difficult to accept this role. I want to ask you, how do you come before Christ? How do you come to God in prayer? Do you recognize that even if you've been a believer 50 years, I see that myself.

You know the story of the people who came to work at the first hour of the day and others who came at the 11th hour, who worked for only one hour, the other people worked for 12 hours and they got the same payment at the end of the day. The meaning there is at whatever time you've come, you came to the Lord 50 years ago, you came to the Lord yesterday, you're still accepted. You're made equal when it comes to acceptance before God.

Rewards may be different, but acceptance before God is equal. The brother who was converted yesterday can come to God with exactly the same freedom that I can come. I don't have greater freedom.

I come before God with a robe of Christ's righteousness. He comes before God in the robe of Christ's righteousness. That's how we are accepted.

If you've understood that, you've understood justification. And when you understand justification, you will never, one test of it is, you will not look down on another believer. Well, you know the answer in your own case, whether it's true or not.

We may disagree with them, but we will not look down on them. And it's through being justified by faith, we read in Romans 5 and verse 1. Romans 5 verse 1. It's through being justified by faith that we have peace with God. Otherwise you won't have peace.

It's not enough to have your sins forgiven. You must have this robe of righteousness which Christ gives you. And all that you need, the only qualification that you need to accept it, is humility.

You know, like the man who came with a suit, compares himself with a beggar who's in rags, and says, I don't need a robe. He needs a robe. He's in rags, but me, look at me, I dress pretty good.

That's the righteous man who feels, I'm okay. I'm not like that wretched sinner. I remember telling one nominal Christian who came to one of our meetings, my meetings in some place, I said, the trouble with you is you're coming to God as Christians, and I'm sorry to say Jesus Christ did not die for Christians.

He was surprised. Jesus Christ didn't die for Christians, and who did he die for? I said, he died for sinners. You come to God as a Christian or a Muslim or a Hindu, he didn't die for you, sorry.

He died for sinners. So I said, if you come to Christ as a sinner, he'll accept you. But you think you're a pretty good Christian, he'll never accept you in a hundred years.

He says, I didn't come for the righteous. I came for sinners. This is sick people who need a doctor, not the healthy people.

So this is very important. So this is fundamental, and once we come there, then we move on to the next. I told you there are two problems we have.

One is our past and the other is this nature that troubles us in the future. Then we have this nature, and this is the problem which, if you're really serious about being free from it, God will lead you further. But if you have accepted that condition saying, oh, I'll never be free from it.

Like, you know, if your scooter has a problem and you say, well, nobody in the world can fix it, then you ride your scooter or your car with that problem continuously. But it can be fixed. You don't have to go with that rattling noise all the time.

You don't have to destroy your engine with something rattling inside all the time. It can be fixed. Why not accept that? Someone who says, I can fix it for you.

I fixed many other cars. And that's what Jesus says. We don't have to live with this constant defeat by anger, this constant defeat with sexually impure thinking, ways of thinking, and defeated by internet pornography.

We don't have to be. I want to tell you the good news. You don't have to be a slave to any of these things, things that you're ashamed of, that you do in your private life in secret in the dark.

You don't have to be ashamed of. You don't have to feel at all well. The things that you are ashamed of, you don't have to feel that you cannot get victory.

You are ashamed to admit it publicly, right? But I want to tell you in Jesus' name, this is the message of the gospel. He can set you free. And that's why I believe what Paul says, I'm not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, because it is not a message, he says in Romans 1, 14, 15, 16.

It's the power of God. There's a lot of difference between knowing the gospel as a message of forgiveness of sins and the power of God unto salvation. Have you seen that verse? We looked at it the very first time.

We looked at Romans chapter 1 and verse 16. I'm not ashamed of the gospel, because it's not just a message. It is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, whoever you are, self-righteous person or sinner.

Let's put it like that. It is the power of God, not a message that says your sins are forgiven, a power. And I feel that a power of God for salvation.

