

How to Murder Sin (part 1)

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[0:00] Colossians, and I'll read the first ten verses of chapter three. Since then, you have been raised with Christ.

Set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature.

Sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires, and greed, which is idolatry. Because of these, the wrath of God is coming.

You used to walk in these ways in the life you once lived. But now you must rid yourselves of all such things as these. Anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips.

[1:11] Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices, and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its creator.

First degree murder. That's what I'm talking about tonight. Planned, thoughtful, malicious murder. And some of you might not have the stomach for what I'm going to be talking about tonight, because you're in love with the victim. The victim is your own darling.

The one you live for. And the victim is sin. And the topic tonight is how to murder sin. I've decided to use the word murder because killing isn't quite strong enough.

Maybe you have those little ladybug. They're not ladybugs, but they're like those little ladybug bugs inside your house.

[2:19] And you're probably on your walls and stuff like that. And I hope none of you, well I do, and I hope none of you are too squeamish, because what I like to do is when I see one, I shoot it and fling it.

That's how I deal with it. And my wife, she has another way of taking care of them. She goes around and vacuums them up and sucks them all up.

Well, can you imagine being a little bug? And all of a sudden a giant finger comes and just swatch you 100 miles across the room, or you're just moseying up the wall, and all of a sudden a giant vacuum cleaner sucks you up, and I don't know what happens to them after that.

You know what, I don't think a lot about what happens to them. I don't care. Killing bugs in my house is not a big deal to me. I'm not mean. I'm not finding great enjoyment in doing that, even though it might appear that I am.

I'm not thoughtful about it even. I just sort of do it when the whim takes me. But that kind of killing is not what I'm talking about tonight.

[3:31] When I talk about killing sin. Because when you're talking about killing sin, we're talking about murder. Malicious, thoughtful, hateful, heartless execution.

And so if you don't have a mean streak when it comes to sin, then you're not ready to kill sin. Then what you're going to hear tonight, it's not for you.

You'll hear me, but you won't do anything about it. Because the victim, you don't mind. Well, it should matter. It should matter to every single one of you here.

Because either you're killing sin, or John Owen said it, you're killing sin, or sin is killing you. You're killing sin, or sin will be killing you.

Some of you are in a life to death struggle with sin, and yet you don't know it. You're waltzing with sin, and the whole time it's stabbing you in the back, even as you dance.

[4:33] And you say, but I don't feel it. I don't feel it. It doesn't seem so bad. But the sting comes in the tail.

It comes in at the end. When we read it, Paul said to the Colossians, put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature, and then he gives a list, and then he gives a reason, because of these, the wrath of God is coming.

So sin is painting a bullseye right on your chest, a bullseye right for God's wrath. And every sin paints that bullseye darker, and darker.

And every sin screams louder, punish me, punish me, I deserve to be punished, destroy me. And so Owen is right. Be killing sin, or sin will be killing you.

So it should matter. It should matter to all of you. Either it dies, or you die. Either it dies, or you die. You can't live together.

[5:40] And so you need to wake up. God hates sin. All of his holy nature burns with hatred for it.

Can you live with a consuming fire? That's the question you need to ask yourself. If you can't live with a consuming fire, then you can't live with sin.

Because sin attracts God's wrath. And sin will destroy you, because God will destroy you for your sin. And I hope I don't have to, I don't need to convince all of you that killing sin, murdering sin, is absolutely necessary.

Sin is God's enemy. If you're a child of God, it should be your enemy too. If your dad was the king, so your father's the king, would you let his assassins live?

Would you let them sleep in your bed? Would you give them the things that they need in order that they could kill your father? Well, if you have a drop of love in your heart for your father, you won't aid and abet the enemy of your father.

[7:02] If you love God, and if we love God, then sin has to be our enemy. And so how do we murder sin? I have nine directions, but we can't get to them all this week.

So we're going to go over the first three. First three directions of how to murder sin. And the first direction is this. Live in Jesus' victory.

Live in Jesus' victory. All real killing of sin flows out of the gospel. It has to flow out of the gospel. The gospel must come first.

