

Freedom From Sin

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 10 November 2019

Preacher: Jason Webb

- [0 : 0 0] Well, in 1 John, there's a very important insight into what happens when you are born again.
- 1 John 3.9 says, No one who is born of God will continue to sin because God's seed remains in him. He cannot go on sinning because he has been born of God.
- Now, what a statement. What a statement. The new birth fundamentally alters our relationship with sin such that John says the born-again Christian cannot go on sinning, cannot sin, continue to sin.
- Now, we know that John is not making an absolute categorical statement where the born-again Christian never sins ever, ever in his whole life.
- He, of course, is not saying that a born-again Christian will absolutely never sin. He's not saying that a born-again Christian can reach such a height in this life, in this world, where he's perfect.
- [1 : 1 9] Where he just doesn't sin anymore. And believe it or not, some people have taught that, that doctrine. And some people have said, yeah, I know a few Christians that don't sin anymore.
- They've said that. But I don't think John is saying that. There's too many other passages of Scripture that would say that that's not true.
- And so we need to put this into context. But just because John is not saying that does not mean that he is not saying something truly radical and amazing and drastic has not happened.
- So traditionally speaking, Christians, especially, I would say, more serious-minded Christians, traditional teaching on Christianity and the Christian life tends to emphasize that the Christian life is a prolonged struggle.
- And next week, Lord willing, we are going to talk about the Christian struggles. But it's almost as part of our culture that we, as serious-minded Christians, have tended to emphasize that there's no easy roads to holiness.
- [2 : 4 5] There's no shortcuts. There's no secret path or experience that you can have that will take you to this amazing, great level.
- There's no doctrine or teaching that somehow or other instantly elevates us all or elevates us above it all. And that tends to be the emphasis.
- And that's good. We have a song about it that we sing from the overhead from John Newton, where he basically says, I had hoped that in some favored hour, you would answer my request for grace and love and faith.
- And what John Newton is saying is, he was praying for those things, and he hoped that somehow or other, in a favored hour, with the sun shining on him, something would happen, and he would instantly grow in these things.
- But instead, it was woe and trials and pain. And all of that, all that I've just been talking about, about that struggle and the lifelong nature of it, that is all true.

[3 : 59] But brothers and sisters, and I do say this, brothers and sisters, there is a ditch on the other side. So if perfectionism, and the idea that we can just rise above it all, and in some favored hour, will instantly become perfect, and won't sin anymore, if that is a ditch, there is a ditch on the other side, that we can't fall into, that we have to watch out for.

And so yeah, we can't fall into the ditch of, I'm going to be perfect, but on the other hand, there is this other ditch that we need to watch out for. And it's the ditch that serious-minded Christians can have the tendency to fall into.

And the ditch is the, woe is me, I'm a wretched man, that's true, and I'm still a sinner, and I haven't had any change.

I've always been this way. Nothing's changed. And we can fall into this ditch of guilt, and self-accusation, and full of sorrow without any joy, full of self-loathing, and full of saying, I'm just weak, and I'm enslaved, still.

Now, you notice there's a lot of things that are true about what I was just saying there, but it's the, when you take it too far, when you go too far, when you don't have the other, other truths, sort of pulling it back and balancing it out.

[5 : 25] And so there is this ditch. Now, there's no growth in either of those ditches. And, there's no growth in the ditch of, I'm going to be perfect, looking for some sort of easy road, where, you know, where there's not this work.

If that's the ditch you're in, you're not going to get any holier. And also, wallowing in the mud, without any felt, real, realization, of what John is talking about.

Where there's no appreciation of, wow, what John is saying is true of me. That the born again Christian does not continue in sin.

Now, there's no holiness in that ditch either. Or you don't have that. The fact of the matter is that the New Testament represents sanctification as beginning and ending with an amazing transformation.

Sanctification begins and ends with an amazing transformation. There's a moment, a sudden crisis, sudden change of new life.

