

Born into a new humanity

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[0 : 0 0] I'll turn, if you would, to Paul's letters to the Romans in chapter 6. And we're looking at verses 1 to 14 this morning.

It's all about being born into a new humanity. What does it mean to be a Christian believer? And what does the life of faith really look like?

That's a very important question, isn't it? Especially today when the word faith has come to mean so little among so many, certainly much less than it means in the Bible.

But in Romans, Paul uses its fuller title, the obedience of faith, just to make very clear that faith isn't just something that's confined to the head. It's not just something that you understand or believe intellectually.

Rather, it's something that commands a person's whole identity and loyalty, their whole life. Faith changes everything.

[1 : 0 4] Because Christ changes everything when he takes charge of our lives by his sovereign grace received by faith. And that's what Paul is teaching over and over again in these great central chapters of the letter to the Romans.

A believer is one, he says, who is justified by grace from sin's guilt. And therefore, he already has peace with God, as chapter 5, verse 1 says.

And therefore, he has guaranteed the glory of a full salvation that is yet to come in the resurrection age. Look at verse 10 of chapter 5. Having been justified, he says, much more shall we be saved from the wrath of God.

Saved in his life. That is, his risen life. And that is certain, because as we saw last time in verses 12 to 21 of chapter 5, Paul tells us so wonderfully that the ruin of our humanity in Adam has been more than reversed by the one man, Jesus Christ.

As in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive. We've been rescued. We've been redeemed.

[2 : 2 0] Out, says verse 21 of chapter 5, out of the realm where sin and death reigned, and into a new realm. The kingdom where grace reigns through righteousness, leading to eternal life, through our great Redeemer, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

So let's get this very, very clear in our minds. The redemption that is in Christ Jesus, as Paul calls it back in chapter 3, verse 24, that redemption involves two things.

Both, a declaration that liberates us from sin's guilt, and therefore its condemnation against us. That's justification. A declaration of righteousness, the very opposite to a declaration of condemnation.

We're justified by grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, he says in chapter 3, verse 24. It's a declaration, but also, says Paul, it is a deliverance that liberates us from sin's power that reigns over us.

Look at chapter 5, verse 18. Christ's one act of righteousness, his righteousness, not ours, leads, Paul says, to justification and life for all men.

[3 : 43] Literally, justification into life. You can't have the one without the other. By faith, the righteous shall live. That's the motto of the whole book.

Chapter 1, verse 17. To be a forgiven person in Christ is to be a new person in Christ, says Paul. It's to have a new identity. It's to have been moved, rescued out of the disastrous, death-bound family of Adam and adopted into the wonderful, life-giving family of Christ.

And when a court declares an adoption to be granted, then everything changes permanently from that moment on, doesn't it? Perhaps that child has been rescued from a background of disaster, perhaps a drug-dependent mother, perhaps a violent home, a place of damage, a place of death.

But they're into a new home with new parents, with a new family, with a new name, a new identity, a new hope of life for the future. Everything is changed.

And that's what it means to have been justified. The declaration of God's righteousness constitutes a whole new life for those who are in Christ Jesus, who are in union with him forever.

[5 : 10] And so forgiveness and justification from sin's guilt means always liberation from sin's power, from its dominion, from its rule over us.

Listen to how Paul puts it in Colossians chapter 1, verse 13. Just listen. He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of his beloved Son in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

forgiveness and deliverance are two sides of the same coin. Or perhaps better, two blessings that come from the same union with Christ that we have by faith through the Holy Spirit.

That's why John Calvin said famously that to imagine that God bestows free justification upon us without also imparting newness of life shamefully rends Christ asunder, rips him in half.

Whereas these two things can never be separated. So what that means is that for the true Christian believer and for the true Christian church, not only is the past dealt with forever, not only is the future assured and guaranteed forever, but so also the present life is transformed forever.

[6 : 38] Nothing just remains the same as it was before. Nothing. We live now no longer as those who are bound naturally to Adam in the darkness and the domain of death.

But rather, we are bound supernaturally by the Spirit of God to Christ in the kingdom of life. And that changes everything. That's so important for us to grasp that Paul restates that three times, adding colors, if you like, to the picture that he's given us in the second half of chapter 5.