So what did Jesus do on the cross? That's where we begin. What did Jesus do on the cross? Well, he did a number of things. He propitiated God's wrath for our sin.

So he saved us from the penalty of sin. And so he rendered the perfect obedience, the obedience that you and I need in order to be right, to be justified with God.

[8:10] And so now through faith in his life and in his death, you are justified. But more than that, on the cross, he broke the power of reigning sin.

We sing that and we're going to sing it later. He breaks the power of reigning sin. Well, how did Jesus break the power of reigning sin in his people's life? In their lives.

He did it by dying. By dying to sin. He died to sin. And the question that you're probably asking is, well, what does that have to do with me?

What does that have to do with me? Because on the cross, it wasn't just his death. By faith, it has become your death. When you believed, you were put into Christ.

You were joined with Christ. You have a union with him. And so, Paul repeatedly says, that was your death that he died.

[9:14] It was your death. When he died, we died. We died with him and we have been raised with him to newness of life. And so we read it in Colossians 3. Since you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above.

For you died and your life is now hidden with Christ and God. Christ and his people, you and Jesus, are so connected that his death to sin was your death to sin.

And his resurrection guarantees your resurrection. And so the death that Christ died was a death to sin. And so your relationship to sin has fundamentally changed.

And this is important because this is the standing on which we're going to do all of our fighting. Your relationship to sin has fundamentally changed because of what Jesus did on the cross.

By faith, it's changed. Now, let's put it like this. Most of you are U.S. citizens. I think probably all of you are U.S. citizens.

[10:22] You are under the rule of the Constitution. You are under all the laws that our Congress and the President have signed into law, have brought into law.

Well, how did you come into that law? How did you come under that law? Did they ask your opinion? Well, no. Most of you, you were born here. You were born under this law.

And so you were born under the law of the United States and that means you have to do what the law says. Now, let's go to a graveyard. So we go to the graveyard and there's lots of people in the graveyard.

Do they have to obey the laws of the United States? No. They don't. They don't. They don't have to do what the Congress says or the President says.

They don't have to do it at all. Why? Well, for the very fundamental reason that they're dead. Right? Dead people can't obey the law of the land. And so, why are they free?

[11:21] Because they've died. The U.S. Constitution cannot tell them to do anything anymore. And brothers and sisters, the point is that has happened to you. You were born into sin's kingdom.

You used to be under sin's rule. But when you threw yourself onto Jesus Christ by faith, when you were joined with Him for salvation, His death became your death.

And His life became your life. And when Jesus, with Jesus, you died to the law of sin. And so, you no longer have to do what it says.

You don't have to sin. You don't have to do what sin wants. You are free. Sin is not your master. So, there was a slave.

And He was a slave to a horrible, horrible king. And the king abused Him terribly. And then one day, a savior from another country, from another nation, came and He said, I have a wonderful plan that I'm going to rescue you from this horrible master.

[12:37] I'm going to rescue you from this horrible rule. And the savior came up with this wonderful plan. And this is what the savior did. This was His plan. He says, I'm going to kill you.

I will kill you. And so, He kills that slave. And then He takes that slave's dead body and takes it into His kingdom and raises that slave to new life.

That's what has happened to each one of you if you have believed. You have died to sin and now you are raised to newness of life into God's kingdom. And so, you are set free.

And so, what happens now when this evil king's sin comes and tells you to do this? Do you have to obey? No.

You're free. You're no longer a part of that kingdom. No matter how much he yells and screams and threatens and tempts and entices, do you have to obey? No. None of you have to obey if you are dead to sin.

[13:42] So, you're dead to sin and you serve a new king. And that's how Paul argues consistently throughout his epistles. That's how Paul argues in Romans 6.

We died to sin. We were buried with Christ through baptism. We've been raised. The old self was crucified. And then he comes up with the application, therefore, do not let sin reign in your mortal body.

Don't let it reign. Why? Because it's not king anymore. Jesus is king. You don't let sin reign. Jesus has died and he's rose again and you died with him.

And so, at the cross, sin's authority over your life was broken. Its rights, its powers are no longer over you.

And so, don't let it rule. Romans 8, follows the same pattern. Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death.