[6 : 48] life. So, at the end, at the resurrection, 1 Corinthians 15, we will be changed in a twinkling of an eye and our earthly bodies will put on immortality in all, all aspects, in any leftover aspects, traces of the fall will, of the flesh will fall away in this glorious realization of the resurrection life of Jesus Christ, filling our souls so that, so that in heaven we will never sin again because we will be filled to the fullness completely with the life of Jesus Christ.

And so, there is this, this, this amazing, radical change that is going to happen. but, can I say something?

As amazing as that is, something even more marvelous has already taken place. Now, we look ahead and we say, that's our, that's our blessed hope.

That's what we are longing for. That's going to be wonderful. And that is true. But, something more marvelous, I'm going to say, has already happened in your life.

Something, at least, now, maybe the outward changes are as visible and as amazing, but what has happened in and of itself is more amazing than what's going to happen.

[8 : 28] And what I mean by that is this, what is more amazing to take a living person that is sick and make them completely well? That's amazing. Or is it more amazing to take a dead person and make them alive?

What's more marvelous, to take a friend who you love and you fight with from time to time and you come to complete, perfect agreement, or to take a dead, set enemy and win them to your side?

because that's what has happened. The dead have been raised to life. Dead set enemies have been won over and we've become friends.

And so, what will happen to us is the blessed hope that we are longing for and that we are eagerly waiting for. It is a radical, amazing change, but we can't miss that what has already happened to you, what has already happened to me is in some ways even more radical.

It's been the dead to life and the enemy to friend. So, the Bible teaches that we have been sanctified, past tense, already finished.

[9 : 52] Now, we've talked about this, we talked about this when Pastor John was talking about our identities as Christians and one of our fundamental identities is we are saints.

We're not going to be saints, saints are not super Christians that do extraordinary works. No, every Christian is a saint, a holy one, a sanctified one, a set apart one, a devoted one to God.

And so, we have been brought from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of his son that he loves. We have been devoted to God. We have, you have been sanctified.

Sin's dominion is over. That's what we're going to talk about today. Sin's dominion is over.

So, 1 Corinthians 6, 11 says, you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the spirit of our God.

[10 : 57] Now, we think normally, we tend to think of justification as coming before sanctification and if we define our terms in a certain way, yeah, it does come first.

but how Paul is using the words there, that isn't the case here. He says, we are washed, we are sanctified, and we are justified. Something has happened to us and we are justified.

Sanctification does follow justification, but in 1 Corinthians 6, 11, it happens at the same time or maybe it happens, it precedes it.

So, brothers and sisters, you have been saved. How have you been saved? Well, the Apostle Peter says, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit. For, what have you been saved for?

How have you been saved? You've been saved by the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit. Why have you been saved? For obedience. Obedience, and the way Peter's using it here, obedience and sanctification, obedience follows sanctification.

[12 : 08] We think of sanctification, a lot of times, we think of sanctification coming first and then obedience comes out of it, but that's not how it here, is here sanctification comes first and then we obey.

We obey out of our sanctified status. Out of what Jesus Christ and what the Holy Spirit have done for us.

So, I doubt I very much doubt that anyone here is falling into the ditch of thinking you are perfect.

I think, I'm willing to bet something pretty significant, I think it's far more likely that you are forgetting the truth that sin's dominion is really over.

Something amazing has happened. And so, we're going to put aside the idea of perfectionism and we're going to focus on this idea of sin's dominion is over.

[13 : 17] So, take your Bibles and turn to Romans chapter 6. Romans chapter 6. Now, remember last week I gave you sort of a 10,000 foot altitude look at the book of Romans.

Romans 1-4 is the gospel. How can the wicked and Paul make sure that we all fit into that category the righteous, the unrighteous, the Jew, the Gentile, the everyone.

We are all wicked. How can the wicked be made right with God? And the answer is it's through faith in Jesus Christ so that no one can boast.

