

Hey, I got a question. He said back there earlier when we were in that law court, somebody jumped right up in the middle of the court and challenged you on something, and I didn't understand your answer, and it's not clear, and it's bothering me. You're telling me that I don't have to work anymore for my justification. I'm a Gentile. You told those Jews that they don't have to obey the law for their justification, for their righteousness, that it is now a free gift.

Now, if my relationship to God and my acceptance by God is based on nothing but His free grace, where is the encouragement to stop sinning? Well, you know it's free grace—my acceptance in Him, my acceptance. Here it is. I got it. It's free. I don't merit it by my works. As a Gentile, I worked really hard for justification, but it didn't work. Jews over there trying to do all that, and it's obvious they couldn't do it. But those were motives for not sinning. Now you're giving me justification free in the face of my sinfulness just because I believe in the death and resurrection of my Lord? What's my motive for stopping to sin? Why not increase my sinning so that the free gift might pour only more and more and more? It poured out. I was sinning and sinning and sinning, and the free gift came and gave me justification and righteousness.

Well, if it works that well, why don't I just keep it up? If sinning provoked my conversion, my righteousness, why not sin more? Am I going to hear a little voice that says to me, "Go ahead and sin, because it's alright. You're justified by faith and not by works. Give up the works. Give up the law. Give up the goodness. You've got grace, and you've got the freedom." Is there going to be a little voice telling me, "Go ahead and do it"? Shouldn't I just keep on sinning and sin bigger? Get more and more grace?

He says, "You don't understand what happened to you. You died to sin."

Well, that doesn't make any sense to me. What do you mean, I died to sin? You died to sin. How could you possibly live in sin any longer? Now, I want to explain to you what I mean by that. That doesn't mean that you're incapable of it. How could you live to sin any longer? That doesn't mean you're no longer capable of it. I mean, how would you dare do such a thing? That's what I mean when I say that. What a shocking thought. Did you dare even consider such a thing?

Now, I'm going to step out—Paul, just a minute. I'm going to talk to you all like... I'm going to talk to you like somebody who doesn't like Baptist preachers. No, I am a Baptist preacher. But anyhow. Ricky, you have been a minister. And you remember how we preached the gospel to people. And after we preached the gospel to them and they got saved, then we said to them, "Stop dancing and smoking." Do you remember, Ricky? That was the big thing we were trying to get Baptists to do: don't drink anymore, don't smoke anymore, don't cuss anymore, don't dance anymore. What a low, low level. What a low, low level. And yet, that was where the battle is fought. Go to any conference. "Is it wrong for a Christian to dance? Is it wrong for a Christian to cuss? Is it wrong for a Christian to..." Mostly it was dance. That

was the big one. "Is it wrong for a Christian to dance?" And that got asked, and here we were dealing with the elemental things. And that's about as far as we ever got up above that moment when Christ became ours.

Alright, now then, let's watch what our brother Paul does. That's not where he starts. He starts here, and this becomes ridiculous. He said, "Listen, don't you know what happened to you? Do you have any idea what happened to you? We're not talking about little stuff here. Big things happened to you. How dare you!" It's not your fault. And he's not talking about stopping sinning. And here is one of the most wonderful things I appreciate about what Paul does. Have you ever presented a supposition anywhere in your life? I've been a teacher—and of course I've been a Christian too—but I'll talk about teaching. I've been a teacher, and I've made a suggestion in a faculty meeting and gotten devoured. Well, I maintained my stance, but I qualified it, and I backed up a little bit, and I clarified, and I held my ground, but I just watered it down a little bit and tried to make it a little bit more palatable.

Paul of Tarsus doesn't back down. This is the third time. There are three times here in a short passage that this is thrown at him. Obviously, Paul has had this thrown at him a lot of times. And Paul doesn't back down. He doesn't qualify. He doesn't *anything*. It shows how much he understood the gospel.

Okay. Do you not know what's happened to you? You were plunged in the moment of this simple, little, mystical, misty, vague thing called believing. No, not then, but at some time or other. We'll find out a little later when. You were plunged into Christ. Now, I did not say "E-N." I said "E-I-S." I'm speaking to you in Greek. "E-N" is "in." "E-I-S" is "inside of." You were plunged inside of Christ. You were made one with Christ. You're not in Christ in some vague way; I mean, you are placed into Him. You were placed into your Lord. Let your Lord speak to you and say, "You are inside me. You are inside of me, the Son of God—immersed into me, plunged into me, lost in me, one with me."

How one, Lord? So one, that when I died, you died.

The most famous Siamese twins who ever lived were utterly joined to one another. But on the day one of them died, the doctors had to operate because they knew that it would be a matter of just hours before the other one died. When one died, the other one would die. So finally, even though they were quite old, they operated to separate them. Because one dies, the other dies. How one with Christ? So one with Him, that when He dies, you die. And when He died, you died. That—how utterly one you were with Him.

