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11 Reasons Why Christians Cannot Continue in Sin

Romans 6:1-8:13

by Tim Conway

Just one verse. Just one verse, Romans 8:13. “If you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body you will live.” If you live according to the flesh *you will* die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body *you will* live. Over the last couple of weeks we’ve been looking at Romans 8:5-13. We have seen, Paul is basically comparing, and contrasting two different categories of people. What are they? Those in the flesh and those in the Spirit. But guys, what we don’t want to miss, what we don’t want to pass over is the reality that these verses are not just the result of Paul’s random thinking. You guys know what I mean by that? Paul doesn’t just indiscriminately or by chance just happen to be talking about the flesh and the Spirit in these verses. It just not out of the blue. These verses, now follow this because one of my agendas way back when we started the book of Romans was to not simply go through every verse but to look at the forest, not get so taken up with the trees. And look at the overall flow. Now what I want you guys to see is that Romans 8:13 is somewhat of the last link in a living chain that goes all the way back to Romans 6 and verse 1. Can Christians continue in sin? Now, what I want to do this morning is stop right here at Romans 8:13 and look back over our shoulders and examine the path that we have walked down right up to this point because I want to make certain that we all see how this verse and the things that come before this all relate back to that original question put forth two and one half chapters earlier and the reason I want to do it right here at verse 13 is because it seems that Romans 8:13 is the last verse in which Paul directly answers that question. From there he seems to begin to diverge and transition but this seems to be the last solid reference to a direct answer to that.

From Romans 6:1 up to Romans 8:13 Paul by at least 11 different points makes the argument that true, justified men and women do not and cannot stay in, remain at, persevere under, persist with, practice, or tarry, or abide, or be habitual with, or carry on in, or continue in sin. Now, is that important? Let me explain a little to you as to why it is definitely important. Listen to this. This is really phenomenal guys. Back in Romans chapter 4, verse 5 God is, don’t turn there, don’t turn there, you just stay right there in 8, there’s just a few words that I want to quote from there and I’ll give them to you, you can hear them, I want you to hear them... God is given a title in Romans 4:5 that really ought to get our attention, “The Lord God is called...” are you ready for this? Do you really want to hear what He’s called? Listen folks, the great God, the one who is called in scripture holy, holy, holy, that God who Psalm 5:5 says “...hates all evildoers...” The One who is offended by every sin and is of pure eyes than to see evil and cannot look at wrong, Habakkuk tells us, that God in Romans 4:5 is given an absolutely staggering title. He is called Him who justifies the ungodly. We might easily see how He could be called Him who hates all evildoers, but Him who justifies the ungodly? Do you realize what that says? That says that God looks at a bad man and says “Good.”. Folks, that’s phenomenal.

There's only one way for a bad person to get right with God, only one way. Ungodly people are made right with God if and only if God says they are right with Him. And the question of the ages, how can God just do that?! When we are bad, how can He just say "we're good?" When we're not right with God how can He just say we are right with Him? Folks, this is the question of all questions. This is what the gospel is all about. Folks, do you realize this is the thing that angels just desire to peer into and figure out? What a truth.

Now here's the point... God does justify, not the righteous, He justifies the ungodly. But He doesn't just do it as though He just ignored that we're ungodly. Oh no. God justifies the ungodly at an enormous price. Ungodliness demands wrath and it demands death. So God put forth His Son, Jesus Christ, as the perfect sacrifice to suffer that wrath and that death in the place of the ones who deserved that wrath and that death. He was crushed for our iniquities. And here's the point, when an ungodly person, Oh if you're in here and your ungodly, this ought to bring you tremendous hope... when an ungodly person looks at the crushed Christ and takes that crushing as having been done for himself, believes it himself, casts himself on this mighty, saving Christ in that moment God says "Righteous". That is a phenomenal, phenomenal truth. Sinless, good, although ungodly as they are. I mean, that's who's justified, it's the ungodly. God looks at the ungodly and because of what Christ did that man believing that that work was done for him at that moment, God says though ungodly He says "Godly." Wow. That man is legally declared to be righteous. Not because of that man's own righteousness because he doesn't have any, he's ungodly, but because by grace God freely forgives him and counts him righteous on the basis of the death and life of Jesus Christ. Now folks that is justification. That is justification. It is the total legal eradication of all our guilt and it is glorious and it is free and it is by God's mercy and it is by God's grace and it's only to be had by faith, not according to works of righteousness you have done, but according to the work of Christ that He has done.