Salvation means being free from something, being pulled out of the pit, delivered from the chains that bind me, set free. It is the power of God. So if we are eager for that, if you say, Lord, I'm sick and tired of this.

First of all, I was problem with my guilt. Now thank God you're dealt with that. And now, Lord, I'm sick and tired of this being constantly defeated in this area.

It looks as sometimes there's one big sin in some of your lives that stands up in front of you like Goliath. In the Old Testament, Goliath stood before the armies of Israel and sent a man. He said, who can fight with me, you cowards? Nobody could go.

Everybody was trembling, the whole army of Israel. They couldn't, till one little boy called David. He wasn't stronger than Goliath.

He came with faith. Many, you know, we tell children that David killed Goliath with a stone. It wasn't really that.

It was his faith. You can't kill a giant with a stone. It was his faith in God.

He said, you come to me with sword and spear. David said, I come to you in the name of the Lord whom you have defied. That should be our attitude to any sin that overpowers you.

Sin and Satan. You say that you come to me with all your power. You have made me your slave for so many years to this habit.

But I come to you in the name of Jesus who has conquered sin. And I believe I can conquer sin. I can conquer sin in the secret areas of my life.

I can conquer sin in my home so that my home becomes a little more like heaven. The peace and joy of heaven begin to rule in your home. Don't you want that? Well, that's for those who are really eager for it.

You know, one of the things I've discovered in the Christian life is God won't force something on you. If God were the type of person who forced people, forced things on people, everybody would go to heaven. Everybody in the world would become a, would have their sins forgiven and then go to heaven.

Why is it such a small percentage of people are going into God's kingdom? Because God doesn't force anyone. Because if he forced people, you would become a robot. And God doesn't want robots just like you don't want robots.

Supposing a married couple haven't had children for many years and you tell them, well, we make a nice robot for you. Nice robot that comes and says, hello daddy, hello mommy, and does so many things. Will you be happy? We make two robots, if you like, so they can play with each other also.

You say, no thanks. I'm not interested. Give me one child.

Well, that can be a naughty one. Never mind. I'd rather have that.

God is like that. We were made in the image of God. God doesn't want robots who are programmed to do what is right.

He won't program you to automatically do what is right. That's why he doesn't possess you like demons. I've seen demon possessed people.

They don't have control over themselves. They say things they don't want to say. They do things they don't want to do because a demon controls them.

The Holy Spirit never controls people. That's why you read of demon possession and Holy Spirit filling. Different.

The Holy Spirit never possesses and demons never fill. Demons possess. The Holy Spirit fills.

That means he gives you freedom. He gives us the power but says, I want you to use it. But he won't control us.

In fact, he gives us self-control. So, that's why God doesn't want robots. So, he wants children and that's why he gives us freedom.

He doesn't force us to go to heaven and he won't force us to overcome sin. That's why you have so many believers defeated, defeated, defeated because they're not eager about it or they don't believe it can work. First of all, if the devil can convince you that you will never overcome that sin.

If the devil could have convinced David, you can never kill Goliath. Impossible, man. Forget it.

Go home. Goliath would not have been killed. Israel would have been slaves.

And I'm convinced that the devil has convinced many of you that some filthy habit in your life, you'll never overcome it. Impossible. See, you've had it all your life.

He said, don't you remember your dad? What a fiery temper he had. And he used to tell you how your grandfather had that. It's, it's, you've inherited it, man.

You got to live with it. Rubbish. They didn't know Christ.

They didn't know the salvation that Christ purchased. I'm not better than them, but I've understood the gospel as the power of God. If you're eager, eager, the rest of what I have to say is only for such people.

The others can listen. No objection. But the ones who will experience it are the ones who are eager.

So we go to Romans 6. What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin so that grace may increase? That's the question. Just because Christ forgives so easily, shall we keep on sinning? No. A thousand times no.