I'm going to go a little bit further, and I know this is incredible, but listen to it. You have never been punished for your sins. Who was punished for your sins? Tell me. Jesus Christ was punished for your sins. Now that's true, and you are not punished for your sins. Nonetheless, you were so one with Him that it is indistinguishable. The punishment was done and taken so that God, your Father, cannot even distinguish as to who took the punishment. You were that identified—so that much, that close, that totally one with Him.

Now, I'm not talking to you about salvation by works here, that you took your own sins. I am telling you that the identification—that is more than identification—the identity of the two was so one, that when the punishment was done in Him, it was done in you. When it was done for you, it was done in Him. It was so utterly done that it was done totally and completely, that God can't separate as to who got punished and who didn't get punished.

Praise the Lord. How one with Him are you? So one, that when He went into death, you died. You have to die when He dies because you're so inseparable. So, He was punished for your sin. He went into death carrying your sin—not His, but yours. He died *with sin, to sin*. He took it to the grave with Him. You died to sin.

Now all of you listen to me—and listen to me carefully. I want to settle this tonight. I don't ever have to face it in any of your lives again. You live in an age, and you live in a world in which a lot of emphasis is put on sin in the Christian's life. And you get the feeling that you are just constantly sinning and that you're just a terrible sinner. I've met and talked to enough Christians, enough believers, to know that you're out there thinking that nobody else in the world is as terrible a sinner as you are. And you're trying to keep this a secret. Everybody else looks pretty good.

Well, first of all, that's not true; we're all in the same mess. You never had a thought I haven't had. You never had a temptation I didn't have. And how many times have I looked in the face of believers, and their faces just lit up. "You mean the rest of you have problems like this? I thought I was the only person who had problems like this. I can't believe it when I hear that!"

No, you're not alone. The boat you're in carries every Christian who's ever lived. That's right. But I want you to know something. Just get out here on a limb: there is too much *sin emphasis* and too much *sin consciousness* among believers. Too much. Way, way too much. Way, way too much. Let me tell you something. Those things you feel so badly about: much of it is the accusation of your enemy. And much of what he's accusing you of has got nothing to do with sin at all. It's got to do with weakness. It's got to do with need. It's got to do with problems. It's got to do with damage. And it has *nothing* to do with sin.

There may be someone in this room who recently committed adultery. But most of you have not recently committed adultery. I want to tell you that. It's really true. You may not know that, so I'm informing you: most of you have not committed adultery recently. Do you know why you haven't recently committed adultery? "Because I'm trying so hard not to." No, that's *not* why you're not committing adultery. You're not committing adultery *because you died to sin*. That's why. That's why. Very little effort on your part is keeping you from committing adultery. Something incredible happened. You were taken into the grave inside of Jesus Christ, so totally one with Him that when He took sin in there, *sin died to Him. Sin died to you*.

Now, the question is: how could sin die to Him? He has never had sin in His own life.

I'm going to try to explain that in just a moment. Brothers and sisters, are you clear on a couple of things? One of them is: too much emphasis on this sin, which leaves you with general guilt. Now, he's not a colonel, he's not a major, he's a general. General guilt.

"I must have done something terribly, terribly bad today." Have you ever had the feeling, "*Lord, just forgive me for everything*"? You just feel so unworthy. Have you ever prayed a prayer like that? "*Lord, just forgive me of everything.*" You can't sin that broadly to be forgiven of *everything*. You can't live long enough to sin everything. Let me give you a word that should be very, very helpful to you. It's been helpful to me. It's something that every Christian ought to hear. Every believer ought to hear:

*If it's not specific, it's not the Holy Spirit.*

If it's one of these general "ache-all-over" sins—one of these very general "*ache-all-over*" sins, "*I'm such a terrible sinner, general ache-all-over sin...*"—it ain't sin. It may be depression. You're eating too much white sugar. You and your husband had a big fight. You don't like your job. That's not sin. That's *humanity*. You've got an ugly face. There's nothing you can do about it. You wanted to be pretty. You're getting bald-headed and wrinkled, but that's not sin. It may be depression—but it's not sin. If it's not specific, that's not the Holy Spirit. If it's specific, it's the Holy Spirit.

Your relationship to sin *so utterly changed* when you got converted.

