

# Dead to Sin, Alive in Christ

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[ 0 : 00 ] This morning's reading from the Word of God is taken from Romans chapter 6, which is on page 1132.

Romans chapter 6, verses 1 to 14, on page 1132. What shall we say then?

Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means. We are those who have died to sin. How can we live in it any longer?

Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.

For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly also be united with him in a resurrection like his. For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body ruled by sin might be done away with, that we would no longer be slaves to sin.

[ 1 : 25 ] Because anyone who has died has been set free from sin. Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him.

For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again. Death no longer has any mastery over him. The death he died, he died to sin once for all.

But the life he lives, he lives to God. In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.

Therefore, do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. Do not offer any part of yourself to sin as an instrument of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life.

And offer every part of yourself to him as an instrument of righteousness. For sin shall no longer be your master, because you are not under the law, but under grace.

[ 2 : 35 ] Thanks be to God. Well, good morning. My name's Robin.

I'm a member of the congregation here at St. Silas, and it's a fantastic passage that we're going to be looking at this morning. So if you want to just keep your thumb in the Bible, I'm going to refer to it as we go through.

So I'm just going to commit our time together into God's hands in prayer, and then we'll look at it together. Father God, we thank you so much for your word.

We thank you that you speak to us through it. We pray that you would give us ears to hear and open our hearts so that we may hear what you're saying to us and change us. We pray for your blessing upon us.

We thank you that your spirit is at work within us. Have mercy upon us, we pray in Jesus' name we ask this. Amen. Amen. Now, one of the things you probably know about me is that I didn't move to Scotland from London on my own, but I moved with our two children, who I think are in the creche, and with Annabelle, my lovely wife, who I am really blessed to be married to.

- [ 3 : 51 ] And one of the things that I knew going into marriage, and maybe it's something most couples think about, is how once you're married, once you're united together, how you share in everything, your bank balance, where you live, what's yours becomes the other person's, and what's theirs becomes yours.
- Now, two things to consider when you think about this with me. I reckon I got the better deal. Because firstly, I think you'd all agree, I'm punching massively above my weight.
- And secondly, when we got married, I was a student, and Annabelle had a job. I went from no money to a lot more money, and because of the money we had, we could afford to move into a nice flat.
- I benefited, whereas Annabelle married me, who had nothing. However, that is nothing compared to the difference between the bride and groom of the most famous wedding of last year, the royal wedding.
- I mean, just think about it, Prince Harry and Meghan Markle. The difference of their backgrounds is huge. He was born into royalty, and I know she was on TV, but come on, look what she got from getting married.
- [ 5 : 03 ] A title, part of the royal family, a royal inheritance. By her union to Harry, everything that has happened to Prince Harry became Meghan's.
- Well, what's that got to do with Romans chapter 6 in our passage this morning? What we're going to see this morning from this chapter is that we, as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, have been united with Him, and we bring nothing to the table.
- He doesn't benefit from us in any way, but we gain everything from Him. I'm going to be thinking about the answer to the big question that comes at the beginning of the passage in verse 1.
- We're going to look at that a little bit later. I'm going to be thinking about this in three points. The objective reality of our union with Christ, the daily experience of our union with Christ, and living in light of our union with Christ.
- But before we jump into it all, it's important we understand where we are in this letter written to the Romans. We're in this section of chapters 5 through 8, which are all about how we are justified and free from condemnation.
- [ 6 : 13 ] How coming under the law is powerless to bring salvation and powerless to bring change to our lives. And so it's appropriate we remind ourselves of the big points that Paul has been making.
- We read in chapter 5 last week that we were all born into Adam, each one of us born into sin, and we therefore face death and condemnation. That's the state we were all born into, and has been the case ever since sin came into the world through the one man Adam.
- And so death reigns through that one man, and we, like a chip off the old block, continue in the same way, and death is what we face. But wonderfully, chapter 5 tells us that a new humanity, a new head and representative has replaced this old way of life.
- The one sin, the one tress of passive Adam, may have brought condemnation and death, but the one righteous act of Christ has changed everything. Through his obedience, we're made righteous.
- We belong to a new realm, a new reign, and are not in Adam anymore, but belong and are in Christ. And nothing we can do can take us away from this new realm. It is certain and secure, and we can't move back the other way.
- [ 7 : 28 ] Nothing we do now will change the realm we're in. We're born into the realm of Adam, but have been forever transferred into the realm of Christ with all the benefits of the free gift of life, justification, and righteousness.