May it never be. How can we who died to sin still live in it? You see, this is a new truth that comes out in Romans 6. That Christ not only forgave us, but there's something he did on the cross, which, where we died. Something in us was killed there.

When you become born again, it becomes a reality. Now this is a mystery, you know, but think of this. How could Christ have died 2,000 years ago for sins you're committing today? Is that possible? I mean, if you say, well, he died for all those who sinned before him, we can understand.

But he paid in advance for all the debts you're going to incur in the future. Okay, we can grasp that a little bit. Maybe Christ paid my debt in advance so that when I incur that debt, it's already cleared.

Our mind can grasp that. That all the sins I committed in my life, Christ died for already 2,000 years ago. But when this comes to this new truth that I, who was born here in the 20th century, has died with Christ, that becomes a little more difficult for us to understand.

And for us to understand that, we need to think of one truth that the Bible says in Ephesians 1.4, that God knew us before the worlds were created, because God knows the future. He knows the whole future, and he knew your name before you were born. He knew your name before your grandparents were born.

He knew your name before Adam was created. Ephesians 1.4 teaches that, and it's a great truth. You don't find these truths in the Old Testament.

But the New Testament, the full revelation, the Holy Spirit came into man, has taught us that God knew me before the worlds were created. And he, not only that, he placed me in Christ before the worlds were created, because he knew that at some point in time, I would give my life to Christ. So God knew that and put me in Christ, in his mind, way back in eternity.

To me, it's a very comforting truth, that I'm in Christ from then. So when Christ, if I was put in Christ in God's mind before the worlds were created, when Christ died on the cross, I died with him, because I was in him, in God's mind, even though I didn't physically exist till the 20th century. And when Christ died, I died with him.

When Christ was buried, I was buried with him. When Christ rose again, I rose again with him. When Christ ascended to heaven, I ascended to heaven with him, in my spirit.

This is the glorious truth that you find in Romans 6. Perhaps you did not know it, that that is what you testified to in baptism. When you went into the waters of baptism, you were saying, I was buried with Christ. When you came out of the waters, you were saying, I rose again with Christ.

Maybe you didn't know it, but that's what it is. Romans 6, 4, therefore we were buried with Christ through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead, through the glory of the Father, now we can walk as new people. New people, not the old people were buried.

The old person was buried, now a new person, because your old man, knowing this, verse 6, that our old man was crucified with Christ. You know, Paul discovered this. He says in Galatians 2, 20, I am crucified with Christ.

This is the way to go into the life of victory. We finished with our past problem, now we are thinking about nature and our future problem. But to recognize that this desire to sin, that's the old man.

The old man is this desire to sin, wanting to sin, wanting to sin, was killed. And a new man was put into us that does not want to sin. That is the mark of a truly born-again person, that he does not want to sin.

Now don't misunderstand me. I'm not saying he does not sin. I'm saying he doesn't want to sin.

Have you found in your life that sometimes you don't want to sin, but you did? That didn't mean you were not born again. It meant you were not strong enough. If I were to use an illustration, in your unconverted days, this old man was like an unfaithful servant who always opened the door of your heart for all the

wickedness to come in.

Come in, come in. Steal my purity, steal my joy, steal my patience, steal everything, make me angry, make me bitter, make me lustful. The door was open.

That old man that wanted to invite wickedness into the heart is killed. God put a new man inside when we are born again, which says, I'm not going to open the door. And the same old wicked fellows come, say, I'm not going to open the door.

Then how do those wicked people get in? Because the new man doesn't eat properly. He doesn't exercise properly, so he's not strong enough. He tries to keep the door shut, but he's been too lazy to exercise and not careful about his food and his diet.

And so he's weak. He wants to keep wickedness out, but he can't. The believer sins.

The same wickedness came into his heart, but you can't say the servant wanted. He didn't open the door like the old fellow. He tried his best, like you try your best sometimes not to sin, not to get angry.

You don't want to go to that internet dirty site, but somehow you went. I'm not saying that proves you're not born again. It does prove that you didn't feed the new man properly.

