

I am a Wretched Man - Applied

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[0 : 00] I'm going to ask you to take your copy of the scriptures and turn to Romans chapter 7. We're going to read from two different passages in Romans.

! The first is Romans 7, verse 14, through the end. And we're going to pick up the reading again in chapter 8. So Romans chapter 7, verse 14.

We know that the law is spiritual, but I am unspiritual. Sold as a slave to sin. I do not understand what I do.

For what I want to do, I do not do. But what I hate, I do. And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good.

As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me. I know nothing good lives in me that is in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out.

[1 : 02] For what I do is not the good I want to do. No, the evil I do not want to do. This I keep on doing. Now, if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it.

So I find this law at work. When I want to do good, evil is right there with me. For in my inner being, I delight in God's law, but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members.

What a wretched man I am. Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then, I myself, in my mind, am a slave to God's law, but in the flesh, a slave to the law of sin.

Then, chapter 8, verse 18. I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.

The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed. For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God.

[2 : 39] We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. Not only so, but we ourselves who have the first fruits of the spirit grown inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.

For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what he already has? But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently.

So you wonder, don't you? Why does being holy and doing good have to be so hard for the Christian? That's a good question.

You'll want to be sure to ask God someday. He always has good reasons for what he does. And though we don't know all of them, we do know that the answer of the Bible to that question is, why is it so hard?

Indwelling sin. Indwelling sin. And Paul says, I find this law at work in me that when I want to do the good, I want to live a holy life.

[3 : 56] Evil is right there with me. It's always on site. This active principle of sin actually lives inside of me. So I have this traitor within that is in the very control center of my being.

And he causes three things. First of all, constant conflict within. I have this constant tug of war going on inside of my heart.

On the one hand, there are these desires of the new heart that God has given me in the new birth that pull me towards God. I want to do the good.

I love and delight in God's law. But on the other hand, are these desires of indwelling sin that pull me away from God and pull me toward evil and lawlessness.

And this is such an irreconcilable war that it squeezes from Paul this tormented cry. What a wretched man I am. But indwelling sin not only causes this constant conflict, it also negatively influences and affects all that I do.

[5 : 05] It keeps me from doing what I want to do and actually contributes to me doing what I hate. It mixes with and spoils all I do, think and say, so that even my best works are tainted by sin.

It keeps me from loving God with all my heart and all my soul and all my strength and all my mind. Like I want to and like God commands me to do.

And indwelling sin keeps me from ever serving God with perfection of obedience and thought, word, deed and motive. I want to, but I cannot carry it out, is his frustration.

What a wretched man I am. And then thirdly, though the better part of me, that renewed mind that is mine in the new birth, those renewed affections and a renewed will, though I want indwelling sin to be gone, it relentlessly refuses to leave.

It's like that unwelcome tenant living in the house. Christ used to rule and reign there as the master, as the head of the house, making you its slave, but Christ has dethroned it.

[6 : 21] Christ has destroyed its reigning power. He's broken its hold over you, so you need not obey it anymore. And yet, though it no longer reigns over you, it still remains in you.

And it still tries to regain its ascendancy and reassert its reign over you. And though Paul wants it gone, he just says, I can't drive it out. And that frustration brings this heart-rending cry.

What a wretched man I am. Who will rescue me from the body of this death? So here in Romans 7, we're finding another important part of the Christian's identity.

This is telling us something important about who we are, what we are. I am a wretched man. Now, that's not all that we are, as we've been seeing in this series, and we have much more to cover.

But it is indeed part of what we are. And so today, we want to consider some applications of this identity. Why is this identity important for us to understand about ourselves?

[7 : 29] What does it do for us? And in the first place, it assures us that constant conflict, coming short of our desire of perfection, and this sense of frustration and wretchedness are all part of the normal Christian life for now.

Part of the normal Christian life. I'm not saying what ought to be, but what is for the Christian life here and now. So my failures and my struggles to pray more often, my struggle to read my Bible more believingly and just to take Jesus at his word, my struggles to forgive more fully those who offend me, to wait more patiently, to control my tongue and my thoughts and my eyes and my appetites, my failures to love God entirely, and my neighbor as much as I love myself.

These are all part of what it means to be a Christian in the present age. It goes with the territory. Sometimes such struggles can cause real Christians to fear that they're not saved at all, or they wouldn't have such struggles, they think.

But this passage helps us and this identity helps us to see that these struggles do not prove that I have not been born again, but just the opposite. The reason I have this inner conflict and this tug of war within, within dwelling sin, the reason I fight against it, and I'm grieved that I do know better is precisely because I have been born again.