But some objections to this: this is too easy! You see this is what they say, "If it's that easy, if that's true than God just justifies people by grace through faith apart from the works of the law it seems to open the doors to more and more sinning. It seems to actually invite wrongdoing. If God declares me good when I'm bad so what if I'm a little badder? Can't God forgive sin? Can God forgive sin if there's a little or a lot? Brother Freddy talked about, you know he brought up we have this parable right? Christ is sitting there eating with the Pharisees and you remember the woman who was the sinner came in and started washing His feet and the Pharisees over there grumbling, 'Oh if they only knew.' and He said look Simon some people love a little some people love a lot. The people who love a little have been forgiven a little and the people who love a lot have been forgiven a lot. Here the deal, can God forgive a little or a lot? He can forgive both, right? "So if God can forgive a little and forgive a lot well I mean hey if He's justifying me not based on what I do if I add a little more sin to the pile here He can still forgive it can't He? I mean He's the God who can forgive a lot. I mean He tells us in scripture chief of sinners can be saved; well I'm not quite the chief yet. I'm not as bad as Paul, so hey if I'm going to be saved so freely by this grace even if I add a bit more sin on the pile I'm probably not getting to where Paul was. I mean after all, folks if I'm really accepted based on Christ's righteousness and not on my own righteousness well than if I'm a little more unrighteous I'm not damaging His righteousness at all, right? If I'm justified not

based on my own performance, well let's just make my performance a little worse." You see folks, that is the great objection and that's how lots of people think.

Well here's, I mean folks, does Paul's radical teaching on justification open the door to all sorts of sin and careless living and indifference to holiness? Does it? Does it foster wretchedness? Does it produce people who practice sin and keep on doing evil? Does it produce people who are captive to sin? That folks is what prompted the question way back there in Romans 6:1. You can turn your bibles there. A question Paul is still answering two and a half chapters later in Romans 8:13 and here is the question that Paul asks, a rhetorical question. He's not looking for your answer, he already knows the answer. He just asks it by way of posing what other people are saying in full well knowing that he has the answer. He intends the answer and he does it with great detail. What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? Is there a continuation of sin in the life of person who has experienced the justifying grace of God? And here is where Paul takes his stand. He boldly answers; you've got your bibles open to Romans 6, look at verse two. What are the first three words that just hit you right in the face? By no means! Yes, justification is absolutely free. No it's not due to our own ability to be able to clean up our lives, that's all true. That's very true. Never the less Christians will and must and do resist and battle and triumph over sin in this life to such a degree and to such an extent that it must be able to be said about them that the very character of their life is that they do not continue in sin. He says by no means do they continue in sin, so whatever the Christian life looks like it better characterize something along the lines of not continuing in sin. I hope ever body can see that.

Now all I did was tell you by no means. I really didn't get into any degree into Paul's arguments which I'm going to do, but listen. This is one the greatest and most essential issues pertaining to the Christian life. Did you guys all hear that? Greatest and most essential that has to do... why do I say that? How can I know that this is indeed one of the greatest and most essential issues pertaining to the Christian life? That just cause I make that up? Is it cause Paul says that right there? Listen. I'll give you two reasons that it is. First, the Christian life is the only life that leads to eternal life. If the Christian life must be a life characterized by triumph over sin than that alone is the life that leads to eternal life. If eternal life is at stake that makes it great and essential. Second, Paul doesn't answer this question one time and one way. He literally makes his point no less than 11 different ways. Throughout chapter 6 and 7 and right up to 8:13 this reality, this truth is driven home with such repetition and clarity and power and logic and inspiration that no one in this room should ever miss this point, Christians don't continue in sin. Only great and essential truths require such massive emphasis.