Now, I'm going to try to explain something to you that you already know. Before I was converted, I was not a big sinner. Drunkenness and lawlessness were not particularly mine. That's no feather in my cap; I just was kind of shy. And a little scared - scared of God. And had been raised morally, more or less. But sin was out there, and there was no sense in me of some limitation in my relationship to sin. I don't know how to say it any clearer than that. You're going to have to follow me by instinct from here. There was some relationship that I had with sin, and with that which was improper and wrong, that had no restraint to it. I didn't take the opportunities to their fullness. Nonetheless, on the day I was converted, *my relationship to sin radically changed*.

Someone has said, "Before I was converted, I sinned and enjoyed it. After I was converted, I sinned and despised it." And that's a pretty good relationship, but it doesn't quite go far enough. There was simply a deep, inured sense that something between me and sin had radically changed.

Now, for those of you who might be questioning—no, I am not... I hate to even have to bring this up, but there's always some Eskimo out there on the back row who heard someone preach once, and he said, "*Oh, he's preaching sinless perfection.*" That is so ridiculous. I am simply presenting to you a difference in your relationship to sin. Big difference. Now, something awesome happened in death and in the grave. Something that radically changed Christ's relationship to sin—and your relationship to sin. Totally changed it because you were so totally one with Him in His death. Amen?

Now then, something else happened. He came out of the grave. There's no power – nothing – that could have kept you from coming out of that grave with Him. Why is that? Vicki, why is that? "I don't know." That's right. I'm going to tell you:

*Because you have been plunged into Christ.* So totally that you can't be un-plunged from Him. You were put inside of Christ. And when He went into the grave, *you had to go there.* When His relationship to sin changed, *so did yours.* And, sister, when He came up, there was no way to separate you from Him. You are that united with Him. One with Him. In union with Him. I don't know what—people: united, all of these things, oneness—all of these words that are used. I don't know which one is better.

EIS. Inside of. With. Totally one with Him.

When He came up out of that grave, there was nothing that could prevent you from coming with Him. He died to sin. You died to sin. He rose to life. You rose to life. And your relationship to sin has now been utterly, totally altered.

Now then, Paul said: Accept that. Consider it. Take it. Reckon it.

And we've gotten on this word "reckon." Reckon yourself dead. Dead to sin and alive to God.

Reckon yourself. Reckon. We have to reckon ourselves. Reckon. I'm sitting on a *reckoning*. And I'm trying to believe that I've died to sin, and sin has died to me, and yet I know that I still sometimes sin. And so we have built these great doctrines to try to explain that. I am not going to explain that. Your old man has died to sin. Your old nature, your old self. And we get all of these definitions. I'd like to free you from that, and I'd like for you to just accept the empirical:

*Something changed radically when you got converted.*

Something changed radically when, by faith, you received His righteousness. Something changed. Accept that fact. It's true. Accept it. Now then, I'll go on and say to you that there are things that are happening to us that don't happen to us in *this* realm. There are things that happen to you that don't happen here. They happen somewhere else. There are things that happen to you that you cannot see.

*Abraham accepted as real that which he could not see.* That was in Romans 5. I'd like to look at that again.

*Abraham accepted as real things that he could not see.* Abraham accepted as real that which was not real. Abraham accepted as real that which he could not feel. He could not see. He accepted the unseen as though it were seen. And this is what we're talking about here. You just accept something that happened that's invisible. That's unseen. If I can step back and look through the eyes of God, my God sees. Let me put it this way: *your* God sees. You plunged—baptized, immersed—into Christ.

Can you see Christ as water? Can you see yourself plunged into Him?

Now you're immersed. Now you're in Him. You're in the water. The water is Christ, okay?

Well, fine. Now the water rises from the dead. The metaphor breaks down here, but Christ comes up out of the grave. You're still immersed in Him. You're immersed in His death. You're immersed in His resurrection. You're plunged into Him. You're invisibly lost in there. This is what God sees. You come up, and things are totally different—and this is what God sees. And you accept—and accept as real and as true - that which you cannot see.

Now, dear Christian, you're a new believer. You're a brand new believer, but this night must forever alter your relationship to sin. I don't want to hear you talking to me about all your great sins.

*"Well, Gene, what am I going to do if I sin?"* It's really simple: Call your attorney.

*Call your attorney.* He'll talk to the Father about this. "But Gene, that breaks down. It says I'm dead to sin!" I don't care what it says. If I do sin, I have an advocate with the Father. Right now, I need to concentrate on the fact that sin and I have had one relationship, and it is broken.

Now, later, if I want to concentrate on the fact that I have sinned—fine. Call a lawyer. Call your lawyer. But right now, concentrate on that which is real, even if it is unseen. And accept as real that which you cannot see, that you have died to sin.

Now I must ask you a question: *whose funeral was it?*

Yours or sins? Think about it for a moment. This is quite interesting. Whose funeral was it?

*Yours.*

And brothers and sisters, I'm just going to close with the simplest illustration you've ever heard in your life.