I have been given these new desires, God word, new thoughts and affections and a new will that doesn't want to ever sin against my Lord, that wants to be like him.

[9 : 24] I've been given the Holy Spirit within who does desire what is contrary to the flesh. So this inner warfare with indwelling sin proves the presence of new life, not its absence.

If there was no new life within, there'd be no tug of war, no spiritual warfare, no desires for holiness and love for God's law, no sense of misery that I come short of it.

No, I would still love my sin. I would still love to go the way that's my way, not God's way, the way I was on before and was just content to live without Jesus.

I would still be there had God not given me new birth. So this wretchedness over the battle with sin is not something unique to you, dear Christian.

Don't think something terribly wrong with me here. I must not be a Christian. No, this is true of all Christians. Don't Christians sometimes think, as we look around at our brothers and sisters, that surely others don't struggle with sin in their lives.

[10 : 43] Paul's answer, oh, but we do. Oh, but we do. And shame on us if we ever try to give the impression that we don't. So this identity, you see, makes sense of our experience as a Christian.

It explains this tug of war, this battle, this frustration, this sense of misery that I can't achieve what I want to do on the inside to not sin against my dear Savior.

It's part of the normal Christian life in this present age, and I find that helpful. But secondly, and closely related to that, what else will this identity as wretched man do for me?

Well, it will save us from many popular and yet false teachings about the Christian life. Church history has been plagued with preachers and books that promise more than what the Bible promises for the here and now.

They promise more than what God promises for this age. Maybe some secret of the victorious Christian life, some new insight or technique that if you just laid hold of it would lift you above the struggle, would lift you above this frustration and this fighting to a higher plane where you're out of reach of these wrong desires and of the influence of indwelling sin.

[12:12] So there's no need for groaning and travail and turmoil and wrestling and striving and battling and especially no need to ever be crying, oh, wretched man that I am.

The claim is that it's possible in this life to reach a level of unbroken victory over all sin where you just sit back and effortlessly watch Jesus Christ live his perfect life through you.

The proposed techniques of how this is accomplished differ from teaching to teaching, whether by a second baptism of the Spirit, by a filling of the Spirit, by an exercise of your faith, by confession of all of your sins, by a total yieldness and surrender, whatever it might be.

It's the false hope of the higher life movement. Again, the very name given, the higher life above the struggle, that by yielding you can live above this downdrag of indwelling sin.

If we'll just quit trying and start trusting. If we'll just let go and let God. As if you could actually get totally out of the way so that Jesus Christ or the Holy Spirit would live instead of you.

[13:35] And of course, when he lives, it's perfect. So you could have this level of perfection out of the range and out of the reach of indwelling sin. Now, these are all various forms of perfectionism.

Claiming a life without sin's influence, whether for a moment or an hour or a day or a month or years. They're forms of perfectionism.

And John tells us in 1 John 1.8 that if we ever claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. Such claims fail to deal with this ever-present reality of sin's downdrag inside of us.

As we said last week, we're that bird with that weight tied to its foot. There's nothing we do in life that that weight doesn't in one way or another affect what we do.

And it surely fails to take this such teaching fails to take seriously what Paul says here. Oh, wretched man that I am. Not, oh, wretched man that I was before I learned this special technique of living the victorious Christian life.

[14:50] J.I. Packer tells how he came under the influence of this higher life teaching early on in his Christian life and how he almost lost his sanity, scraping the insides, trying to find some hidden sin that he hadn't confessed yet, that was holding him back from this higher life and this experience of effortless holiness.

Try as he might to yield and to let go and to let God. He couldn't reach that level of living above the struggle and where he no longer felt the frustration of wanting to please God perfectly and yet coming short.

And according to Packer, giving Christians such false hopes and raising such unbiblical expectations is downright cruel. He was one of the victims of such teaching.

Setting them up for disillusionment, confusion, and despair where they wonder, am I even a Christian? What's wrong with me? Everybody else has got it figured out.

I must be the only... Something's wrong with me. And they dive into themselves deeper, trying to find what is it that's wrong? When the only thing that's wrong here, or one of the things that's wrong is you're listening to the wrong teachers on the Christian life.

[16:14] And the Apostle Paul tells us in Romans 7 what's wrong. It's called indwelling sin. That's what's wrong. And it's not just you, it's me too, and it's Paul.

And we've got to deal with it to the very end. We can no longer shed the influence of indwelling sin for a moment, for a day, for a year.