So now, for those who trust in Christ, it is grace that reigns, and Christ has replaced Adam in this new humanity where we stand and live. However much we sin, whatever we do, we will never be transported back into that old realm.

In fact, Paul says that the law was put there not to stop us from sinning, but to make us more aware that we do. And by making us more aware of our sin, we're made more aware of how gracious and forgiving and kind God in Christ has been to us.

But, and this is a huge but, the obvious question that we might have, if nothing we do, if no sin will transport us back into the old realm, if the demonstration of God's grace to us increases when we sin, should we just carry on sinning and sin more, maybe?

If we think grace, that's the unmerited kindness of God towards us, if we think grace is a good thing, which we surely all do, then does it not stand to reason that we should go on sin so more grace is revealed and displayed?

[ 8 : 53 ] Is that what we should do? It's the very question that Paul answers in this section that we look at this morning and that he asks in verse 1. Just look with me.

What shall we say then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means, says Paul.

By no means. Not at all. And what follows in the rest of this, sort of the first half of this chapter, is his explanation and argument of why this is the case.

Why this is the case. And the first point that we're going to look at to help us think about this big question is the objective reality of our union with Christ. The objective reality of our union with Christ.

Because it's all well and good saying things like, you know, we belong to the new realm, the realm of Christ, where we receive this amazing gift of life, justification, and righteousness. But what does that mean on the ground?

[ 9 : 51 ] How does it work? If we belong to Jesus, if we're united with him, what does that mean? And sometimes, I don't know about you, but I can quickly get in a muddle with what might seem like Christian jargon.

Quite simply, one of the things, just one of the things that the objective reality of our union with Christ means is what happens to Jesus happens to us. What happens to Jesus happens to us.

Because he's our head and we're united with him. Just think, if you're united to someone, we thought about that earlier with marriage. If you're united to someone, which we are spiritually, with Christ, stands to reason that what happens to Jesus happens to us.

When we're transferred from the realm of Adam to the realm of Christ, we become united with him. And everything that has happened to him then happens to us. And so, let's look at what it says happens to Jesus from our Bible passage.

What we notice is there is a lot about Jesus' death and that's, and because we're united to him, what's happened to Jesus happens to us through our union with him.

[ 10 : 57 ] Let's just look at what it says. Verse four, we, that's us, were therefore buried with him through baptism into death. First thing, we're buried with him into his death. Verse five, we've been united with him in a death like his.

Jesus has died and by being united with him in his realm, we too have died with him. What happens to Jesus happens to us. Verse six, our old self was crucified with him.

Verse eight, we died with Christ. What happens to Jesus happens to us. We've died with Christ, we've died to sin by being united with Christ. When Jesus was crucified, our old self died too.

What happens to Jesus happens to us. But that's not the only thing that happens to Jesus, is it? Jesus, as we know, was also raised to new resurrection life. And so therefore, if what happens to Jesus happens to us, that will include our resurrection, which is exactly what Paul tells us.

Look again with me, back again in verse four. Just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may have new life.

[ 12 : 05 ] Verse five, we will certainly also be united with him in a resurrection like his. Verse eight, we will also live like him.

We have died with Christ, yes, but we've also been raised with Christ. We have died with Christ, but we have also been raised with Christ. It is an astonishing revelation of what it means to be a Christian.

Absolutely astonishing revelation that we've been united with Christ, made one with him. What happens to Jesus happens to us. And I think getting this is absolutely transformational.

One of the reasons I say that, and I think it's really relevant, is I think it's connected to how we view ourselves. Because as people, is it not almost a natural trait that we view ourselves in certain ways?

We place ourselves in society and believe things about ourselves, maybe becoming defined by the labels that we give ourselves. Maybe it's something that comes from your past.

[ 13 : 09 ] And I'm not saying those aren't real or trying to downplay any of it. We can start to live as the labels we put on ourselves are the defining characteristic of who we are.

We're the victim or the ex-con or we're the only child, we're the lonely person or the loud person. Or maybe it's sins that we've done in our past or that we still do.

We let that define us. Maybe it's our jobs, our careers become the labels that we put on ourselves. The salaries we earn.

This is who I am. This is what I earn. This is my personality. This is me. That's what I'm like. These labels we carry and we use them to define who we are. What labels do you put on yourself?

What labels do you put on yourself? Because I want us to realise this morning that whilst our past circumstances and life choices influence us, those are not the labels that will define you eternally.