So, let's run down this path. We're going to look over our shoulders starting at 8:13 looking back to 6:1 and we're just going to reflect for a second here. 8:13, are you there? If you're at 6:1 go to 8:13 now. Read it with me. "If you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body you will live." Okay folks. Let's make this real, real simple. You don't, well yeah, yeah, why don't you turn there, look at Romans 5:18. Its real close, probably back one. Romans 5:18, I want to read that to you real quick. "Therefore as one trespass led to condemnation for all men so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men." Now, the only thing I want you to see there is justification and life go together, do they not? Condemnation and death go together, justification and life go together. Everybody sees that. Okay, back to

8:13. Justified people will live, right? Because justification and life are attached in 5:18, right? So, justified people will live. Now, you're back here at 8:13. All others will die. You all believe that. Nobody's sitting there saying "Well, I don't really know if that's..." Did you see 5:18? It said justification and life go together. Do you all believe that? You've got to be justified in order to have eternal life. Because you've got to be declared righteous be God if you're going to have eternal life. You've got to have all your guilt eradicated folks to go to heaven. Okay, so you're all confident of that. Justified people will live. Okay, so whoever the ones are in 8:13 who will live they must be the justified people right? Is that not safe to assume? Because you've got some people in here that are dying, some people that are living. We know the people the people that are under condemnation they're the ones that die, people that are justified they live. Well, we've got some people in this verse that are living so we know whoever those people are they must be the justified people. You all agree with that? Good. Well who are they? They're the ones who by the Spirit put to death the deeds of the body. They're the ones putting to death the things like, remember deeds of the body, works of the flesh, we're talking the same things here. These are the people who are putting to death sexual immorality, impurity, unbridled lust, idolatry, witchcraft, drug abuse, hatred, fighting, jealousy, fits of anger, selfishness, divisiveness, heresies, envy, drunkenness, partying, or some translations orgies. Things like these. In other words, by the Spirit they put sin to death. Now here's the thing guys... would it be safe to say that what this person is doing here is putting sin to death? Would that be safe to say? Would it be safe to say that putting sin to death is not continuing in sin? If I put sexual immorality to death am I continuing in it? Of course not. So here's what we know. We know that if we're justified you will live. We know that if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body you will live. Conclusion, justified people are the people who put sin to death, no exceptions. If you don't you die. That's what this verse says. That's how certain Paul is that justified folks do not continue in sin.

This hits close to home for if you're truly justified you will have a history of sin killing. There will be a path of carnage and slaughter and death wherever you walk. And I'm not talking about among people or animals. I'm talking about with sin, with lust, with immorality, with unrighteousness. Now listen. "Put to death" is a present tense active verb. You have been doing it since you became a Christian and you are doing it right now. You are putting sin to death now and that is the same as saying you are not continuing in sin now. Would you all agree with me? Paul made his point very well right there.

Now see in scripture if we said "Okay. Well he said it once. Boy that scripture, we need to run with this." But what if he says it ten other ways ten other times? You begin to say you know this is not only biblical this is like one of the most essential things that we can find in the scripture. There aren't a whole lot of things folks that two and half chapters are devoted to, to explain. But when God decided in His word to give us that much space to it, it must be because it is just very often neglected, likely to be not believed, likely to be attacked, likely to be distorted, likely to be a target of the devil, likely for false prophets, false teachers, false apostles, to misconstrue. Would not all that be correct if that much time and effort is devoted to it?