Then we could shed our skin. It's with us. It's with us. It's in our hearts. And that's what makes us cry, oh wretched man that I am.

And so this identity will deliver us from these false expectations in the Christian life. False teachings about this level of holiness and sanctification that is perfect and without sin, if even just for a moment.

Then thirdly, this identity of wretched man calls us to vigorously pursue the lifelong battle of indwelling sin. If indwelling sin is within me until death do us part, then I must resist it every day until death do us part.

[17:28] This identity leaves no room for complacency, for a truce. Well, I guess if that's the way it is, then I guess there's no reason to fight, right?

I can't get rid of it. So why fight it? That's not biblical logic. It's devilish logic. He'd love you to just give up and give in to indwelling sin.

It would fit his program for you just perfectly. But there's nothing of that here in Romans 7. Pulls up and arms over this, isn't he? It's what causes him misery and distress, wretchedness.

No, oh well. I guess sin's just got to be a part of my daily life and I just have to learn to live with defeat.

Jesus has a different logic. He says the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.

[18:29] And because it's weak, you need to watch and pray so that you don't fall into temptation. Not, well, because I have this problem of indwelling sin, I guess I just, okay, sera, sera.

That's the way it's going to be. No, that's the reason to be up, watching, praying against the enemy. It's a call to arms. So the impossibility of a perfect holiness in this life does not mean that we don't aim for it.

Paul says aim for perfection. Jesus says be perfect as your father in heaven is perfect. It doesn't mean just because I can't reach it, I don't aim for it. And neither does it mean that real significant growth is not possible.

The apostle Paul is giving us a realistic view of sanctification. But not a pessimistic view. Not a pessimistic view where we just say, well, then why fight it?

No, that's not his view at all. Real progress in holiness is possible in this life. And it's commanded, isn't it? There are greater victories over sin.

[19:39] There is greater likeness to Jesus to be had. Even in this life, even as sin is dwelling in me. But it won't come without effort. It won't come by letting go.

It won't come without spiritual warfare. It won't come without putting on the armor of God, peace by peace, and being strong in the Lord and in his mighty power.

We're commanded to grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. You see, growth is possible. We should be holier this year than we were last year.

And we should be holier next year than we are this year. We're to be growing. We're to be growing. That's possible for the children of God. We're to make every effort to add to our faith goodness.

You see, that's progress. Not just to be satisfied that I have saving faith. No, add to your faith goodness. And to goodness, knowledge.

[20:43] And to knowledge, self-control. And add to self-control, perseverance. And to perseverance, godliness. And to godliness, brotherly kindness. And to brotherly kindness, love.

That's progress. That's addition. And it's possible in the Christian life to add to our faith. For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 Peter 1, 5-8.

So we can grow in sanctification, in holiness, in likeness to Jesus. Instead of just following our hearts, we can become more suspicious of them.

Since we know that there's a traitor inside that's trickier than I might think. He's deceitful. And we can become more aware of the ways that indwelling sin trips us up.

And the occasions in my life and the situations that would bring temptation to sin. Things that we should avoid so as to not fall as often or as far.

[21:54] We can gain substantial victory over whole areas in our lives of sin and temptation. We can be more aware of our weakness and pray more often for God's strength.

We can be more careful with that Christian armor. We can make better use of the sword in the battle.

We can be by the Spirit put to death the misdeeds of the body. We can set our mind more on what the Spirit desires and not on what the flesh desires. We can fix our eyes on Jesus who in the scriptures is set before us.

And as we behold him, we are changed into his likeness from one stage of glory to another. That's possible in this Christian life.

We can put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh. So very far and opposite from making us just all right with sin.

[22 : 57] This identity is a call to rise up and seek sin's destruction. As John Owen said, be killing sin or it will be killing you.

It was one of the authors that God used to save the sanity of Dr. Packer. Romans 13, 14.

Put on the Lord Jesus and make no provision for the flesh. No provision for that indwelling sin.

Okay, it's there, but I'm not going to make provision. I'm not going to give a thought to how to satisfy it. J. Adams paraphrases, buy no groceries for the flesh.

If you're trying to starve the dog, you don't buy dog food when you go to the store. That would be making provision for the dog.

[23 : 54] And God is telling us don't make any provision for that indwelling sin. Don't buy any groceries for it. Don't even throw it a bone.

Because indwelling sin is not satisfied once it's fed. That's a lie. Just this once more. Or just once. And I'll be satisfied.

Oh no. Sin is never satisfied. Once more is never enough. Rather, feeding the flesh only makes it hungrier for more. Like a wild animal that once gets its taste for blood.