To be no longer in Adam, but in Christ, means first in chapter 6, verses 1 to 14, that we've been born into a new humanity, a new realm, with a new ruler to honor and fight for.

Look at verse 11. It's the true humanity of life. We're alive to God in Christ Jesus. Then in verses 15 to 23, he tells us that we now belong to a new household.

We have a new master to serve and to obey. Again, notice verse 23. It's the true household of life. We have eternal life in Christ Jesus. And then again, another color in chapter 7, verses 1 to 6.

[7 : 52] He says we're bound to a new husband. We have a new lover, a new life giver to please and to bear fruit for. And again, chapter 7, verse 6.

It's at last the true relationship of life, the new life of the Spirit. Well, we're going to look at all of these, but today we've just got time to look at the first 14 verses of chapter 6.

And they begin, if you look at it, with a question that might naturally arise following that great and glorious climax in chapter 5 about sin's reign and death's reign being destroyed through Christ and grace now reigning leading to eternal life in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Here's a question. Okay, Paul, that's marvelous. That really is. The hope of eternal life. It's wonderful. But what about now? What does it mean to be a Christian now?

Where does my present experience fit into that great scheme of things? I'm having trouble, Paul, just squaring that with the reality of my own life. I seem to be still living in this world of Adam.

[9 : 06] This world of sin and death. I still sin. And this mortal body of mine, it's a body of death. It's still going to die. Why? That's true of all of you too this morning, isn't it?

If any of you think that you are entirely free from sin and your body is never going to die, well, there's really no point in staying for the rest of this sermon. You can go and get your coffee now. We'll just see you in heaven.

But Paul is saying, Lord, is this as good as it gets? Verse 1, are we to, literally, are we to remain in sin in this world of sin and death under its rule and power so that grace may be abounding?

Are we just to go on as before? Thankful, yes, for daily forgiveness, longing for future perfection in life, but in the meantime pretty much resigned to the same old, same old life as before.

Same old habits, same old sins, same old addictions, same failure. nothing all that different really until Jesus comes.

[10 : 18] Is that really all there is to the Christian life? It seems to me that that's the question that Paul's asking here in verse 1. I know often it is taken differently from that.

It's taken as a cynical question. As though somebody was saying, aha, isn't this wonderful? God's free grace means I can do as I like so I can sin more and more and more and God's grace will abound.

Well, it's possible it could be that, but that actually isn't what it says. It doesn't say, as the NIV translates, shall we go on sinning? It says, shall we remain in sin?

Meaning, under the domain of sin. Certainly, if it is that cynical question, then Paul's answer firmly scotches that whole attitude. But I don't think that is how we're to take this question.

In chapter 3, verse 8, that was the question. But if you look at that, you'll see that Paul doesn't even deign to answer that question. He just dismisses it. It's ridiculous. But here, he does answer the question and I think he does so because it's a genuine question.

[11 : 25] It's a question that we often find ourselves and other people asking. I've never actually met anybody who said to me, wait, now I'm a Christian, I can live the life of Riley and God's grace will abound.

I've never met anybody who said that to me. Perhaps I have been. But I have met many, many Christians who look at their own life and their experience and they say, well, is this it?

Is this as good as it gets? And who either settle down then to a mediocre Christian life, expecting very little or no transformation and even excusing the lack of transformation in their life by it, or, they're more earnest, who seek out something else, something more, something to add to the experience that they feel must be missing in their Christian life.

I've met lots of people like that. So you've got the lazy Christians who are content with the gospel minus, for whom holiness doesn't really matter all that much and they're quite content really to, yes, say I'm a Christian but just go on living pretty much like the rest of the world does round about.

And on the other hand, you get the earnest Christian to whom holiness does matter and they therefore resort to the gospel plus because they think that faith alone, well, yes, that frees me from my guilt of my sin but to really get on in a Christian experience, to really make it as a victorious Christian, well, somehow I need more, perhaps a new discipline of a law or regulations to follow that will help me overcome the sin in my life.

[13 : 06] Or perhaps a new experience, a second blessing, a new baptism of the Holy Spirit, something that at last will enable me now to really die to sin and live that glorious spirit-filled life as I long to do.

Well, Paul's answer is the answer to both these, very wrong and very damaging perceptions, which alas are all too common in the Christian church today.