[14:53] So, we've been set free by the Spirit. Set free from what? The law of sin. This mastery that sin had over us. And then verse 12 says, therefore, brothers, we have an obligation.

There's somebody that has obligated us to do certain things. He says, we have an obligation, but it's not to the sinful nature to live according to it.

For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die. But if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live.

And so, there's this pattern. How do we put sin to death? It starts here. There's this pattern. Gospel precedes mortification.

So, the first direction is to live, to count it as so, to live as it is so, that what Jesus did on the cross is actually what He did for you.

[16:03] He gained the victory for you. So, live in Jesus' victory. Revel in the Gospel. Soak in the Gospel. Think about the Gospel until your fingers are pruned with it.

Rejoice in your freedom. Rejoice in your freedom. Fasten it in your mind. You're going to want to go back to that old kingdom.

There's parts of you. We talked about it during the worship. There's still this struggle within us, this indwelling sin that's going to want to go back and it's going to tempt us to do what it wants.

But don't. Don't. Sin has lost its grip on you. You don't have to do what it says. Jesus is your King. His Word is your law. And you're bound to no other. So don't let sin reign in your mortal bodies. And so before we take any action against sin, until we take any positive mortifying mortification, mortifying actions against sin, before you make any strike against sin, look to make sure that where your feet are is where it's supposed to be.

[17 : 21] Are your feet resting on Jesus' great victory for you? Do you really see yourself as dead to sin? As already victorious over it in Jesus Christ?

Do you see yourself as really alive to God? Because those who have died have also been raised to this new life. And so don't take a step until you are sure that your feet are shod with the gospel of peace.

You are at peace with God. So the question is, are you tasting the goodness, are you living in the goodness of Jesus' victory for you?

That's the thing you want to work on first and foremost. Get into the gospel. Find out what it means for you. Dwell in that grace until it thrills your heart.

And what you find is the way to live free of the gospel is to count it as such that you are free indeed. Now the second direction is this.

[18 : 30] Understand your responsibility. Understand your responsibility. Whose job is it to kill sin?

Whose job is it to kill sin? It's yours. It's your job to kill sin. And I think a lot of Christians have the wrong idea about how mortification of sin works.

And I think a lot of normal, good, Christian folks, they have the wrong idea because they take their previous Christian experience and what happened to them right when they were converted and then they make that the norm for the rest of their life.

And what I mean is this. When you were saved, probably a lot of things instantly changed, didn't it? A lot of sins just completely dropped away.

You know? You quit smoking and it wasn't hard. You quit swearing. You quit lying. It was just effortless. Things made this instantaneous change.

[19 : 36] God gave you this freedom over all these things. And the problem is when we take that experience, which is true and good and we should be thankful for it, but when we make that experience and we expect that that's how sin dies, how all sin dies.

And so now here you are. Some of those things are behind you now, but you still have the sin within. There's still things there.

You're still impatient. You still eat too much. You lust. You're greedy. And then you have this false expectation that God is just going to, one day you're going to wake up and out of the overflow of your heart, you won't be impatient anymore.

Out of the overflow of your heart, you'll eat the right amount and you'll have all this perfect self control and sin is just going to fall off you. But it doesn't happen.

And so you're sad, you're frustrated, you're upset, and perhaps you even pray, oh God, take this sin away from me. God, make me holy. Help me not to be impatient.

[20 : 52] Help me not to lust. And we pray, and that's good, but we pray and then we don't do what we're supposed to do, and that's murder, sin.

So we've already read the passages. Colossians 3, 5, yeah, 3, 5. Put to death, therefore. Who? Who's putting this to death?

Well, the implied answer is you. You put to death. Romans 8, 15. If by the Spirit you put to death. So who's putting to death the misdeeds of the body?

You are. Romans 6, 12. Do not let sin reign. Who? You. You do not let sin reign.

So whose responsibility is it to murder sin? It's your responsibility. It's yours. And so many times I think it's like I think we're like this.

[21 : 56] We're saying I'm struggling. I'm struggling against sin. I surrender. Actually is what we're saying. I surrender.