He's not satisfied. He now wants more. More of the same. And so we've got to starve.

Indwelling sin. And there's success to be had. Against this enemy. But only by starving it. I wonder, have you considered what you might be doing to be feeding indwelling sin?

[25 : 03] We ought to think for a moment. What am I giving to indwelling sin? Maybe it's people that you're with.

And when you're around those people, the flesh is strengthened and pulls you away from God.

There's other people that when you're around them, they pull you closer to God.

Maybe it's activities that you're doing. Maybe it's what you're watching. Maybe it's what you're listening to. Maybe it's what you're thinking. And their effect is to strengthen sin rather than to starve it.

So how are you going to starve it? Oh, I'm just surfing the net. Are you or are you fishing for food for the flesh?

How will I starve indwelling sin? You see, that's radical. To cut off those feeding times altogether in my life?

[26 : 13] To just remove that from my life so that my flesh isn't fed? Yes, that's the radical treatment Jesus calls on us to make, isn't it? In Matthew 5.

If your eye causes you to sin, then gouge it out. It would be better for you to go to heaven with one eye than to go into hell with both eyes. That's surgery.

That's remove the occasion of sin. Let's make no provision for the flesh. If it's beating you there, then radical surgery is the answer. Put to death the misdeeds of the body.

That's murder. Murder those thoughts. Murder those appetites. Starve them. So, that's what we see.

This, oh, wretched man that I am, does not lead me to passivity and to a nonchalant attitude towards sin. It rather is a call to arms to watch and pray that we not enter into temptation.

[27 : 14] No truce. No peaceful coexistence. All out war. All our days. And then, fourthly, this identity of wretched man, because of our indwelling sin, should make us thankful for the Holy Spirit's help in the battle.

Christian, be encouraged. You do not fight this battle alone. The Holy Spirit is in the trenches with you.

And he is fighting with you and for you against indwellings. And he's the great difference maker as he brings his almightiness into the fray.

So, Romans 8 does encourage us in the battle. Well, I didn't tell you earlier when I was talking about some of the erroneous teaching that we hear on the Christian life that would make us expect perfection.

There's this line and thought and teaching that we need to get out of Romans 7 and on into Romans 8. As if all the wretchedness and trouble and struggling, that's Romans 7.

[28 : 27] And what Paul's trying to teach is if we could just move from Romans 7 on into Romans 8, then we'd know this unending victory without struggle. There's only one problem with that.

It doesn't work. Because, yes, in Romans 8, we have teaching about the Holy Spirit. But even after that, we find Paul groaning, groaning.

In other words, things aren't completely right yet. So, it is true that Romans 8 does speak much about the Holy Spirit and his help for us in this battle.

Verse 4 says, It is through him that the righteous requirements of the law are kept. Verse 13 says, It's by the Spirit that we put to death the misdeeds of the body.

For if you live according to the flesh, you will die. But if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live. Because those who are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

[29 : 32] Not leading you in decisions of what occupation, what school, and who to marry. It's not what he's talking about. Those who are led by the Spirit to put to death the misdeeds of the body, they are the sons of God.

That's one of the marks of how you know them. By the Spirit they are killing sinful desires and thoughts and actions. Bless God for the Spirit.

Verse 26 says, He helps us in our weakness. Oh, and how indwelling sin makes us feel our weakness. We don't even know what we should pray for as we are. But the Spirit, He helps us even then.

So you think the battle with the flesh is hard. Think what it would be without the Holy Spirit. You wouldn't have a fighting chance. There wouldn't be a fight.

Without God's on-site agent of sanctification. Without the Holy Spirit fighting in you, working in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure.

[30 : 35] Without Him producing in you the fruit of the Spirit that counters the works of the flesh. For every work of the flesh there's a countering fruit of the Spirit.

We never feel the full force of the flesh as a Christian. Due to the Holy Spirit warring against our flesh. Shielding us, strengthening us.

Without the Holy Spirit we'd still be slaves of sin. We would not only be bemoaning its remaining presence and its remaining influence in us.

But we would be suffering under its cruel domination. Led about by indwelling sin. With a hook in our nose. Wherever it wanted to lead us. He's the one who is progressively sanctifying us in this Christian life.

For as we behold Christ in the Scriptures. We are being changed into His image. From one stage of glory to another. Which comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.

[31 : 40] 2 Corinthians 3.18 So we watch. We pray for. And we depend upon the Holy Spirit's mighty influence.

It's not by your might or power. But by my Spirit says the Lord. So we want to be careful to guard against anything that would grieve the Holy Spirit.