And his answer is there in verse 2, it's categorical. Are we to remain in sin? Is that all there is? By no means, says Paul, no.

No, Mr. Lazy Christian, you can't go on before as though sin didn't matter. And no, Mr. Earnest Christian, you don't need to go and find a way of dying to sin's power in your life as though you need some new experience.

Both of you, listen. You have died to sin already, says Paul. How can we who died to sin still live in it?

[14 : 16] The we there is emphatic. He's saying we by very definition are people who have died to sin. It's an oxymoron then to say that you can be a Christian and remain living under the power of sin.

It's rather like somebody saying to most of us, Scotsmen, do you support England at rugby? Us? Us?

We're Scotsmen. By very definition, it's impossible that we could support England at rugby. I love my dear brother Edward Lobb down there. I love Rupert Hunt Taylor, all the other Englishmen here, but watch rugby with them and support England.

It's just an impossibility. It will never, ever, ever, ever, ever happen. Not ever. I remember once when I was in London watching a Scotland-England rugby match with my friend Richard Culkin and Jason Robinson was running rings around the Scots and scoring tries and I was looking miserable.

He turned to me and said, why aren't you cheering? He's a Christian brother. I said, he's a dirty English Christian brother.

[15 : 36] When he's on the rugby pitch, this is all confined to the rugby pitch, by the way. Don't worry if you're English here for the first time. Many of us are and we love you. But not on the rugby pitch.

You get the point, don't you? By very definition, says Paul, we are the people who have died to sin, died to its power and authority. How can we possibly be people then who remain living under its power and authority?

We can't. It's as simple as that. So, look at verse 11. He says, we must consider, or rather reckon ourselves to be dead to sin and alive to God in Jesus Christ.

It's a whole new life. And we must do so because it really is true, verse 14. For sin will have no dominion, no lordship over you, since you are not under the rule of law, but under the rule of grace.

And therefore, verses 12 and 13, we must not live as though it weren't true. We're not to serve the realm and rule of sin, but rather we're to serve the realm and rule of righteousness.

[17 : 01] And that's Paul's argument really in a nutshell. But we need to have a closer look as to what it means that we really are dead to sin and how it's come about. So I want to consider verses 2 to 11 where Paul expounds the reality of our redemption, our liberation from sin, and then verses 12 to 14 briefly, which lay out the responsibility of that redemption.

Paul is insistent that we recognize the reality of our redemption in Christ Jesus. That's the answer to both the lazy Christian, careless about holiness, and the earnest Christian who is seeking for holiness but in wrong ways and ultimately in destructive ways.

What both of these people need to realize is that it's not a better salvation that we need to grasp for, but it's a better grasp of the great salvation that is already ours that we need to reckon on.

And these two words are crucial in Christ. To be a Christian is to be in Christ Jesus, says Paul, united to Christ once and for all and forever by faith.

United with him in his death to sin and therefore united with him in his risen victorious life to God, once and for all and forever. John Murray, the great theologian, says that union with Christ is the central truth of the whole doctrine of salvation.

[18 : 35] And that is absolutely so. And that's why these verses are so crucial for us to understand. They're not easy. Paul repeats himself several times to reinforce the message.

So let me try and put the argument for you into a few clear statements to try and make Paul's logic clear. First of all, look at verses 9 and 10. They focus on what Christ's death and resurrection mean for him.

Verse 10, Christ died to sin once for all. That's why verse 9 says, being raised from the dead, that is bodily, he will never die again.

Death no longer has dominion, has lordship over him. No, he is dead to sin. The life, the risen life he lives, he lives to God.

Christ died to sin. What does that mean? Well, Paul's already told us that Christ died for sin, to pay sin's penalty, but here it says he died to sin, just as it says he now lives to God.

[19 : 47] And what Paul is saying is that Jesus, as the new Adam, as the true Adam, reversed the tragedy of the first Adam. Through Adam, sin's power overtook the world of humanity, so that sin reigned in death.

Sin became king, and it ruled as a dominating power over natural human beings. Now, notice how all the way through this passage, sin is spoken of, as it were, with a capital S.

Sin is a power. Chapter 5, verse 21, talks about sin as a king, reigning. chapter 6, verse 9, and verse 14, speak about sin as a tyrant having dominion, having lordship over people.