Now, that's chapters 1-4. Chapters 5-11, if we could put one word on all of that section, it would be the word hope.

It's all about hope. It's the hope that we can have because we are saved. And because we need that.

[14 : 31] Now that we're saved, we're not somehow magically transported to heaven. Now we're in this time of waiting and we're in this time of suffering and we're still living in the presence of sin.

And so there's hope for the faith in the face of the ongoing presence of sin. There's hope in the face of suffering, in the face of frustration. And there's a sure hope that God's purpose for us will not fail.

That Proverbs 16-4 that we just memorized is true. God is working out all things for his own end. That includes us, the wicked for the day of disaster, but his people for a day of great salvation and glory.

So here we are, we're in chapter 6 and so we're in this section about hope and Paul is working out why we can have hope as we do battle against sin, as we live in the presence of sin, as we deal with the ongoing reality of I still have sin in my life.

And he's asking the question, since we have peace with God, Romans 5-1, since we have been justified, does that mean that we go on sinning?

[15 : 54] So, Romans 6-1-2 What shall we say then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase?

By no means. We die to sin. How can we live in it any longer? Why doesn't the gospel leave us willy-nilly free for all with sin?

Just go on sinning. After all, the more I sin, the bigger God's grace is, right? The more I sin, the more He forgives, the greater His grace is.

And that sort of reasoning would be true if grace just meant forgiveness. If grace was just limited to I'm forgiven, then I suppose that that might very well be true.

But, grace isn't just forgiveness. There, grace is always, we've talked about this on Sunday evening, grace is always connected to Jesus Christ.

[17 : 01] You can't separate who Christ is from the grace that He gives us. And so, there isn't any grace that is just mere forgiveness.

Grace is always united to Christ. And so, what Paul is thinking now when he's thinking in terms of that, he is saying, we died to sin. Part of the grace that Jesus Christ brings to His people is not just forgiveness.

It's, you died to sin. So, how can we go on sinning? How can we go on sinning? Now, to get sort of the feeling of that, of what he's saying, like, he's saying, by no means, we died to sin.

How can we go on any longer? It's that same feeling that Paul is conveying to us that we should be picking up here is that when we say, I can't believe they did that.

I can't believe she did that. Have you ever been shocked by what someone has done? Because it's so out of character? Or it's so not the way it should be?

[18 : 12] So, when a pastor has an affair, it's worse because he's a pastor. People are extraordinarily appalled.

And part of the reason that they're extraordinarily appalled is because of his status. He's the pastor. That doesn't match with who he is and what he says about himself and his behavior and his status really don't go together.

Paul is saying our status as those who have died to sin and going on sinning, they don't go together. together. They don't go together.

They don't fit. They don't belong. Now, brothers and sisters, this is a life-giving, freedom-giving truth.

truth is really the paved road that sanctification runs on.

[19 : 21] It's freedom-giving, it's life-giving, it paves the road at our feet. So the main argument here is that Christians have died to sin and they have been raised to a new life unto God.

And so the old slavery is dead and there is a new slavery in its place. The old slavery is dead, the new slavery is in its place.

Now, Paul works through this in three stages. First, our death to sin. How did that happen? Did we make that happen? Was that our decision?

No, what he's saying is our death to sin has been accomplished through our union with Jesus Christ. So, Romans 6, verse 3, and we'll read through verse 5.

Or don't you know, so now he's going back up. This is why this is such a preposterous idea that you should just go on sinning if you have died to sin. He says, or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?

[20 : 34] 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.

If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection. So, let's begin with baptism.

Your baptism, believer, was a vivid illustration, living picture of your union with Christ, of your connection to Jesus Christ.

Baptized, the word means dunked into, dipped into, and we have been dunked into, dipped into, baptized into Jesus Christ.

In a certain way, the picture is he's the water and we're dunked under him and into him. We've been baptized in him. Now, Paul's saying remember your baptism.