Okay, very quickly Roman 8:7 through 9. We dealt with this last week. Let's back up and look at it. Romans 8:7. "For the mind that is set on the flesh..." Remember the

mind that is set on the flesh is the mind of the people who are in the flesh. People who walk according to the flesh, people with minds that are set on the things of the flesh, they're hostile to God. That hostility shows itself in the fact that they do not submit to God's law, indeed it doesn't, that kind of mind doesn't have the ability to submit to that law. Those who are in the flesh, of course if they're not submitting to His law they cannot please God. "You however," these are the Christians. These are the saved people. These are the justified folks." "You however are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you." Again, let's make this real simple. If you look at verse 10 you'll notice right in verse 10 it says this, "the Spirit is life." Again, we know that justified people have life. Romans 5:18 says that. If the Spirit is life and justified people have life than justified people must have the Spirit, right? We can prove that a lot of different ways, of course that's true. They're in the Spirit; if they're in the Spirit than they're opposite of those who are lost and in the flesh. Those who are in the flesh are hostile to God and do not submit to God's law. Christians however are not in the flesh. Meaning they are not like those who don't submit to God's law; they do submit to it. That's what it says in Romans 8:4. Romans 8:4 speaks of the righteous requirement of the law fulfilled in us. That's what Jesus Christ came to do. As I reminded you all last week this is exactly what the new covenant says. Ezekiel 36:27: "I will put my Spirit within you and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules." That's exactly what he's saying, if you're in the flesh you don't submit to God's law but you're not in the flesh you are in the Spirit. And what was it the Spirit under the new covenant was meant to do in us? Cause us to keep His commandments; to fulfill the righteous requirement of the law. Folks, this is exactly what's said in the Old Testament over and over. I'll just give you one example 1 John 2, 3, and 4. By this you know you have come to know him, how do you know if you are truly a Christian and have come to know him? If we keep his commandments, whoever says I know him, says "I'm a Christian", whoever says I'm justified, whoever says I'm in Christ but does not keep his commandments is a liar and the truth is not in him.

So here it is, as Christians can we continue in lawlessness? What did all these verses just say? No, no, we don't. Does God's word teach that we are these perpetually wretched individuals who can never do right and no matter how hard we try we just keep on breaking God's law? That may be your definition of a Christian but that is not the bible's definition. God sent His Son and sent his Spirit in order to cause us to be careful to obey his rules. Now, I just ask you this simple question, can you continue in sin if you are keeping his commandments, walking in his statutes, carefully obeying his rules and fulfilling the righteous requirements of the law? Can you? You can't, because continuing in sin is breaking his commandments, forsaking his statutes, disobeying his laws, and failing to uphold the requirements of the law. Folks, God sent his Son to do what the law never could, to condemn sin in the flesh in order to create a people that would be fulfillers of the righteous requirement of the law. You can't argue that. There's overwhelming biblical support for that truth. Christ came to make all things new, including how the ungodly regard the law of God. So Paul asserts again, justified people don't continue in sin because they don't continue in lawlessness and sin is lawlessness according to 1 John.

Okay so, Romans 8:2, "The law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death." Now, we established back when we looked at this,

that the word law as its used here is used the same way not when we're referring to the law of God, the Ten Commandments, but like we would use it when we refer to the law of gravity. It describes the way a force behaves. Gravitational forces behave in a certain way every time so we call it a law of gravity, sin is a force likewise behaves a certain way all the time, so we call it the law of sin. How does sin behave? We know how gravity behaves, how does sin behave? Well, Paul tells us, Romans 6:6, "sin seeks to enslave", Romans 6:12, "sin seeks to reign in our mortal bodies, Romans 7:5, 8 sin uses the law of God to provoke and arouse more and more sin. In a very general way that is the law of sin. But here is the question, does sin behave that way, does the power of sin behave that way in Christians? Are justified people in bondage to the law of sin? Paul says no. The law of the Spirit of life has set you free, if you're in Christ Jesus, from the enslaving law of sin. Those who continue in sin do so because they are in bondage to the law of sin. But we that are in Christ are freed and free people don't continue living according to the law of sin, not if they're set free from the law of sin. It's amazing how much effort and how many different ways Paul keeps hammering and explaining and illustrating that we don't continue in sin if we're Christians. Romans 7:6, back up to there, now we are released from the law, it doesn't say we're released from sin specifically here, but it says we're released from the law, "Having died to that which held us captive so that we serve not under the old written code but in the new life of the Spirit." Now did you guys see what's being done here? There is two ways of serving; one is under the old written code and what's the other way? In the new life of the Spirit. Now, serving is a word that means performing the duties of a slave. That's the idea. What is our slavery like as a Christian? Is it under the old written letter, the old written code? Or are we slaves to righteousness, slaves to God? That's how Paul in Romans 6 describes that.