Or that would quench Him and His work in my life. I can't afford to have the Holy Spirit grieved. He's the one who brings supernatural power. Into my war against the flesh.

And so our identity as wretched men will keep us looking outside of ourselves for help. To the Spirit of God who is given to us. So Romans 8 does give us much encouragement about the Holy Spirit's help in our battle with indwelling sin.

But here's the point I want you to get this morning. And why we read Romans 8.18-25. The Holy Spirit's help does not in this life lead to any kind of perfect performance by me.

[32 : 46] My flesh continues to taint all that I do. Even with the Spirit's help. I continue to fall short of perfect love to God with all my heart, soul, mind, and strength.

And I fall short of perfectly loving my neighbor as myself. Which is the summary of what holiness is. So the Spirit's present help in Romans 8 is still not the final answer to our sin problem.

I say the Spirit's help in the battle is not the full redemption from sin. And Romans 8.18-25 points out something of the present incompleteness of God's answer to sin.

Now Jesus Christ has provided a full redemption. But we only enter into the enjoyment of that full redemption in stages.

Notice verse 22 of Romans 8. Paul says, We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time.

[33 : 55] Some of you have been through childbirth for the first time this year. Others are waiting. The Bible talks about it.

The whole creation is groaning. Dads, have you heard her groan? You know what Paul's talking about. When the pains of childbirth come upon.

Well, what's causing creation to groan? What's causing the mountains and the rivers and the streams and the flowers and the birds and the weather systems and the sky?

What's causing it to groan? Well, it groans under the frustration of its bondage to decay. Nature here is being personified as if it knows that it was made for something better than the present. Nature is being hampered. It's being hamstrung. It's being held back by the curse that subjected it to frustration and bondage to decay. What nature could be without the curse?

[35 : 04] It's groaning for that, you see. Longing for that. So it groans with longing as it waits to be liberated from this frustration of the curse and the bondage that it finds itself in.

It wants to be brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God. Can't wait. But verse 23 tells us that nature is not alone in groaning.

And that's what you need to see. Not only so, but we ourselves who have the first fruits of the spirit, we groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.

Notice three things from verse 23. First, the we. Paul puts himself as a groaner. He present tense is groaning.

As are every other believer. They're groaning. Secondly, even the present operations of the Holy Spirit within us do not stop the groaning.

[36 : 13] Notice he says who's groaning. It's we who have the first fruits of the spirit. We have the spirit. We have his ministry in our lives, but it's only the first fruits.

He hasn't given us the full deal yet. It's just the first fruits that we're enjoying. And so we who have the first fruits of the spirit are still groaning, groaning because something's still not right.

You see. Do you want to hear what those groans are saying? If you could interpret them. We have a sample of it in chapter seven and verse 24.

This is Paul's groan. What a wretched man I am. Can you hear him groaning as he says that? He's not nonchalant like, oh, yeah, that's right. I still struggle with indwelling sin.

He's groaning. Because of the frustration of wanting to please God perfectly and coming short. When will this battle with sin be over?

[37 : 14] You see, it's precisely because we have the first fruits of the spirit that we groan with longing. We know something better is coming.

And if this be but the first fruits, what will the fullness be? So we groan for that perfection that's coming. And thirdly, notice this is not a hopeless groaning. There is hopeless groaning.

But this is not a hopeless groaning any more than a pregnant woman's groanings under the pain of childbirth are hopeless groanings. There are hopeless groanings.

If you have an appendicitis attack. That's a hopeless groaning. That pain causes you. Because it's not leading to something good, is it?

But it's... But the groans of a woman in labor are full of hope, aren't they? An expectation of something good. The very reason she's groaning is because it's time for the baby to come.

[38 : 12] And so what's coming gives hope in the midst of her groaning. And that's the kind of groaning nature is doing. For the freedom it longs for is most assuredly coming at the renewal of all things.

When Jesus says, I make all things new. And the children of God are revealed and creation itself will then share in the glorious freedom of the children of God.

That's the kind of groaning that nature does. Hopeful groaning. And it's the same kind of groaning that we are doing. Paul and you and me. As we are still fighting against sin.

Because the freedom we long for is most assuredly coming. There is yet a more glorious freedom from sin that awaits the children of God.

There is a freedom from the very presence of sin. And so we groan and we wait and hope for all that lies ahead. For who hopes for what he already has.

[39 : 11] But if we hope for what we do not yet have. We wait for it patiently. Albeit with longing groans. There is still something more to this freedom from sin.