I'm not struggling. I'm giving up. And I'll say I'm struggling. But I'm actually being taken prisoner. So that's not fighting.

And so we don't complain against our sin. We don't murmur about it. And we don't even merely pray about it. We murder it.

You murder it. And that's vigorous action. That's effort. That's rocks and sticks and guns and knives. And that's taking cheap shots. And that's hitting while the enemy's down. And that's stomping on its head when it's begging for mercy. And we saw it today. David's hacking Goliath's head off until when? Until he has that head off the shoulders and he's taking it away as a war trophy to Jerusalem.

[23:01] It's effort. It's sweating. And it's your responsibility to put to death sin. And you don't stop until it is dead. And that might mean on the day that you're dying, the day you die, you're going to be fighting that.

But so be it. And so it's your responsibility. It requires effort on your part. Now let me, let's ask, what's the connection then between what we talked about before, the gospel, and then now our responsibility?

We want to tie all these things back to the gospel. gospel. So what's the connection between my responsibility and the gospel? Well, the gospel, it makes us free from the law of sin.

So we're called to live free. We're called to not let sin reign over us. That's an action that we are supposed to take. Sin is going to want to get on the throne of our hearts, and it's going to want to use our faculties and our mind and our will and our body to sin, and we're to not let it get on the throne.

not to let it reign. And so the gospel has fundamentally changed who is in control. The Holy Spirit is now in charge, and the Holy Spirit is sitting on the throne, and we are to keep sin off the throne.

[24:26] But more than that, now we have the Holy Spirit. We have the Holy Spirit. You have the Holy Spirit in you. And how did you get him?

The crowning gift of resurrection. Jesus won the Holy Spirit for you. And so now, because of what Jesus did on the cross, the Holy Spirit is for you.

He is the blood-bought new covenant gift for you. And so now you aren't alone in your fighting. All that effort that we were talking about, and all that sweating and hacking and cutting and stomping, you're not alone in those things.

The Holy Spirit is fighting against the sinful nature, and he's fighting with you. Philippians 2.12 says, work out your salvation with fear and trembling. Who's working it out?

You work it out. So we're talking about you work out your salvation, and what are we talking about there? We're talking about salvation from sin. So work out your salvation from selfishness, from greed, from lust.

[25:37] You work it out, and you work it out with fear and trembling. Why? Because it's God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.

Why are we to work with fear and trembling? It's not because if I don't, I'm going to hell. If we took this out of context, you might think that.

it's because God the Almighty, the Spirit, is inside of me. And he is so close that your acting is his acting, and your willing is his willing.

He's so close to you, and that should make you tremble. And it also should make you work. You work because he works.

And so it's your responsibility, but it's not your strength. Isn't that good news? It's your responsibility, but it's his strength.

[26:43] If you, what did Paul say in Romans 8? If you by the Spirit put to death the misdeeds of the body, you'll live. It's your effort, but it's his strength. And so why did Jesus give the Holy Spirit?

it? To make you holy? To help you put to death sin? To write the laws on your heart? And so that you would want to obey them? And so that not only would you want to obey them, but you would have the strength to obey them.

And he doesn't give that from a million miles away. He invades us, and he works, and we work. And so it's your responsibility, but by the gracious gift of God, by the gracious gift of Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, you can do it.

It's your responsibility, but you're not alone. It's his strength. That's the second direction.

Understand your responsibility. Now here's the third direction.

Feed the fires of hate. Feed the fires of hate. What turns an ordinary man into a bloodthirsty killer?

[27:54] hate. It's hate. Hate. God calls us to be gentle with others. He calls us to love others.

He calls us to turn the other cheek with others. He calls us to be gentle and gracious and kind with others. But he calls us to be absolutely bloodthirsty when it comes to sin.

God's love. And if you're going to murder sin, you need a mean streak a mile wide. Listen to Ed Welch. There's a mean streak to authentic self-control.

Self-control is not for the timid. When we want to grow in it, not only do we nurture an exuberance for Jesus Christ, that's sort of our first point, an exuberance for Jesus Christ, we also demand of ourselves a hatred for sin.