I want to develop this a little for you, go back to Romans chapter 2 and look right at the end of the chapter, Romans 2 verse 26; because there Paul deals with these two realms: the one in the old way of the letter or the old way of the written code and the new one of the Spirit. He gives us more definition there and I think this is just crucial, folks. Look there, Romans 2:26, "So if a man who is uncircumcised," Who are the uncircumcised? Gentiles. So now listen, if you get the whole context here Paul is talking to Jews very specifically in the later part of Romans 2, well really he starts right in the beginning saying if you're judging and he's dealing with the self-righteous and that typically he dealt with the Gentiles in the second part of Romans 1 he kind of breaks over and deals with the Jews in Romans chapter 2. And he's developing this whole argument, now watch this, he says to them look if a Gentile keeps the precepts of the law, he's not just talking theoretically here, well if somebody could, he's actually referring to somebody who does. I'll show you that as we develop this. He says if you have this man who's a Gentile, uncircumcised, he keeps the precepts of the law, will not his uncircumcision be regarded as circumcision? You see what he's saying? Keeping the precepts of the law is foundational for true circumcision. Is that not what he says? Then he this Gentile who is physically uncircumcised but keeps the law he will condemn you who have the written code. See, there's our word there, written code. This is a Jew who's under the old system, under the written code, he has physical circumcision but he breaks the law and he's going to get condemned by this Gentile who does keep the law. He's not circumcised in the flesh but his circumcision well it's going to be explained very shortly here in verse 28. "For no one is a Jew who is merely one outwardly, nor is circumcision

outward and physical but a Jew is one inwardly and circumcision is a matter of the heart by the spirit not by the letter.” Now you see the comparison? Spirit and letter, spirit and letter and the old written code, here’s what you have, if you are in the new life of the Spirit not in the old life of the written code do you know what’s true about you? You’re a true Jew, you’re a true Jew because you have the true circumcision not one of the flesh it’s the circumcision of the heart that is done by the Spirit and the very grounds of that circumcision is keeping the precepts of the law. Do you see that folks? Can I continue in sin if I am a true Jew with a true circumcision serving in the new life of the Spirit? No, a true Jew has to be truly circumcised and a true circumcision is based on the keeping of the law. Now I realize that’s a reiteration of the fact that we will be those who keep the law but I wanted to build on that because that also means we are those who are true Jews, we are those who are truly circumcised. Romans 7:4 check that out. “Likewise my brothers you also have died to the law through the body of Christ so that you belong to another to Him who has been raised from the dead.” Do you see what’s happening? No longer are you connected with that law now you are joined with Jesus Christ, joined with Him, married with Him, coupled with Him, why? In order that you can do something, bear fruit for God. Do you see that? Christians bear fruit for God. Now let me ask you this question. Is fruit for God good fruit or bad fruit? Fruit for God is good fruit, right? God doesn’t accept bad fruit. If it’s fruit for God it’s got to be good fruit. Now let me ask you this next question, does good fruit come from good trees or bad trees? Good trees, right? Everybody agrees with that, definitely comes from good trees. Now, listen to what Jesus says about good trees in Luke 6:43, “No good tree bears bad fruit.” Here’s my question to you, can good trees bear bad fruit? No, why? Well, I would say just because Jesus just said that it can’t. Now there might be other good answers but that’s a good answer right? If you can say well Jesus said it, Jesus said good trees don’t bear bad fruit, I just quoted him saying that. So if bearing fruit is bearing good fruit and it comes from a good tree, and good trees can’t bear bad fruit then let me ask you this question. Is continuing in sin good fruit or bad fruit? If it’s bad fruit can it be hanging on that kind of tree that bears fruit for God? Romans 6:22, jump back there, “Now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God the fruit you get leads to sanctification and its end eternal life.” Just one thing I want to pull out of there, it says, Christians, justified people, they have become slaves of God. Does it not say that? Is a true Christian a slave of God? Yes. How do you know that? That verse I just read said that! Right? Okay, and we always know what God says in his word is absolutely true. Okay, now check this out Romans 6:16 says that “you are a slave of the one you obey.” Does it not say that? If you are a slave of God than what must the conclusion be? You obey God. It must be that. And if you are obedient to God can you be continuing in sin? No, because sin is disobeying God! Right? Again, Paul is driving home this fact; no we do not continue in sin, a slave of God cannot. He obeys God. Now find Romans 6:18, “having been set free from sin we have become slaves of righteousness.” Now, right there, set free from sin can’t mean continuing in sin, why? Because that wouldn’t be freedom. Freedom means I’ve escaped its mastery and its power, it means it no longer controls me like it once did. I’m free. You simply can’t make that to mean anything else. So I don’t continue in sins bondage if I am free from that bondage. Does that make sense? I mean Paul is just incredibly logical here. Romans 6:17, “Thanks be to God that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart.” Paul is thanking God, clearly because God has done something