[21 : 40] Remember it. Do you ever do that? You should. Remember it. It was telling you something. It was showing you something.

You have been united to Christ. And if you were baptized into him, then just as Christ died, and that's a picture too of what's going on in baptism.

Baptism is a symbolic death. It's a symbolic washing. It's a symbolic death too. The person goes under. So just as Christ died, we died.

And just as Christ rose to new life to God, the same is true for the Christian. We are the kind of people, people. We are the people who have died to sin and who have been united to the life and raised to life with Christ.

We can't, we won't go on sinning. We cannot live that same life because of our union with Jesus.

[22 : 50] holiness. One of the keys then to holiness, living in holiness, is living in the light of that reality.

Number two, our union with Christ involves the death of the old man. The old man. Romans 6, verse 6 and 7.

For we know that our old self, and it's anthropos, our old man, was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin because anyone who has died has been freed from sin.

man. So again, the word translated in the NIV self is anthropos, it's man. It's talking about the old man. And it's not coming out of nowhere here in Romans 6.

He's in Romans 5. Remember, there's no chapters as Paul's writing this. So he just got done talking about this old man. And so I think it's a bit of a confusion to put self in here because it's not just the death of the person that we used to be.

[24 : 07] That's not exactly what Paul has in mind. In Romans 5, he's already talked about how death came through Adam and life comes through Jesus Christ. The power of sin comes to man through our connection to Adam.

We're connected. We're united to Adam. And so we are born sinners. Because we're born connected to him, the first sinner, the first man.

And so what he was, we are. Death came to us through him to all of us. And so just as though Adam was, so through Adam, excuse me, so through Adam, we're born under condemnation.

We're born guilty. We're born in disobedience. That's, that's the old man. Us in Adam. And what Paul is saying is, the old man that died is us in Adam.

Our standing, our status as being in Adam, that's, and that's what we truly were. That old man died.

[25 : 21] Died. And that old man, Romans 5, 21 says, sin reigned, had dominion.

We were slaves to sin. And that's why, no matter how good of a parent you are, your children turn out to be sinners. And that's why, there's not been anyone ever born except for one man who was born that wasn't going astray.

We all, like sheep, have gone astray. But the old slave man died. Now this was, this is true of me and this is true of you. I was a slave and I had a master and the master was sin and the master told me what to do and I did it.

I was always at his beck and call. You know, you're not a slave just sometimes. You're a slave all the time. And anytime he says do something, you do it.

And so my whole life was built around pleasing that master, the master's sin. My whole life was organized and governed by that.

[26 : 41] But Jesus Christ came and he saved me. Now how did he save me from that master? save me from Well, it's a very amazing way.

Probably on, you wouldn't think of saving slaves this way. So how did he come and save me? Well, he took me to himself.

He united himself to me. He took me as I was a slave. He wrapped his arms around me. And then, as it were, he jumped off of death's cliff down into the waters, into the deadly waters, and down into the darkest waters.

We both went, buried. And slave and savior went down together. And he died in those waters.

others. And that me died too. That slave died with him. And so the next day, the master came looking for his slave, and the slave was dead.

[27 : 54] The slave didn't respond. I was dead to him. So the world's crucified to me, and I'm crucified to the world.

You know, crucified men aren't very good at obeying, are they? Because they're dead. And I know this is a profound truth, but dead people aren't slaves.

And so we're dead to sin. We've been freed from sin. Now what does that mean? It means you don't have to obey sin. You don't have to obey sin.

Sin and temptation are not invincible. They are not irresistible in your life. Your sin will call out to you. Your sin will command you.

But you never, ever have to do what it says. And so that's why in a little bit, Paul's going to say, therefore, do not let sin reign.

[28 : 59] Do not offer the parts of your body to sin as instruments of wickedness. sin. So battle against temptation is really very much a battle to live out our freedom.

It's a battle for freedom. And so, and that's what he says. So why shouldn't I let sin reign? Because it doesn't belong there. And I've been set free from it.