The only possible attitude toward out-of-control desire is a declaration of all-out war. So did you hear that? The only attitude that we can face, that we can have towards an out-of-control desire, towards sin, is a declaration of all-out war.

[29 : 14] We must demand of ourselves a hatred for sin. And so if you want to murder sin, feed the fires of your hate. Nebuchadnezzar, remember, he heated the furnace seven times in his anger.

He said, make that furnace seven times hotter. So let me ask you, what will you do in your hatred, in your anger for sin? And you'll never kill sin until you hate it.

Well, how do you feed the fires of hate? Think about what sin wants to do. And all these things that I'm going to tell you about demand your mind.

So think about what sin wants to do. Is sin innocent? Is it a little pet bunny that you can take out of the cage and pet it and feed it and then put it back in the cage?

No, sin wants to murder you. So do you play cards with a serial killer who's broken into your house in the middle of the night? No. You either run for your life or you kill him.

[30 : 23] Don't you? You either run for your life or you kill him. And remember, sin doesn't just want a little bit. It wants you dead. It wants you more than dead.

It wants you in hell. It wants you to go all the way. And so when it puts on a timid, humble face and says, oh, just a little bit, remember what it's really after.

It really wants to go all the way. It wants you to carry you as far as it can. So listen to John Owen. Sin aims always at the utmost.

Every time it rises up to tempt or entice, it would go out to the utmost sin of that kind. Every unclean thought or glance would be adultery if it could.

Every covetous desire would be oppression. Every thought of unbelief would be atheism. So doesn't that make you hate sin?

[31 : 28] Sin is such a liar. It says it just wants a little bit, but actually what it wants is everything. And it wants to ruin you. It wants your whole life. And if you give it a little, it will take everything.

And so sin just says one more, one more picture, one more porn picture, but what it really wants is you committing adultery with your neighbor's wife. It will not be satisfied until you're doing the most heinous things.

It's a gaping mouth. It's an open grave and it's going to devour you unless you kill it. And so sin is like Hitler. You can't make peace with it.

You can only kill it. Neville Chamberlain, 1938, he was the prime minister of England. He went to Munich to appease Hitler.

Hitler. And so in his effort to appease Hitler, to keep Hitler off, he gave him a chunk of Czechoslovakia. But Hitler wasn't satisfied. A year later, he invades Poland, and you know what happens after that.

[32 : 31] You can't make peace with evil. You can only kill it. Kill it, or it will kill you. And so sin wants to destroy your family. It wants to destroy your wife or your husband.

So picture your wife there. Her beautiful, lovely face, and she loves you so much, and sin wants to hurt her. And sin, it says, just keep up with the Joneses, the next door neighbors, but it won't be happy when you've accomplished that.

The sin of greed won't be satisfied until you own everything. Until the whole world is at your feet, and you have owned everything, and everyone is bowing down for you, because of what you've done and what you have.

What did Rockefeller say when he was asked, how much money do you need? And he just said, just a little more. Just a little more. Doesn't that make you hate sin?

Sin is this disgusting worm that is never satisfied until it's ate all of your life. And think about what it cost Jesus to save you from it.

[33 : 42] Jesus, the pure and holy one. Had your wreaking sin stuck on him in order to save you?

It was all heaped up on his head. Him who knew no sin became sin. And sin clung to that holy and pure one.

And it made his father stab him. and it made Jesus weep tears of blood and it snuffed out the Lord of light.

And it drug into the hell of God's fury the only person who was ever worthy to walk on the face of this earth. It snuffed him out and sin tore his hands and it pierced his side and sin made him cry out, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

And then sin, it spurns Jesus' love. Sin says, I'm better than Jesus. I'm more worthy than Jesus. Doesn't that make you mad?

[34 : 53] How dare it say that? How dare it say that it is better than Jesus, the lover of your soul? Sin grieves the Holy Spirit.

sin breaks his heart. The Holy Spirit is so close to you that your working is his working. And then we take him in and we sin.

And we break his heart. Shouldn't you hate your sin? And sin saddens your father's heart. Your father who would rejoice over you with singing, who would delight in you, and would you grieve him?