that deserves credit to be thanked for. He has done something in the lives of these Roman Christians. What is it he has done? What has God done here that he needs to be thanked for? He's freed them so that they've become obedient from the heart, right? He's transformed them. They were once slaves of sin, which means they once practiced and continued in sin but he's made them to be obedient from the heart. God makes this happen that's why he's being thanked for it. God sees to it that Christians cannot continue in sin. That's got to be true or else he would never be thanked for it. He does it by giving an obedient heart. That's the new heart that he promises under the new covenant. Again, an obedient heart doesn't continue in sin. And then Romans 6:14, "sin will have no dominion over you!" Wow! What could be more plain than that? Are we to continue in sin is not even the issue. Can we continue in sin?! How can we continue in it if its dominion and its power, authority, its mastery is broken. Christ condemns it, he kills it, and he dethrones it. Here this well, no dominion over you. Romans 6:11, "You also must consider yourselves dead to sin, alive to God in Christ Jesus." Paul wouldn't tell us to consider ourselves dead to sin unless we actually are dead to sin. What does being dead to something mean? We can remember John Sytsma standing here, talking about the guy in his church who the father basically said you are disinherited, what happens if a radical Hindu father says to his Christian son, "Look you are disinherited and as far as I'm concerned you're dead to me." What does that mean if we say we're dead to something? One thing for certain it means the relationship that man and his son once had is severed. If I'm dead to sin my old relationship is terminated. Sin and I don't relate as we once did. My former relationship with it where I just ran in it, I continued in it, I'm dead to that now.

Romans 6:6, "We know that our old self was crucified." Do you see that? There's a way that we used to be and that's called the old self. It's that old thing that loved sin, drank sin, delighted in sin, contemplated sin, so that we continued in slavery to sin. But listen, it was crucified. Christian, you are not you're old self. Romans 6:13 says that you have been brought from death to life; you're a new man, a new creation in Christ, old things are passed away or you're not a Christian at all. The crucifixion of that old man is the crucifixion of my old sinful lifestyle. Romans 6:4 says, "We walk in newness of life." There is regeneration. I am changed, radically changed.

Hey Paul, do Christians walk in sin? He's like well, let me tell you. They're brought from death to life, they walk in newness of life, the old self is crucified, they're dead to sin, sin can't have dominion over them, God has made them obedient from the heart, they're free from sin, God has made us His slaves, they're good trees bearing fruit for God, they serve in the new life of the Spirit, they are true Jews with true circumcision, the Spirit of life has set them free from the law of sin, Christ came to make them law-keepers, by the Spirit they put to death the deeds of the flesh. I think he's made himself quite clear. I mean, don't you think he's made his case and if he hasn't, if that isn't enough at least seven times through these three chapters of Romans Paul says in a variety of ways that if you continue in sin you will die. Not the least of which is Romans 8:13 where we started. "If you live according to the flesh," which is another way of saying if you continue in sin, "you will die."