It's like an illiterate man who got converted and really born again. And the one who brought him to the Lord met him about a year later and said, how is it going? He said, well, in the old days there was no battle inside me, but now I find a battle. It's like two dogs fighting inside me, a black dog and a white dog.

And the person asked him, which dog is winning? He said, that depends on which dog I feed. That's the dog that wins. Well, he got the theology right.

Whichever dog you feed, that's the dog that's going to win. Your flesh or your new man. So if we neglect scripture, for example, you don't read the Bible because you're too busy.

Television is more interesting. And you don't spend time in prayer and seeking God. You know, too lazy to get up 15 minutes earlier.

And you don't seek fellowship with other godly people. You just come for the meetings, listen to a message and go away. And you don't seek for fellowship.

You don't read good Christian books that can challenge you. You're weak. What happens when those wicked fellows come to the door? You try your best to keep the door shut, but you can't.

You're weak. You're too weak. They just walk right in.

That's the tragedy. So that's why God gives us, you know, gives us the Holy Spirit, but he won't force us. Because if he forced us, we'd become robots.

So Romans 6 speaks about this. And then in Romans 7, it speaks about a marriage to the law. Now I want to try and explain this.

And one of the best ways I found to explain it is as three marriages. In our unconverted days, we are married to the old man who is a very evil man, makes us do all types of wrong things. It's like having a wicked husband who, you know, makes you as a wife to go and have sex with other men and harms you

and hurts you and troubles you.

And you're sick and tired of being married to this man. And one day that man dies and you say, Hallelujah, I'm free. That's the day you're converted.

That wicked man is dead. The old man is dead. And now you're looking for another husband and you find this perfect gentleman who never does anything wrong, perfectly right.

And you say, ah, this is the person I want to marry. This must be Christ. And you marry him and you discover it's not Christ.

It's God's law. You married the commandments upright, never asked you to do one single wrong thing, never hurt you, never harm you, never beat you. You see, this is a pretty good husband.

Ah, but just wait a minute. He says, I want everything perfect in the house. When I say breakfast at 8 o'clock, it must be there at 8 o'clock.

I don't believe in 8-0-1, 8-0-0. Clothes must be perfectly washed without a spot on it, no wrinkle. When you iron the clothes, there must not be a single wrinkle in it.

And the shoes must be perfectly polished and the house must be perfectly spotless 24 hours a day. And you wonder, wow, is this marriage better or the old one better? This is how so many Christians are living. There are demands, do this, do this, do that.

You haven't read your Bible today for half an hour. What are you doing? You hear these voices inside of law. Why didn't you spend a half an hour in prayer today? Law.

And he's not asking you to do anything evil. He's not asking you to tell lies or commit adultery. Only right things.

Demand, demand, demand. And everything he demands is absolutely right. You can't complain about it.

And your life is a torture. You don't want the old one. The old man was worse.

But this new one doesn't seem to, he's better in one way. He doesn't beat you and hammer you, but your mind is tortured because you never can come up to his standard. And everything he asks for is right.

You acknowledge that. What he's asking for is right, but you can't live up to it. And you wish, now like the old man, he will also die.

God will kill him. But God will never kill his law. His law is perfect.

It's forever. He's got no blood pressure, no diabetes, no heart problem. He's going to live forever.

And you're, once you've discovered that, you feel I'm hopeless. This husband of mine is going to live forever. He's perfect.

Does God have a solution for that? Would you have a solution for it? If you were in that type of situation, what would you do? God has the wisdom of God. The Bible says, you know, that the married woman, verse 2, Romans 7, 2, is bound by law to her husband while he's living. You know, in marriage, they say in marriage, until death parts us.

It's not forever. That's why once your husband or wife die, it's perfectly right, even in God's eyes, to marry again. So the marriage is only as long as the husband is living, or we can say as long as the wife is living.