So Paul is giving us a sample of this groaning. It's full of hope for the believer. What a wretched man that I am. Who will rescue me from the body of this death?

Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord. 725. You see that's groaning with hope. Yes I groan to see the present. Frustration.

But thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord. You see the hope that Paul has. He doesn't end on just the groaning. As if that's all we have to live with.

No we have this blessed hope. In Jesus Christ our Lord. He will rescue us. So there is a progression. In our freedom from sin.

[40 : 11] That's what we see. In Romans 6, 7 and 8. That this freedom from sin. Does not come to us all at once. It comes in stages. Indeed maybe it's even pictured in Israel's entering into the promised land.

In the Old Testament. God didn't destroy all their enemies at once. But they drove them out. One by one progressively. There was a process.

At least that pictures for us. The way that we enter into freedom from sin. Chapter 6 says we're free from our bondage to sin's dominion and reign.

But chapter 7 somewhat qualifies that freedom. We still can't escape its influence. It's in us. It's still here. And that itself feels like something of a bondage. It's not what it was in Romans 6.

But there's still this frustration of its very presence in us. But chapter 8 then points us to a perfect freedom from sin that is coming. So I think we can see three steps of increasing freedom from sin.

[41 : 15] First of all. And you can think about the three Ps of sin. Sin's penalty. We are under the penalty of God because of our sin.

And what is that penalty? It's damnation. It's hell forever. And we couldn't escape sin's penalty. We were held in its grip. But upon believing in Jesus.

We're justified freely by his blood. And declared righteous for Jesus' sake. And all of our sins were transferred to him. And he paid for them all at Calvary.

And all of his righteousness is transferred to me. So that I am justified. There is no more penalty for sin for me. The moment I believe. There is therefore now no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus.

That's the first stage of freedom from sin. We're immediately upon faith in Christ. Set free from sin's penalty. But that's not complete freedom from sin.

[42 : 14] Altogether is it? Because we still have its reigning. It's its presence in us. And even its struggle. Don't we? But secondly, there is also sin's reigning power.

Our flesh from birth was bound by... Or I should say we were bound by sin's power. We entered the world as slaves to sin. And so it was our master.

And it held dominion over us. And we did what it said. And we obeyed its cravings, its desires, and thoughts. But upon union with Christ. By our conversion.

Our reigning power of sin was broken in our lives. It freed us from the authority of our old master sin. And brought us under to this new master, Jesus Christ.

So that sin will not have dominion over you. You're now in this covenant of grace. Sin will not have its dominion over you. You don't have to serve sin anymore.

[43 : 15] Saving grace teaches us to say no to ungodliness and worldly passions. We've been given a new heart. We've been given the spirit to help us battle. And the Holy Spirit is a deposit guaranteeing what is to come.

Oh, do you mean there's more to come to freedom from sin? Yes. Yes, that's right. Because we're still not completely free from sin. Because it's still here. No longer reigns. But it still remains.

And it still causes a lot of trouble in my life. Such that I can say with Paul, I'm a wretched man when I think of what it does. And so that points us to sin's presence altogether.

Thirdly. We will be saved from sin's presence. And though that happens at death. Death is not the Savior. Jesus is.

Paul doesn't say. Who will rescue me from this body of this death? Oh, I thank God for death. No. No, death isn't the Savior.

[44 : 16] Jesus is. And he saves us from sin's presence. Yes. When death does us part. He's coming back.

To finish what he has begun. To save his people from their sins altogether. Sin's penalty. He already bore it. Sin's reigning power. He's already broken it.

Sin's presence. He will annihilate it. For he will rescue us. From this wicked enemy within. He will evict this unwelcomed guest.

Christ. Whether at his coming. To us. Or our going to him. The Bible says that upon seeing Christ. We will be made like him.

First John 2.2. Dear friends. Now we are children of God. But what we will be. Has not yet been made known.

[45 : 11] But we know this much about it. That when he appears. We will be like him. For we will see him. As he is. You will be like Jesus Christ. You know he has no indwelling sin in him.

And neither will you. Heaven has a sign. Leave your sin at the door. You see.

Nothing get. Nothing unclean gets. Gets by. It's really not written for you. Jesus is the one that. That destroys. Anything of remaining sin. Within us.

And that's our glorification. Isn't that glory. Christ image. Perfectly restored in us. Perfect moral likeness to Jesus. Already those who have died in Christ.

Our loved ones who are. Have died in Christ. They're referred to in Hebrews 12. As the spirits of just men. Made perfect. Already their spirits have been made perfect.