There was this fellow—and he really is embodied as an existing creature. There was this creature walking around the earth. And behind him was a slave. And when he went this way, the slave went with him. When he went that way, the slave went with him. Willingly or unwillingly, he went with him. And this master, sin, was very attached to his slave. His slave was in total obedience to him. The slave knew that. Sometimes, and sometimes didn't, but sin was always his master.

One day, Sin was walking along with this slave beside him. And Sin looked up and saw a cross. And he knew something had radically changed. And he looked around for his slave, and there was a grave. And on the tombstone, it said:

*"The slave has died and is now freed by death."*

And Sin stood over the grave and said, “*Get out of there. Come on. I own you. You’re mine. I haven’t paid you fully. Well... I guess I have. You’ve died. Get up out of the grave. Come follow me.*”

Nothing. The most final act there is, legally, empirically, any way you want to look at it, legislatively, executively, judicially, the most final act there is, is *death*.

Death separates everybody. You never see a tax collector getting money from a corpse. You never see a witness brought in who is dead. There’s no way to talk about the finality of death. When a person dies, that’s it. You will sometimes hear about his estate being brought into court, but *he’s* not brought into court. When death comes, death causes the end of all relationships between that person and *everything*.

Let me tell you a story that’s not well-known.

Louis XIV had a wife he didn’t like, but he put up with her. He was Europe’s most famous monarch, probably Europe’s most colorful and most powerful, certainly one of the wealthiest who ever was. Anyway, she finally died. He did not remarry—at least they did not think he did.

But in fact, he secretly married a woman named Maintenon. Well, later he died. Later, she died.

Fifty years later, it was known that he had remarried. And the woman had been hated in her lifetime, but fifty years later, the French Revolution came. Now, I do not know why they did not dig up Louis XIV, but they found Madame Maintenon’s grave, and they dug her up in the middle of the fierceness of the French Revolution. They pulled her corpse out of there. And they hung it. And they took sticks and beat on it. She was that hated.

And I have imagined that corpse. They were beating on that corpse. Do you think Madame Maintenon knew this? That corpse was totally without response.

Hated - the corpse didn’t know it. Beaten - the corpse didn’t know it. Despised and cursed - the corpse didn’t know it.

Madame Maintenon don’t live here no more. Death had severed her from all of those things.

So here we are now - *dead to sin*.

Now that’s sin’s view. Sin cannot find you to enslave you. But from yet another view: you’re walking down the road, being pulled by sin, and you look up and see a cross. And something radically changes. And you turn around and you see a grave, and the grave says:

“*Here lies sin and its power.*” You are freed from sin. And you look up and you see the One who died on the cross—and you yield to Him.

From sin’s viewpoint, you’re dead. You’re in the grave. Sin cannot locate you. It looks everywhere—and you are gone. You have died. Sin cannot find you.

And from your viewpoint, sin has gone into the grave and died. And you have risen into a new realm. And there is a new master: Christ.

Once you had yielded these hands to sin. Once you had yielded these eyes to sin.

Yield them again to a new master. *Yield them again to a new master.*

Up until this point—I tell you, this is all that is required of that one who, like Abraham, has believed on that which he cannot see and cannot even fully understand, except he believed that his seed would live. Though he was dead, he believed he would live. Now will you just believe that you are dead, and that you will live, and that you have risen from the dead, just as Abraham's body rose from the dead and a seed was in it?

Now believe, and all that you do now is you do the same thing you used to do—just yield to a different person. How could you, who are one with Christ, dare to even consider being again a slave to sin?

And dear brother and sister, I am 55 years old, and I am telling you. I have watched believers. And I'm talking about believers who believe. Believers who love. Believers who love Him. I have seen them leave the church. I have seen them leave this and that and the other. But I want you to know: most of those that I have run around with in my lifetime have never returned to being a slave to sin.

And the few that have? Most of them turned around. Came back. Now I know there are some others who left and never came back. That's not my problem. But I am reporting to you that which I have seen and I have heard, that regardless of what happens to you for the rest of your life, I want to tell you something: You do not have as much faith in yourself as the Lord does.

And I'm going to tell you: you probably don't have as much faith in yourself as I do. I don't expect you to ever go back into sin and to become a slave. Why? How could you? How dare you? Could you say such a thing?

You have been made so one with Christ that when He died, you died.

When He died to sin, you died to sin.

When He rose to life, you rose to life.

How dare you even bring up the question?

Brothers and sisters - you're a *believer*. *Believe what you can't see.*

You're dead to sin. Sin can't find you to re-enslave you. You're alive to Christ, and you live in His resurrection.

We're going to have one more session in this anti-room for new believers, and then we're going to climb some high, high mountains. Praise the Lord. Thank you, brothers.