Now I just want to say two things as I wrap up here. I make no apologies for believing that as Paul describes himself in the later part of Romans 7, he is definitely a Christian as he writes it but he is describing himself as he was while he was under the

slavery to sin. Why do I believe that? Because he says that. He says in Romans 7:14, "he's sold under sin." All you guys have to do is grab some type of bible help and look at the words sold and grab your concordance it is not the common word for sold, it is a word that means sold as a slave, and it means that. Paul says I am sold as a slave under sin! The term sold folks, he's sold to it; he's owned by sin. If anything should be evident to you is the fact that Paul unequivocally, profoundly, dogmatically, and repeatedly asserts that Christians are not slaves of sin! They're slaves of righteousness, yes; slaves of God, yes; but free from sin, never a slave to it. Romans 6:17, "Thanks be to God that you who were once slaves of sin;" Romans 6:20, "you were slaves of sin," but the Paul that is being described in Romans 7:14 is presently sold as a slave to sin. Also Romans 7:14, Paul says about himself, that he's of the flesh, now is that a Christian? Romans 8:9 says that Christians are not in the flesh, Romans 8:4 says don't walk according to the flesh, don't live according to the flesh, they don't set they're minds on the things of the flesh; then you have Romans 7:18, 19, Romans 7 again, the man there Paul describing himself as he was when he came under conviction of that law but still continuing in sin, how do I know that? He says so. [Romans] 7:18 and 19, "I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is in my flesh, for I have the desire to do what is right," but look he has no ability to carry it out, "for I do not do the good I want, the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing." There are no exceptions here, he says this is the pattern of my life, this is the run of my life, this is the character of my life, and the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing. Now would you please think about that with me for a second? The evil I do not want is what I keep on doing, he's continuing in sin, period. If Paul has done anything throughout these three chapters it's prove that this can't be a Christian. Then you have [Romans] 7:23 and 25, where he's describing himself as captive to the law of sin. Romans 8:2 expressly says, justified people, Christians are set free from the law of the Spirit of God from the law of sin. If you're in Christ Jesus you are free from the law of sin! You are not captive to it. Someone will say "Yah, but it also says in that portion of Romans 7 that he wants to do good and he delights," You know Freebird says this word could easily be, happily approves. You guys can agree with that, delight and happily approve, in the law of God. With his mind he serves the law of God but hold on just a second. Who ever said that's a good thing? It is serving the law and serving under the old letter that Paul has been saying we need to be delivered from. This is no different from how Paul describes the lost Jews in Romans 2:17. So right as we end up, I want you to turn to Romans 2:17 because I want you to see this with your own eyes. What Paul says about no ability to do the law and yet he has the law, serves the law, knows the law, delights in the law is no different than describing the Jews as he describes them, the lost Jews described here in Romans 2. It is no different because he says these are the ones who are going to be condemned by those who keep the precepts of the law, so obviously they're not keeping them; he says they don't keep them. We looked at that already at the end of Romans 2, look at Romans 2:17, you call yourself a Jew and rely on the law"; Romans 2:18, "you know his will and approve what is excellent because you're instructed from the law"; Romans 2:23, "you who boast in the law" you see what these guys are doing they are relying on the law, they're approving the law, they're boasting in the law. Does that sound any different than the guy in Romans 7 at all? That's exactly what he's doing, he's approving it, he's boasting in it, he's relying on it, he has it but with all the law he has what doesn't he have? A discontinuation of sin. And what is his point