[46 : 13] They weren't perfect here on earth. The spirit of God. Was sanctifying them. But not yet perfect. But they are perfect now. And now all they await is the.

The resurrection. And the full redemption of the body. So this identity of wretched man. Is only a temporary identity. For us Christians. There will come a day.

When that will no longer. Be true of us. Oh wretched man. That I am. When we see him. We will have a new identity. Of perfectly holy.

And therefore perfectly happy. Never again. Will you groan with frustrated desires. For God. That you can't fulfill. Never again. Will you struggle. To do what is right.

Never again. For all eternity. Will sins grimy fingerprints. Beyond everything that you do. And for the first time. In our lives. We will love God. With all of our hearts.

[47 : 10] All of our souls. All of our minds. All of our strength. And our neighbor is ourself. Think of that.

Loving God. With all your mind. Never again. Forgetful of what God has done for you. Never again. Forgetful of his promises. Of his nature.

His name. His offices. For you. All these. Never again forget. No. You'll love him. Perfectly. With all your mind. No proud thoughts. No.

No unworthy thoughts. Of God. No shrinking thoughts. Of thinking less of him. Than what he really is. No doubtful thoughts. Of his love for you. Or his faithfulness to you. Never again.

Such a thought. But all the meditations. Of your heart. Will be perfectly pleasing. In his sight. And our minds. Will never grow tired. Or weary. Of God.

[48 : 09] And so. We will never again. Sing. 418. We have not known thee. As we ought. The things of earth. Have filled our thought. And trifles. Of the passing hour. Never again.

Will we forget God. Because of trifles. Of the passing hour. Rather. The trifles of heaven. Whatever we're involved with. In heaven. Will remind us of God. And then we'll love him.

With all of our affections. Always ablaze. Always hot. After God. Never again. Will we have the sad experience. Of coming to the Lord's Supper. And saying.

You know. There's a whole lot more. That I am remembering here. Than what I'm feeling. In my heart. This love of God. That we are. We are looking at.

As his body broken for us. And his blood shed for us. I know there's a whole lot more. In that. Than what my heart is. Is yet feeling. Never again. Have that problem. We will be singing.

[49 : 08] Worthy is the lamb. As with our affections. Perfected. We will drink in. This love of God. Perfectly. And respond. In wonder.

Love. In praise. Never again. Find our hearts. Losing their first love. For Jesus. Never again. Find our hearts. Only half engaged. In the. Hearing of his word.

The singing of his. His praises. Never again. Need to confess. We have not loved thee. As we ought. Nor care. That we are loved. By thee. Thy presence.

We have coldly sought. And feebly long. Thy face to see. No. With a pure. And loving heart. We will feel. And we will own. The love. That thou art.

And then. We will love him. With all of our will. Perfectly. In line. With God's will. Isn't that your greatest. Trouble in life. That you still have this. This.

[50 : 05] Disalignment. We'll call it. Between God's will. And yours. And there's conflict. And there's struggle. And. But then. There will be no more conflict. And you will will. Only one will. And that is

God's will. That's perfect peace.

Always. And only. Delighting. To choose. To obey the Lord. No more duties. Left undone. No more battles. Lost.

Or scarcely won. And then. Will God's will. Be done on earth. As it is in heaven. In the new earth. By the perfected. People of God.

And then. I will perfectly. Love my neighbor. And care. About. Him. About her. As I care. For myself. That's glorification.

Oh that will be glory. For me. Heaven. A world. Of perfect love. And we'll know. The unspeakable joy. Of doing exactly. What we were made. For. To know.

[51 : 01] God. To glorify. And enjoy him. Forever. I wonder. If this is one of the greatest. Attractions. For heaven. Of heaven. For you. Is this what makes you.

Long for heaven. To worship. And serve him. With unsinning heart. Dear dying lamb. Thy precious blood.

Will never lose its power. Until all the ransomed. Church of God. Be saved. To sin. No more. William Cooper. Are you just leading this on. With some. Expectation. That the Bible. Doesn't give us. No. You are telling us. In him.

In poetry. What God has promised us. In his word. That seeing his son. We will be made like him. And then. It will be to sin. No more.

[51 : 58] And to know that. That is forever. And ever. It's coming brother. Fight on sister. And that's the fifth thing. Our present identity.

Is wretched man. Does for us. It focuses our hope. On the glorious. Return of Jesus Christ. And the perfect freedom.

From sin. That will be ours. When we see him. We grow weary. Of the fight. With indwelling sin. Don't we? We're weary. By it. It wears us out. And well. The Bible.