Verse 23, of chapter 6, speaks about sin as a brutal employer, paying out wages. The grim wages that he pays is death. Sin is a controlling, domineering power that rules.

But Jesus died to sin, and death no longer has dominion or lordship over him. Now, of course, Jesus was not by nature sinful, as we are, but the thing is that in his saving love, he became sin for us, Paul says.

[21 : 19] He put himself as fully man, under the power of sin and death. That must have been so, because Jesus died. And death is the wage paid by the overlord's sin.

But having received that wage, he died, and sin no longer has any power over him, no hold whatsoever. As long as your employer owes you wages or share options or whatever it is to tie you into him, he owns you, doesn't he?

He can't leave. He's got a hold on you. But once all those Jews have been paid, you're free to go. There's nothing anymore to hold you back. And so it was for Jesus.

And the proof of that was that he rose again from the dead, never to die again. That was a final and definitive victory over sin as a ruling power.

The death, he died to sin, he died once for all, says Paul, and therefore, the life he lives, he lives to God. That is in real, bodily, human, resurrection life, in God's presence and for God's glory forever and ever.

[22 : 31] That's a truth, says Paul, about Christ, the last Adam, the new and the true human being. We know that, he says in verse 9. Christ is raised, death and sin will never lord it over him again.

Alright then, says Paul, now grasp what that means for us. Here's the second thing. We were united with Christ in his death when we received the free gift of righteousness by faith.

We really died with him. Now to emphasize that, Paul says that six times in these verses in slightly different ways.

Look at verse 3. Don't you know that that's what having become a Christian disciple means, he says. A disciple is someone who's baptized into Christ Jesus.

Notice, by the way, that here as everywhere else in the New Testament, there's no such thing as a secret inward Christian who isn't one outwardly. You believe and you belong publicly to Christ and his church together.

[23 : 39] You believe in your heart and you confess with your mouth, says Paul in Romans 10, unto salvation. So you're baptized into Christ Jesus and you're baptized into his body, the church, as Paul puts it in 1 Corinthians 12.

But don't you realize what that means, says Paul here? You were baptized, verse 3, into Christ's death. It says it again in verse 4.

You were buried with him, verse 4, into the absolute finality of his death. verse 5, we were united with him, planted together with him in the likeness of his death, a death full of amazing, far-reaching consequences for sin.

Verse 6, again, we were crucified with him. Verse 7, we have died, and again, we have died with Christ. Has he said it enough times? Do we get the picture?

I think we do. Receiving the gift of righteousness of justification and forgiveness means that the old life, the life we once were, is dead.

[24 : 49] It's gone. It's buried forever, full stop, in the death of Jesus. In 2 Corinthians 5, verse 17, Paul summarizes it rather beautifully.

If anyone is in Christ, he says, he is a new creation. The old has passed away, behold, the new has come. Yes, not only is the old me dead and gone, dead and buried, but the new me has been born.

Look at the second half of verse 4. We really did die with him, says Paul, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we also might walk in newness of life.

Okay, Christ died to sin once for all, so sin no more has dominion over him. The life he lives, he lives to God. We died with him in his death.

Therefore, here's the third part of Paul's argument, we also are people whose identity now is defined by being dead to sin.

[26 : 02] Once and for all liberated from its power and alive to God in Jesus Christ. Christ. And that's how we are to consider ourselves to be today if we're believers in Jesus Christ.

That's what verse 11 plainly says. The old has gone, the new has come. We died to the realm and the rule of sin's dark power and we cannot live there anymore.

Now we're united instead with the risen Lord Jesus Christ in order that we also might walk in newness of life. Now, today, in the kingdom where grace and life reigns, not in the kingdom where sin and death reigns.

We really are redeemed, says Paul. We are liberated from the power of sin to dominate, to rule over, to have lordship over our lives.

I don't misunderstand that. Paul is not saying, repeat, not saying, that sin's presence in this world or in our lives has been brought to an end.

[27 : 15] People have sometimes said that as though we can somehow live lives totally free, utterly perfect from now on and forever. A tip on that is anybody suggests that they are doing that to you, punch them on the nose very hard and watch for their reaction and you'll soon realize in fact they're not actually as free from sin as they think they might be.