If your husband dies, you can marry again. So here the husband is never going to die. So what to do? How to break this marriage? God has a wonderful way.

He kills the wife. He kills you in Christ. And then marriage is over.

It's wonderful. I'm finished. But then he raises you up.

So you become alive again. And now you say, I'm not going to make that mistake again. Now I'm going to marry for the third time.

And this time it's going to be Jesus Christ. So it says here in Romans 7, verse 4, brethren, you were made to die. You, the wife, were made to die to the husband, the law, so that you can be married to another, the one who was raised from the dead.

That's Christ, so that we can bear children for God. Fruit for God means now I'm married to Christ. And like in a husband and wife have children, now I can have children in my life.

Service, worship, so many things. Those are the children, the fruit I can bear for God, because now I'm united to Christ. But now when I'm united to Christ, I find that, oh, Christ is just as demanding as the law.

He also says breakfast at 8 o'clock, there must be no wrinkle on the clothes. Do you think his standard is less than the law? No, it's even higher. But the difference is, he comes into the kitchen and says, let's make breakfast together.

Let's iron the clothes together. I'll help you polish the shoes. I'll help you sweep the floor.

Wow. Wouldn't you girls like a husband like that? That's Jesus Christ. And you struggle and struggle with Christ's help, and you manage.

You know, you're the lazy type who makes breakfast by 12 noon every day. But with Christ's help, you manage to make it by 11 after a few years. And then finally, the Lord says, don't worry, don't worry.

We'll do it. After a few years, it becomes 10 o'clock. A few years, 9 o'clock.

And one day, 8 o'clock. You've made it. This is progression to perfection.

That's what we go into Romans 8, the life in the Holy Spirit. And here, in life in the Holy Spirit, it says about what the law could not do, verse 3. What is it the law could not do? That husband could never help you to come to this life. He was demanding, demanding, demanding.

He would never help you to come to this life. But what the law could not do, God did. Isn't that a wonderful truth? God sent his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and condemned sin in the flesh, so that now what the law required, breakfast at 8 o'clock, perfectly polished shoes, verse 4, can be fulfilled through Christ helping us.

Christ, you know, when you say the Spirit is living in us, that's the same as Christ living in us. When you ask a person, receive Jesus Christ into your heart, you're really asking him to receive the Holy Spirit. Christ is in heaven.

How does he come into your heart? Through the Holy Spirit. When you say, Lord Jesus, come into your heart, it's the Holy Spirit who comes in. Don't let get confused.

You may not be filled with the Holy Spirit because you haven't yielded every area of your life to the Holy Spirit. But when you ask Jesus, come into my heart, it's the Spirit of Christ that comes in. It says that here in Romans 8 and verse 9, Romans 8 9. If you don't have the Spirit of Christ, you don't even belong to him.

Spirit of Christ is the Holy Spirit. You're not even born again. But then, if you don't yield yourself completely to be filled with the Holy Spirit, you know, our heart is like a house with ten rooms and one room we always want clean completely.

That's the guilt room. We don't like that room dark. Oh Lord, come and get rid of my guilt.

And he comes in and there's light in one room. But there could be nine other rooms where you haven't opened up to him. Your television room, your CD and DVD room, the books you read, your finances room.

You say, Lord, don't come in there because certain things you may not like. He won't come in. That room remains dark.

And you pray and pray and fast. Oh God, fill me with the Holy Spirit. How can he fill you with the Holy Spirit when you lock the door to some rooms in your life? There are many people praying to be baptized and filled with the Holy Spirit.

But they kept all the doors locked and asked God to fill them with the Holy Spirit. It's like if you pull all the curtains in your windows and say, oh sunshine, come in, come in, come in. It's not going to come in.

Pull the curtains, open the doors, the light will come right in. Light is just waiting to come in. Spirit of God is just waiting to fill your life.

So don't let people deceive you that if you go and get some guy to put his empty hands on your head, you'll get filled with the Holy Spirit. Rubbish. You just open your heart, every area of your heart to God and the Spirit of God will help you.