[ 14 : 12 ] There is a new label attached to every Christian and every believer in Jesus. It's a label that supersedes anything you've ever put on yourself and that label is in Christ.

In Christ, belonging to him, united with the King of Kings. You have been united and joined with Jesus. This is who you are. This is who you are.

This is your identity. It will not fade, but it will remain forever. This is who you are. You've been united with the Lord Jesus Christ, died and raised with him.

However, there is, as wonderful as this is, we're faced with a bit of a problem. And we're going to think a little bit about this as we move on to our second point.

The daily experience of our union with Christ. The daily experience of our union with Christ. Let's go back to thinking about the royal marriage for a minute.

[ 15 : 19 ] Now, I don't know this for sure, but I reckon for Meghan Markle that the royal marriage, for some days, maybe she thinks it's not as all it was cracked up to be. There will be some days when she looks down, she sees the royal wedding ring on her finger, and although she now knows that she is royalty, maybe she doesn't just feel like it was gonna.

Some days it's even mundane. Maybe even some days she remembers the good times of when she was just a normal actress on Suits. Obviously, I can't speak for her, but I'm guessing her experience day to day doesn't always match up with what she thought it would be like to be married to a prince.

We're faced with a similar but different problem. Yes, we've died with Christ, and yes, we've been raised with him. Yes, there is this objective reality of our new identity, but there is a problem.

The problem is our experience day to day, isn't it? And I can understand if we're thinking, if this is true, like Paul writes, I don't understand what it means to be raised with Christ.

I don't understand what it means to have a new identity. To have a new identity in him. To be united with him. To belong to this new realm. Because I'm still here on this earth, in this body, that will die.

[ 16 : 37 ] When we look at our present circumstances, our everyday experience, does it really look like we've been raised up? It doesn't, does it? We still get sick.

One day, we're all going to die. We still sin. sin. Our experience is what it's like to live in a world under the curse of sin.

How are we dead to sin and alive to God? It doesn't feel like that at all. Maybe that's how you feel today. To understand how this all works, we need to remember how God created us.

When he created us, he didn't just create us with our physical bodies, you know, our hands, feet, lungs, heart, all the rest of it. But he created us spiritually as well. We have a spiritual life where not just what we see, but we are spirit, our soul and body.

Our experience doesn't seem to quite match up with what we read because it is spiritually that we've been raised and we can't see that. Physically, our body is decaying and dying and still under the curse of sin, waiting to be raised up.

[ 17 : 43 ] You could say that we're waiting for our physical bodies to catch up with where we are spiritually. Yes, what happens to Jesus happens to us immediately, spiritually.

Spiritually, from the moment you believe in Jesus Christ, he united him, transferred to the new realm and raised up to new spiritual life. That is true for everyone here this morning who trusts and believes in the Lord Jesus Christ.

But Paul knows that there is this disconnect between what's true and our experience. He experienced it himself. He still suffered physically, he's still back with sin, which is why he knows we need to be reminded and need to hear it ourselves every day.

Just look with me in verse 10 and 11 in what Paul says. The death he, that's Jesus, the death he died, he died to sin once for all, but the life he lives, he lives to God.

And here's the important verse with what Paul is getting at. In the same way, in the same way, counting yourselves dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.

[ 18 : 51 ] In the same way as we look at what's happened to Jesus, in the same way, counting yourselves dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus. Count it to yourself, reckon it to yourself, remind yourself, take hold of this by faith, that even though it might not look like it, even though our daily experience may not look very often look like we have been raised, count it to yourself, this is your status, this is who you are, this is the new label.

Even Abraham had to do this. Remember back in Romans chapter 4, we read about it a few weeks ago, what does Paul tell us about him? That his, Abraham's body and Sarah's womb were as good as dead, and yet they believed that life would be given to them.

Abraham looked at his own body and the womb of his wife and all he could see was death. But he knew what God had told him and counted it to himself, counted that life would come, knowing that life would come from what looked like death.

We need to do the same, despite what our daily experience might be. Reckon it, count it to yourselves, take hold of this by faith, that this really has happened to you spiritually.

You really are raised with him and you really have been given new life. And one day, your physical life will catch up and you will receive a resurrection, physical body as well.

[ 20 : 19 ] Okay, so we're united with Christ into the new realm, we've been raised up spiritually and are waiting physically to catch up. And so what now?

What now? What does that mean for us? Well it's here that Paul really drives home to the answer to the question that he had in verse 1, shall we go on sinning?