Paul is not saying we are free from sin's presence. Because if he were, he'd also be saying we are free from death's presence. And we know that that's not so.

It will be so. Paul is clear on that. Look at verse 5 again. We shall be united with him, with Christ, in a resurrection like his, a bodily resurrection. Verse 8 again, the same thing.

We believe we shall also live with him, that is in the new creation and resurrection bodies. But Paul is clear that there is a not yet in our experience of this great deliverance in Christ.

You'll see more of that in chapter 8. Verse 23, we await eagerly, says Paul, our full adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies, our resurrection. So he knows that there's a not yet that we're awaiting.

[28 : 26] But he is equally clear, abundantly clear in this passage, that there is a no longer for everyone who today is a believer in Christ, because they have been born again into a totally new humanity, which began at the moment of our regeneration, our rebirth by the Spirit of God.

Look at verse 6. It's very important. Our old self, literally our old man, was crucified with him.

He doesn't just mean part of me, he means everything of me as I once was. The person I once was, naturally in Adam, is crucified, dead, buried, gone.

In order that, says Paul, the body of sin might be brought to nothing or rendered powerless. In other words, so that my physical life as merely a helpless tool in the hands of sin, might be definitively defeated.

So that we would no longer, says Paul, be enslaved to sin. 4, verse 7, just to hammer it home, one who has died has been set free from sin.

[29 : 48] You'll see the footnote shows that that word there is justified from sin. Not just to serve, to underline that the declaration of real deliverance from sin's power is as decisive as the declaration that releases us from sin's penalty.

We are no longer enslaved to sin. That is the judicial command of God Almighty. And that's what the redemption of those who are baptized into Christ Jesus means.

Now, today, in your life and in mine. It might help us to think for a minute about the great redemption of the Old Testament, which of course is prophetic and which is fulfilled ultimately in the redemption of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I mean the Passover and the Exodus under Moses. In fact, it's very interesting. In 1 Corinthians chapter 10, Paul tells us that the Israelites all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea.

Through the Passover, through the Exodus, under Moses, they were constituted, they were redeemed and made into the redeemed people of God. They were brought out of bondage in Egypt to start their journey.

[31 : 05] They were not yet in the promised land, but they were already liberated from the tyrant of Pharaoh. And they were liberated into the joyous liberty of the lordship of the covenant God to walk in newness of life.

They were a people holy to the Lord. I am the Lord, said God, who brought you out from under the bondage of the Egyptians. I will lead you into the land that I swore to give to Abraham.

But now, says the Lord, and from now on you will be a people holy to the Lord. Well, how much more, if that were so for those who were baptized into Moses, how much more for those who are baptized into Christ Jesus, the great redeemer.

Not from Egypt, but from the power and tyranny of sin and death itself. You have been, says Paul, set free from the tyrant.

True, we still eagerly await the new creation and our bodily resurrection, salvation. But our bodily life now is no longer as helpless slaves controlled at the back and call of sin's power.

[32 : 23] We don't live in Egypt anymore. We don't get up every morning to go on acting as though we did, making bricks without straw. Of course not. We walk in newness of life, a new life in Christ through the Holy Spirit who has united us with him forever, permanently.

no going back. And that's why Paul says in verse 11, we mustn't deny this reality.

We must consider ourselves, we must reckon ourselves dead to sin and to sin's commanding rule and alive to God and his commanding and gracious rule.

And that's the responsibility of our redemption in Christ Jesus. my father used to say that that word reckon in verse 11 is probably the most important single word in the whole New Testament.

Why is that? It's because understanding the truth about our new identity that is already ours in Christ is the key that opens the door to all the richness of our new life in Christ.

[33 : 39] Christ. We have to grasp this fact, friends, if we're going to have faith to live according to those facts. And we must do that if we're ever going to experience the joy of the power that this great new life brings to us.

An illustration will help. After a wedding ceremony, we go through to the vestry to sign the wedding license. And I sign it and then I'll often say, now Mrs.

so-and-so, you sign it. And she usually just looks around and doesn't realize I'm talking to her. I say, I'm talking to you. You're Mrs. Smith now. Oh, so I am. You see, for a moment she'd forgotten who she was.

She didn't feel any different to how she did just a few minutes before, but she is. Because the declaration of marriage changes her identity forever.