Would you make him sad? He picked you out of the orphanage. He didn't have to pick you and he didn't pick others. He picked you out of the orphanage to be his child and sin says, no, I'm better than he is.

I can provide for you. I can give to you what you want. His love is nothing. I'll love you. I'll take care of you. And with its forked tongue, it lies about our heavenly father.

[36 : 08] Doesn't that make you hate sin? Well, then think about it, brothers and sisters. Is there nothing so disgusting as sin? Sin would destroy this church.

Sin would destroy your marriage. Sin would destroy you. Sin would break out and ruin your life. There's nothing more evil than sin.

sin damned our savior. And so if you want to murder sin, feed the fires of your hate. Stir yourself up. Pour gas on the fire until you burn with a vindictive rage against sin. And so what did Jesus say? If your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off.

If your right eye causes you to sin, gouge it out. How will we ever even approach that kind of mortification unless we hate sin until our hearts are really angry and hateful about what sin has done.

[37 : 16] And so we feed the fires. Think about what sin does. It wastes our time. What is sin worth in view of eternity? It's nothing. What will it get you?

Nothing. Nothing good. Think about how sin diminishes your affections, your emotions. So you come in on Sunday morning, Sunday evening, and you want to praise God, but there you are, your heart is like this dried up clod of dirt.

There's nothing there. There's no joy. Well, why not? Where did your joy go? Sin ruined it. Sin put a cloud over God's face.

Think about the pain that it cost your friends and your family. Sin hurts the ones you love. Think about how it barges in on your holy devotions. So you're sitting there, you're praying, and who's knocking on the door of your mind?

It's sin. It has to get its grubby, dirty little nose in everything that we do. think about how foolish it makes you. Think about how much good you can't do because of sin.

[38 : 31] Think about what good you will never be able to do because you've squandered your energy, your life, your resources on sin. And think about it until the hatred in your heart is stirred up, until your hand is ready to chop your other hand off, until your hand is ready to gouge out your own right eye to get rid of it.

It's war. It's not just words, it's war. It's a war that requires vigorous, mental, spiritual effort.

And if you want to murder sin, then turn over and over in your mind how hateful sin is. Stew over it until you hate it.

And that's the third direction. So what have we seen? Three directions for murdering sin. One, live in the victory of Jesus. Two, understand your responsibility.

Three, feed the fires of your hate. We're not done yet, we have six more to go, but I think this is a good start. If we work on these things, then I think sin will start understanding what it means to mortify sin.

[39 : 49] And we'll finish the rest, Lord willing, in a few weeks. But until then, may God give us grace to be putting sin to death for His glory. And before we pray, remember the gospel comes first.

If you don't know Jesus, then there's no way that you could put any sin to death. Where mortification begins is with the gospel.

And so go to Jesus. The only sin that is ever killed is a forgiven sin. The only sin that's ever killed in a Christian's life is a forgiven sin.

And so go to Jesus. Throw yourself on Him. Throw yourself on His life and His death. Weep and cry and repent. Trust in Him.

and then out of love for this new King who has saved you, go and put sin to death. Don't put the second thing in place of the first.

[40 : 54] Go to Jesus first and then put to death His enemies. Well, let's pray. pray. Our Heavenly Father, I do pray that You would bless this word to these people, that You would encourage them to be putting sin to death, that we would be a holy people, a holy bride for Jesus, that we would be vigorous and cleansing out, cleansing all these spots.

And Lord, thank You that one day, when we see You, or when we die, when You return, that all these things will be done.

And in an instant, we will see You and be like You, and then the war will be over and we'll enter our eternal rest. But I pray, Father, that You would encourage us to do what You've called us to do now, as we wait for You, as we wait for Your returning, that we would be putting sin to death.

Lord, please save break into some sinner's heart tonight and convict them, that they're in love with sin, and that sin is going to destroy them.

They're in love with sin, and You hate sin. Will You show them how evil it is, and bring them to Jesus. Lord, do it for their good. Pray that You would bless us as we go through our week, that we would be remembering what we are called to do every day, and that's to be putting sin to death.

[42 : 40] In Jesus' name, Amen.