And so now we're going to look at our third point, living in light of our union with Christ. Let's just think back to our illustration with the royal marriage, Meghan Markle.

And I want us to imagine that after she got married, Meghan bizarrely decided that she didn't want any of the things that had happened to Harry.

Imagine that she continued to live in the same house with the same income, refused the royal title. Imagine if she didn't go to any of the functions that were expected of her, didn't attend any of the tours to the Commonwealth.

[ 21 : 21 ] Imagine if she didn't move into the royal house and continue to live in America, shopped at the same shops and just didn't bother seeing any of his family at all. Now I said imagine because that is ridiculous, isn't it?

We know that would never happen. She has a new identity. She is part of the royal family through her marriage. Her life has been transformed and she can't go back to how her life was before.

It would be really weird if she did. So in answer to the question we have, why we shouldn't go on sinning, this is not who you are.

It would be weird and ridiculous for us to live in the old way. Just look with me in verse 12, what Paul says. Therefore, do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires.

Do not offer any part of yourself to sin as an instrument of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life.

[ 22 : 27 ] And offer every part of yourself to him as an instrument of righteousness. For sin shall no longer be your master because you are not under the law but under grace.

You've been brought to new life from death and have a new identity in him. So why would you want to go on sinning? It's not who you are.

This is groundbreaking. We think about our spiritual lives and the way we think about sin plagues us. And we all know the experience of trying to fight it, to battle it.

Maybe you're sat here today and have constant frustration, feeling overwhelmed at battling sin. You can't help boasting. Or you're stuck in a cycle of watching internet pornography.

You constantly compare yourself with others around you and want what they have. And it feels like you're stuck in this sinful pattern and you're fed up with it. But the ongoing cycle and feelings of guilt and despair, they just continue.

[ 23 : 31 ] Now, what might be the normal thing we might think of? Or if we know someone else who is facing these types of issues, we might say things which would be totally brilliant and wonderful things to say.

We might say things like, it's bad for us, that it does dishonor God, and we'd be absolutely right and to tell us ourselves and to tell each other those things.

But this changes our approach slightly. It doesn't take away from what's true, but I think it just adds to it. Because what we can say to others and ourselves as well as those things is, this is not who you are anymore.

Why would you want to do that? You've died to sin. You've been raised with Christ. Sin's no longer even your master. You've been set free. This is your identity. This is who you are. The reason you shouldn't sin anymore is because you've been made new.

We live in light of who we've become, united with our Saviour. Offer yourselves to God as those who've been brought from death to life.

[ 24 : 40 ] Offer yourselves to God as those who've been brought from death to life. And so, as we come in for landing, let's sum up the three things that we've looked at.

The objective reality of your union with Christ. You have died with Christ and been raised with him and have a new identity that can never change, which means that what happens to Jesus happens to us.

But our daily experience of that union is problematic because we have been raised spiritually but are waiting for our physical bodies to catch up, which therefore means that we need to count ourselves and reckon this truth to ourselves, taking hold of it by faith.

And finally, we thought about how we live, knowing that if this is true, that we are united with him, it is crazy to want to live as the old self, to go back to living as we did before, because we're new people.

We have a new identity in Christ, a new label that will be eternally true. When we realize this is true and start to live this way, it changes the way we think about who we are in our spiritual lives.

[ 25 : 48 ] It brings stability to our spiritual lives. Nothing can change the objective reality that we united with Christ, the King of Kings, our Saviour, and therefore we're to live as people who have been changed.

Let me pray. Loving Heavenly Father, we praise you and thank you for all that you have done for us.

we thank you for this wonderful part of your word and we thank you that the salvation that you have achieved for us is bigger than anything that we could have imagined.

That you have made us one with Christ, you have united us with him and transferred us from being in Adam to being in Christ and given us a new label that supersedes any label that we put on ourselves and lasts forever.

forever. We will always be in Christ. And Father, we pray that you would help us to, on the days when it doesn't feel like that, help us to count this to ourselves, to reckon it to ourselves, to take hold of it, to remind ourselves and each other that this is true.

[ 27 : 01 ] And therefore, Lord God, would you help us to live in light of this amazing union. Help us to live in light of what you've done for us, knowing that it is foolish and ridiculous to go back to living like the old self.

We pray that you'd cement these truths within our heart and help us this week to live them out for your glory and for our joy. We ask you in Jesus' name. Amen.