And she has to go out and begin to reckon herself as being Mrs. Smith. And living as though she really is married. Now, there's no pretense in that, is there? Just believing something is true and living as though it were true, because it is true now.

[34 : 58] Everything has changed. Now, sometimes it will be easy for her to remember that it's true when her dutiful husband is bringing her breakfast in bed and smiling at her. Or perhaps giving her a bunch of old socks to wash or something like that.

Sometimes it might not seem all that different when she's out with friends and can forget, especially near the beginning. But it is true. And when she reckons it as true and lives that truth, well, the marriage will flourish.

If it doesn't, and doesn't even begin to live as somebody married to somebody else, well, it will be a stunted marriage. It will be a shadow of everything that it was meant to be and could be and must be.

And just so in the Christian life, we have the responsibility to reckon on the reality of our redemption and to live out that reality. A reality of newness of life in Christ Jesus, alive to God.

God. But just like responsibility of a new wife living out her life, so it is for us. It's a joyous responsibility.

[36 : 10] What does it mean in practice? Well, verses 11 to 14 just give us a starter to think about in summary form. It's really, rather, the three R's of walking in newness of life, of being truly human, of finding your true identity in Christ Jesus.

First R, verse 11, reckon and rejoice in the reality. That's three R's already, isn't it? Okay. Reckon and rejoice in the reality.

Now, do you see, this is very important, do you see how the commands of verses 12 and verse 13 are enveloped in the facts of verse 11 and verse 14?

Do you see that? God never commands us to do what he doesn't empower us to do. The imperatives, the commands of God about what we must do always, always rest on the indicatives, on the facts of what God has already done for us and in us.

We are dead to sin and we are alive to God. So we can reckon ourselves to be so, verse 11. For sin, verse 14, shall have no dominion over you since you're not under law.

[37 : 21] That's just another term for the old humanity of sin and death. And that's the source of power for your new life. You are liberated so you can live the new life.

Now that's a challenge, isn't it, to the lazy Christian who says, well, I can't help that my life isn't very marked by holiness. Yes, you can, says God. Sin will not lord it over you because I am your Lord now.

And it's also a challenge to the earnest Christian who's looking for that experience that will lead them into a new life of holiness or a new excitement in their faith or a new wholehearted abandon to Jesus.

I had an email just two weeks ago saying, do you want to have a new wholehearted abandon to Jesus in your life? Well, if you want that power, come to this special meeting and receive the special blessing.

No, says Paul. Don't go to that meeting. You have that power already. From the moment you began in Jesus Christ, you were baptized into him.

[38 : 28] And you have his risen life. You're alive to God in Christ Jesus. So rejoice in that. Reckon on that. Live it. And you'll be amazed to find that it's true and that it's powerful.

You have the power. Reckon it to be so. How is that power manifested then in the practicality of our life? Well, the second are verse 12.

Resist. Resist the rule of sin. Do not let sin reign in your mortal bodies so as to obey their passions. Why do we need to resist sin's rule if we're already liberated from it?

Well, because although we've been liberated from enemy control, the whole story of the war is not yet over. We still await. We long for the full redemption of our bodies, these mortal bodies.

Then there will be no more struggle. Then there will be no more warfare. But until then, verse 12 is plain. We live in mortal bodies. And that means that we will live always not only fighting the battle of the bulge, but fighting the battle of the brute.

[39 : 39] Fighting against the world, the flesh, and the devil. Trying to con us into thinking that they still reign over us, that they can still dominate us.

But as Bob was saying last Sunday night in Revelation chapter 12, it's as though we're living between D-Day and V-E-Day in the Great War. There's a lot of fighting still to be done, but it's a mopping up operation now.

The decisive move that means victory is secured has already taken place. It's rather like we're prisoners of war who've been liberated by the advancing army of the allies.

We're no longer under the dominion of the enemy. We're free now to take up arms against him and to join the battle and fight on the victor's side. And that's what the third R tells us in verse 13.

Realign. Realign your weaponry. We're not any longer to present our members, all of our bodily faculties, our mental faculties, not any longer as weapons of unrighteousness.

[40 : 48] That's what we used to do when sin was the general who was in charge of us, but not any longer. Notice he doesn't say, he doesn't say, try and break free from all of that. Try and do better.