Keeps. Pointing us. To this. This happy hope. The glorious appearing. Of our great God. And savior. Set your hope. Fully. On the grace. To be given you. When Jesus Christ.

Is revealed. And no small part. Of that grace. Is that you will be perfected. So set your heart. On that. Weary. Soldier. Worn out. Pilgrim. It's coming.

[52 : 51] It's coming. And that's what this. Oh wretched man. That I am. Who will deliver me from. Thank be. Thanks be to God. Jesus Christ. Our Lord. It focuses. Our attention.

On the freedom. The absolute. Total freedom. He's coming again. And our indwelling sin. Will be consumed. And he who has this hope in him. Purifies himself.

Even now. Even as he is pure. So lift up your heads. Your redemption. Draws. Nigh. That's why we sing.

Finish then. Thy new creation. It's not done. It's been begun. But we're crying. And longing. And groaning.

For God. To finish then. Thy new creation. Pure and spotless. Let us be. Let us see. Thy great salvation. Perfectly restored. In thee. Changed from glory.

[53 : 44] Into glory. Till in heaven. We take our place. Till we cast our crowns. Before they lost. In wonder. Love. And praise. That's what we're looking forward to.

Worshiping our Savior. With unsinning heart. Do you know anything. Friend. Of this groaning desire. To be holy. Do you know anything. Of the frustration.

Of not being able. To perfectly please God. Does it bother you. That you love him no more. Than you do. That you. That you don't. Obey him. More faithfully.

Than you do. That you don't delight in him. As you know he is worthy. Does that bother you. Or you just. That's okay with me. I've got a lot of things here. That I'm enjoying.

And that's just satisfying me. Fine. This identity. Is the identity. Of every Christian. There is something. Of this frustration. That's created. By the new birth.

[54 : 41] And yet. The incompleteness. Of the. Work. And application. I should say. Of Jesus salvation. There's still something. Future. And every Christian. Knows something. Of that longing.

After it. If that's not you. You need to know Jesus. You need to get a new heart. And only Jesus. Can give you.

A new heart. And though this shows us. Just the folly. Of ever trusting. In our own righteousness. Of ever trusting.

In what we do. Some good deed. That I could do. To pay for my bad deeds. Because it. It teaches us. To look again. At our righteousness. What is our righteousness.

If even the Christian's. Righteousness. Is still imperfect. Still has something. Of sin. Marring. And fouling up. Our motives. And the degree.

[55 : 33] With which. We do what we do. And the joy. And giving. And the joy. If even the Christian's. Best deeds. Have something. To be repented of. What of your deeds. My friend.

Without Jesus Christ. Without a new heart. That you would think. That with my religious acts. And my good deeds. I could. I could pay off. My debt. For my sins.

You might. Just as well. Expect. To pay off your debts. With monopoly money. No. Look at those. Righteous acts.

That you. Think to pay off. There's nothing there. Augustine called them. Splendid sins. That's all they are. Isaiah called them. Filthy rags.

That's all they are. Do we ever think. That. By doing good deeds. We could. Pay off. The penalty. Of our bad deeds. What a wretched system.

[56 : 29] What a beautiful thing. Is the gospel. That Jesus Christ. Came and perfectly. Obeyed God's law. The only one to do it. All of us. Sinners. He tempted. Just like us.

But without sin. And so he has a perfect. Righteousness. And he promises to give that to anyone. Who comes to him in faith. With nothing good to say for themselves.

To condemn themselves and say. God I can't in any way. Earn your salvation. Your privilege. Your pleasure. I cannot earn that. But I come.

And cast myself. Upon you for mercy. Have mercy on me. The sinner. For Jesus sake. And he is pleased to give you. His perfect righteousness. So that you can stand.

In the day of judgment. Clothed in the righteousness. Of Jesus. You can stand right now. And whatever. Confronts you. And know that in that day. He will own me. As righteous.

[57 : 27] Nothing against him. That needs to be punished. Jesus paid it all. Finish. Then. Thy new. Creation.

Let's sing it. Number 460. I trust. If. You don't know this savior. You trust in him. Even as we sing. What a willing. And able savior.

He is. With a righteousness. For all who come to him. 460. Let's stand. As we. Cry to the Lord. Thankful for what he has.

Already done within us. But longing for him. To finish. What he's begun. I've become. I've become. I've become. I've become. I've become. I've become. I've become. I've become. I've become. I've become.

I've become. I've become. I've become. I've become. I've become. I've become. I've become. I've become. I've become. I've become.