And here it speaks about Christ coming in the flesh. This is such an important thing. Not in sinful flesh, because there was no sin in him, in the likeness.

That means outwardly he appeared to have the same, but there was one big element missing. Sin was missing in his flesh, but it was the flesh. And that's why it says in Hebrews, he could be tempted like we are.

And so let me close there. The life of Jesus began with a miracle, the virgin birth. Nobody in history ever had a virgin birth.

You know, a woman having a child without a husband. It ended with a miracle, the resurrection from the dead. Nobody in history ever, there were people who raised and who died again like Lazarus, but resurrection permanently with a new body never happened.

The beginning and end of Jesus' life was a miracle and in between. I was just reading an article that my son Sandeep wrote for the Malayalam magazine, saying, how do you know, he was answering a question, how do you know that Jesus is the only way? Why do you insist on that? And he says there are so many

things you could say, virgin birth, et cetera, resurrection, but he says, I think of another miracle. And that really spoke to my heart, what he said there.

That was the miracle of living 33 years, 33 and a half years without sinning. And he said there, have you thought of trying to live, I mean, think of this, trying to live one day without sinning at all, without sinning in thought, word, deed, attitude, motive, perfectly pure, just for 24 hours, at stuff, in a filthy world. I mean, you can do it in heaven, but on this earth, and then you think of someone who lived like that day after day, tempted like you and me, don't forget, every day tempted like you and me, morning till night, not sinning one day, two days, three days, 33 and a half years.

So he says in that article, that's why I believe he's the way, the truth, and the life. And I see there, there's a truth there. And I believe many of us haven't seen it, that the secret of godliness is that Christ came in a flesh like ours, was tempted exactly, and did not sin.

There was no sin in him, in that sense, his flesh was not the same, but he was tempted like us. Okay, forget the flesh part, he was tempted like us, and did not sin. Not just tempted, not tempted like Adam, but Hebrews 4 15 says, tempted like us, and did not sin.

And therefore it says in Hebrews 2 18, he can run to help anyone who's being tempted today. This is the secret of the Christian life, to be filled with the Holy Spirit, and to see that Jesus was tempted like me. I remember many years ago, when I first discovered this truth, it changed the direction of my life completely.

I said Lord, whenever I was tempted, struggling with something, I'd say Lord, in Nazareth you were tempted like this, exactly like I'm being tempted now. Now I want to have the same attitude that you had then. And the Spirit of God shows me what attitude Jesus had, and gives me the strength to have that attitude.

And I found I could overcome discouragement, depression, lust, anger, love of money, little by little by little. Boy, it became real. And I saw the truth of that statement in 1 Timothy 3 16.

Great is the secret of godliness. Christ came in the flesh. Or as the Bible says, it's a beautiful paraphrase, it's true, he says, the way to live a godly life is not an easy matter.

But the answer lies in Christ, who came to earth as a man, was tempted like us, and did not sin. Many of us have understood perhaps being filled with the Holy Spirit. Perhaps you haven't seen Jesus.

Look unto Jesus, and you will run this race, and you'll be an overcomer. The whole secret of the Christian life is there. Once I discovered it, I spent all these past years looking at Jesus.

That's why I'm never discouraged. I'll tell you honestly, this is the truth. For many, many years, I'm never discouraged, because I look unto Jesus.

I'm tempted, but I resist it. I look unto Jesus, tempted in many ways, but I look unto Jesus. This is the secret.

I want to encourage all of you to see it, dear brothers and sisters. Some of you have been here many years, but you haven't progressed. It grieves my heart to say that.

I pray that the coming year will be different. God bless you. Let's pray.

Heavenly Father, help us to honor you in our earthly life. We have only one opportunity you give us on earth, to show our love for you. To show how much we've been forgiven, our gratitude, our love, our affection, and a life of devotion to you.

Please help us to live this one life without being foolish, but as wise. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

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