Try and stop being ruled by your temper. Try and stop being ruled by your appetites or your ambition or your sex drive or your addiction or whatever it is. That would be a counsel of despair.

What does he say, verse 13? Present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, who have been liberated in Christ, so that you can now present all your faculties to God as weapons of righteousness, not of unrighteousness.

You can realign your weaponry, every aspect of your life, because God has realigned your whole life and your whole destiny in Jesus Christ.

And you can do this every day, day by day, and you must do it. For, verse 14, sin will not lord it over you.

[41 : 54] Not any longer. Because already, already, you are living not under the power of sin, and under sin's power of the law, but under grace.

What he's saying is God has won it for us and in us, in Christ Jesus, but we have got to walk it. Walk in newness of life.

Walk this way, day by day, saying no to sin, calling its bluff, refusing to be taken in by its false claims, and saying yes instead to God and the true claim that he has on you.

And you'll discover more and more that you are not the person that you once were, and that you are the person that God says you are in Christ Jesus, a new creation, really alive to God in Jesus Christ.

Walk by the Spirit, as Paul puts it in a different way in Galatians 5, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. But you'll only experience that powerful reality, friends, if you start walking, and if you keep walking that way now in the new life that's yours in Jesus.

[43 : 11] And if you believe to be true what God has said to be true, and live out that truth. Don't any longer offer your limbs as weapons of unrighteousness, but of righteousness.

Don't any longer let your feet take you to places that make you sin, to the places your addict friends hang out, to the betting shop where you used to bankrupt yourself and your family, to the home of the woman who's not your wife.

Instead, let your feet take you to the place of fellowship with God's people, with those who can help you, and strengthen you, and lead you. Don't offer your eyes any longer to the things that corrupt your desires, the internet sites, the TV programs, whatever it is for you.

Say, no, I'll only put my eyes on things that bring glory to God. Don't give your love any longer to things that only satisfy you and yourself.

It's the essence of sin, isn't it? To put ourselves at the very center of the world. No, give your life in love to others, to share your life with them, with the unlovely, with those who have nothing to offer you in return, but are beloved of God.

[44 : 27] Walk that way, says Paul, day by day, hearts and hands and minds and voices and loves and time and wallets and everything. And you'll discover more and more and more of the present wonder of our union with Christ.

More and more of the holiness, the true, wholesome humanness that we were created for and which we have now been born into in the new humanity that is ours in Christ Jesus.

God has worked the wonder. We are dead to sin. We are alive to God in Jesus Christ. We are men made new. But we must walk the wonder.

That's our responsibility. If we're ever going to experience it, we need to walk it. Reckoning, resisting, realigning day by day through his grace as those who have been brought from death to life eternal.

There was once a man who fled to this country from a corrupt and tyrannical regime. He sought asylum. And his lawyer worked a wonder. He was granted that asylum.

[45 : 48] He was given a British passport and all the citizenship rights that went with it. But for a long, long time he lived in fear. Never left his house. He felt he was still really a prisoner.

Lived under the shadow of that old regime. He was isolated. He hardly knew anyone. Knew very little language. He lived in fear. He wouldn't walk the streets because he was in fear of arrest just like in the old country.

He wouldn't use the money that he had to furnish his home and buy clothes because he feared that they would just be confiscated just like in the old country. He certainly wouldn't use his passport to go out of the country on holiday because of fear that he would never be readmitted on his return.

And then at last, a true friend helped him to see that he really was free. He took his passport out and he read it to him. You're under the protection of her Britannic majesty.

You're no longer under the dominion of that evil state. You have the full rights of a British citizen. They took him by the hand and led him out around the country to see all its beauties.

[46 : 58] He took him to use his money to buy clothes and buy furniture with no fear of confiscation. He helped him learn the language and make friends and build a life. He even began to travel the world and he discovered that that passport really did work.

The more he walked in the newness of this life, the more wonderful he found that it was.

And that in fact it had always been from the very day he received in his hand that passport. So also, says Paul, you must reckon yourselves to be dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

Amen. Let's pray. Lord, help us this day and every day to walk in the wonder of the newness of life that is ours in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Help us to walk the wonder. In Jesus' name. Amen.