over and over and over and over again? Christians don't continue in it. So here it is folks, why do I say this? My brother, my sister, I say this not to discourage you. Oh! If sin is dominating your life I definitely want to discourage you from believing you're a Christian. But to those of you that are fighting it, you're putting it to death, you know if you look behind you, you can see you're not what you used to be and there is a path of carnage and death to sin and immorality and lust and your filthy mouth and wicked lifestyle lays in ruins behind you because you've fought it and by God's help and through His Spirit you have put these things to death than I don't say this to discourage you I say it so that your faith might just lay hold of this and give you that encouragement to motivate you to look at all of what God's done, I assure you that this is the case look at all that God has done in sending his Son to make you a fulfiller of the law. Look at all that God has done to send his Spirit to break you free from the bonds of that law of sin. Look at what he has done in sending his Spirit to make you those who are able to put to death the deeds of the flesh. And having done all that you will live. But I encourage you if sin dominates you, sin has no dominion over the Christian, you're not saved. Don't say you are, you need to go back to the beginning and start all over again. Remember this, justification comes by believing what the risen Christ did on that cross, what he did for me and in simple faith believing it. That's how you're justified. Paul's reality all through this is if you're justified all that way it doesn't lead you to believe you can go out there and just live any way you want because God dispatched his Son to this earth and released this powerful Holy Spirit into the lives of God's people in order to make justified people into law-keeping people who do not continue in sin.

This is the reality folks, brother, sister, you are risen to newness of life, your old self is crucified, you've been brought from death to life, you're dead to sin, God promised you sin will not have dominion over you. God has made you obedient from the heart, he has freed you from sin, made you a slave to Himself made you a good tree, a good fruit-bearer, fruit for God, you serve in the new life of the Spirit, you are a true Jew, truly circumcised, that's a reality. The Spirit of God has busted you loose from that law of sin that held you in its grasp. You are now one who can be a doer and a fulfiller of the law, you can put the sin to death, you not only can you must. This is glorious reality. What we find out is salvation is not this little deal where you believe these little facts and you just walk on in your life the same as you always were. If there is not this radical severing with sin, you are not truly justified. But I'll tell you what I know some of you look, I want you guys not to sign your name to Romans 7, I want you to sign your name to this list I've given you of these eleven things and say I believe it, I know it, and I'm going to walk in it! And you go out with that confidence into this world and you can say by the Spirit, no not in your own strength, not in your own, but you walk in the power of another. You know we get discouraged, I can't do this, you're absolutely right, you can't do this, but you look, keep your eyes on Jesus Christ and degree by degree he will transform you into that image, the Spirit of God will do that and in order for you to get into his image there is a perfection that is wrought in you and every time I mean what does God have to do, he pairs off that sharp edge, that thing over here, he puts it to death and as he pairs it off there it falls and you go on your way and now as you get in this point in life and your able to see that scrap there, that immorality there, that lust there, that thing peeled off there by the Holy Spirit I lost that. Listen, I can do that. I look back and I say you know what when I was lost I had a filthy, foul, disturbing mouth but I can

see it back there. I can see it laid beside the path I've walked. How? Not in my own strength. Every true Christian in this place knows that's a reality. But if you're sitting there questioning because sin is so real and so dominant in your life and your questioning this oh you have reason to question, I don't want to encourage you. Those of you, you know you've fought, you know you've put it to death, you know there is no continuation in it the way there was before. You erase your name out of Romans 7, your not there my friend, your not the person who perpetually keeps on doing evil and can't do anything about it; captive to the law of sin; sold as a slave under sin and of the flesh. That's not you. You're not in the flesh, folks, you're in the Spirit. You're triumphant. You're the triumphant ones of Jesus Christ. You remember how we read about it, I saw that text there, what is it 1 Corinthians 15? You are the glory; this church is the glory of Christ. He didn't save you to make you wretched. He didn't save you to make you these perpetual evil doers. Take your name out of there, hang it on all these things. This is you Christian, this is you. May you take that, believe it and run with it. You can kill this thing; you can beat this; you must. Those who put to death the deeds of the flesh live. All others die.

[Father, we thank you for such a marvelous and a radical salvation, regeneration. Christ came to make all things new. Oh, Lord we thank you for such a great salvation. In Christ's name we thank you. Amen.]