It doesn't belong on the throne. Sin's dominion is over. So God is on the throne. You don't have to obey. And so do you see the hope that is? Do you see the help that is? You don't have to obey.

And so hopelessness and despair. Hopelessness and despair. Satan wields despair like a spear.

And if he cannot get you to be careless, he will get you to despair. He will make you hopeless. I can't win. I can't be free.

[29 : 59] The sin will always plague me. I am not free. Can I tell you that is those are lies. Utter devil devilish lies.

If the son sets you free, you are free indeed. And so you say, I don't feel free. I don't feel free.

So what is true? your feelings are God's word. If you say I'm not free because I don't feel free, can I say you are putting your faith in your feelings rather than in the word of God?

You are free. You are dead to sin. It's not your master. You're not its slave. Number three then, our union with Christ means we have new life in him.

We have new life in him. It's not that we're just dead to sin. We are positively alive to God. So Romans verse 8, now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him.

[31 : 14] For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again. Death no longer has mastery over him. The death he died, he died to sin once for all, but the life he lives, he lives to God.

So Christ didn't just take us down into the dark waters of where death is and where that old man died and we died. He rose up and we rise up.

We will and through our union with Jesus Christ and our souls, we have already living a new life to God. God. So the old man is buried and he's dead and he's gone and the new man in Christ is alive and he's alive to God, alive towards God.

He's facing God, he's loving God, he's living for God, he's awake to God. And more than all of that, Paul says we're slaves to God.

This is so important because, so look at Romans 6, 18. you've been set free from sin and you've become slaves to righteousness.

[32 : 25] You're slaves to righteousness. And that's why John can say the man born again does not continue to sin. It's an impossibility because sin is not its master anymore.

Righteousness and God is his master. So we're not just freed from sin. Positively, we've been enslaved to God. We've been handed over, is how Paul puts it, we've been bonded over to God's word, to the gospel, to positively we are slaves to righteousness.

Now, what's the, what are the practical implications of this? Very quickly, it's this, just really one point.

What's the practical implication of everything that I've been saying? Well, I think we're going to talk more about, therefore, in our struggles against sin, we have great hope, we don't let sin reign in our mortal bodies, but really, the practical implication that I want you to carry with you as you leave and as you go into next week, as you go through the rest of your life, is this, there should be great joy in the believer's life.

Great joy. Sinclair Ferguson uses this illustration, it's obviously him because it's way before my time, maybe it's not before some of yours, but he talked about Danny Kaye used to sing a children's song called The Ugly Duckling, and of course it's about the ugly duckling.

[34 : 05] His feathers were all stubby and brown, and everywhere he went, the duck said, get out, get out, get out of town. And all the winter he hid himself in the grass till the spring came and a flock of swans came paddling by and they said, look there, what a mighty fine swan. and the duckling said, me a swan? And they sang, go look in the water and you can see.

And he looked down and his brown, ugly feathers were all gone and in their place, splendid white feathers. And he said, I'm a swan, I'm a swan, not a quack, not a quack, not a waddle or a quack, but a glide and a whistle and a snowy white back, and a head so high, are so noble and high.

Say, who's an ugly duckling? Not I, not I. That's what Paul is teaching here. There should be this joyful recognition, a joyful hope, a joyful realization that you aren't under sin's dominion anymore.

You're slaves to God. And the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life. For the wages of sin, and what he means there is, what happens when you live according to the old man and you just live in sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life.

[35 : 37] You aren't an ugly duckling. You're a swan, a child of God going to heaven, and with that truth in your wings, you should go and fight against sin.

You should go and live in the freedom of that and live in the joy of that. You have the high ground, you have the momentum, you aren't fighting as a slave for her freedom, you're fighting as a free man, you're fighting as a free woman.

The joy of the Lord is your strength. And so then go, brothers and sisters, go, and be strong in the Lord.

We're dismissed. Bush Bush Bush Bush Bush Bush