

The Grace of Our Union with Christ
By Ken Temple

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Providence Church
2146 Buford Hwy
Buford Hwy, Duluth, GA 30097

Website: www.providenceduluth.org
Online Sermons: www.sermonaudio.com/providencechurch

Let's pray.

"O the deep, deep love of Jesus.
Spread his praise from shore to shore.
How he came to pay our ransom,
Through the saving cross he bore.
How he watches o'er his loved ones,
Those he died to make his own.
How for them he's interceding,
Pleading now before the throne."

Lord God, we worship you and praise you and we thank you for the deep, deep love of Jesus which you demonstrated at the cross, you ransomed us from sin. You saved us and you rose from the dead and your resurrection proved that everything you said in the Gospels, everything you did, all of the Old Testament prophecies, your word was confirmed and by your resurrection power you proved you are the eternal Son of God, the Word of God who became flesh, born of the virgin Mary, and you are real Jesus in history and in reality and in spiritual life and truth and now, Lord Jesus, you are seated at the right hand of the Father interceding for us. What a wonderful song, "The deep, deep love of Jesus." So we worship you, Lord God, holy Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and we ask for your Spirit to work. Use me, your weak servant. Use your word in the hearts of everyone here. For all the saints, all the believers, may your word go deeper in growth and change and growing in holiness. And for anyone who does not know you yet, who has not been born again, who has not truly repented and trusted Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord, I pray for those that are here that have not experienced that yet. We ask you, Holy Spirit, to take your word and work in their hearts and cause any who are wrestling and struggling with the Gospel, to seek you in your word, to wrestle with the truths that they hear. There are so many children that hear it all the time from their parents and we pray that your Spirit would draw them to yourself and draw them to seek, to read in your word and to cry out to you for mercy. Thank you for what you're going to do, Lord, now. We praise you that you're here and you're working in our hearts. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Romans 6. I'm going to focus on verse 6. The title of this message is "The Grace of Our Union with Christ." The grace of our union with Christ. When Pastor Ty asked me to preach, I pretty much had chosen this because I had preached it in Farsi in Turkey several times, and then later I realized, "Oh man, Pastor Ty has been going through this series on Wednesday nights called 'Winning the War Within.'" And if you haven't heard any of those or some of those, I recommend them to you. They're online at our church website. And so this is meant as a compliment to all of that that our pastor has been teaching. He started in November and finished up, I think, in March. And I missed some so it was a great blessing for me to go back and listen to what he said.

So we're looking at Romans 6. I'm going to focus on verse 6 but in order to read the whole context, I'm going to start in chapter 5, verse 19. Romans 5:19.

19 For as through the one man's disobedience [that's Adam] the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous. 20 The Law came in so that the transgression would increase; but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more, 21 so that, as sin reigned in death, even so grace would reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

1 What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase? 2 May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it? 3 Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? 4 Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. 5 For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection, 6 knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin; 7 for he who has died is freed from sin. 8 Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, 9 knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, is never to die again; death no longer is master over Him. 10 For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God. 11 Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus. 12 Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts, 13 and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. 14 For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law but under grace.

What a great passage. What a deep passage.

I was very encouraged maybe a couple of years ago, I was listening to R. C. Sproul talk about this passage and he said Romans 6:6 is harder than Romans 9. I was like, "Thank you, man," because I've struggled with this really wanting to know what the meaning of this passage is for 30 years or more. And it reminds me of what I read about Luther in this book that John Piper wrote, "The Legacy of Sovereign Joy," about Augustine and Luther and Calvin and he mentions how Luther said, "I imagine the Bible as this big giant tree and every time I read through the Bible, I just tap on every branch." And you could just see him dressed in his monk clothes, you know, those pictures of Luther and he's just tapping on all the branches trying to understand what the Bible says, especially about justification and righteousness. And it also reminded me of this giant magnolia tree that one of my neighbors had that the branches were low and we could just climb up in it.

And that's what this verse has been for me for many years. I grew up in a very liberal United Methodist Church. They didn't believe the Bible but after the Lord saved me, we went to a good Baptist church and I really grew. But one problem, one of the problems is a little bit later they started teaching and they had these counselors and they started teaching that we no longer have a sin nature. And every time the teachers or the counselors would say that, I'd be sitting there and I'd go, "Hmm, that can't be right because I feel that sinful nature," or that sin principle or whatever you want to call it. He's alive and he's pulling us to lust, to gluttony, to selfishness, to pride, to anger, to sinful fears and worries. So I didn't believe that. But we were there a long time and I was trying to believe it but I thought, "No, this can't be right.

So then finally a few years later, we were sent off as missionaries and I'll never forget they were teaching that we no longer have a sin nature and so I asked the counselor, they did a seminar for us missionaries, and I asked him, I said, "So, after we're born again we don't have a sin nature?" He goes, "Yeah, that's right." I said, "Okay, well, here is Connie, Connie and I are married and we both got saved before we were married so we're born again so we don't have a sin nature?" And he goes, "That's right." I said, "So after we got married, we have children, we have three children," I said, "do they have a sin nature?" And he goes, "Yeah." I said, "Well, where did that sin nature come from if we don't have one anymore?" And he goes, "Ah, well, that's a good question? I never had that question put to me before. I'm going to have to think about that."

After he left, all the other missionaries and other people who had been around for a long time, they came up to me and they go, "Man, thank you for asking that because we've all been struggling with this teaching and wondering what in the world is this." And some of the teachers gave the impression that the Christian life is a very passive life, and they would even say things like, "You just let go and let God," which is unbiblical. And whenever they would say that, I would go, "Wait a minute, what about all those verses that says, you know, I press on and I fight the good fight of faith and I struggle against sin?" I was sitting there going, "Ah," and they would say, "Stop trying and start trusting." And then they'd say things like, "You're just doing it in the flesh, brother, trying to obey God." And then other people would say, "Well, the flesh, I'm living in this body." And I'd say, "Yeah, there are verses about that too." So I've been wrestling with this passage for many years.

Now, unfortunately I always over-prepare. I just want to walk through some truths around verse 6. Look at verse 5 again of Romans 6, "For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with." One of the first problems with that translation, and most all translations. You know, some translations say "destroyed." But really, the best translation of this word here is "that the body of sin might be rendered powerless." Rendered powerless. It's still there, whatever the body of sin means, the old sinful nature or the sin principle within us, which Pastor Ty has been talking about.

So it means it is rendered powerless or nullified or canceled. It's like our cellphones when we're constantly having to recharge them, right? Well, what he's saying is, and then the next part, "so that we would no longer be slaves to sin," the slavery, the chain, the wire, that draws power to cause sin, that chain of slavery has been broken and what he's basically saying is, "Now if you're in Christ, you have the freedom to choose not to constantly always sin and be connected to the power of sin, but you can still choose to take that wire and plug it into the wall and put it back and you can still choose to sin." And it's always calling for you, too. It goes beep-beep. The power is low, plug me in.

So there is this sin principle still within us that constantly is trying to get us to sin but he says this body of sin might be rendered powerless so that we would no longer be slaves to sin, "for he who has died is freed from sin." But I wonder if you know the real word there is "justified, he who has died is justified from sin," which is very interesting, which shows us that the basis for our growth in holiness and sanctification is based on our justification and we have been freed from guilt, from blinding guilt, as John Piper says in his message on this, from paralyzing guilt, if you're truly justified.

The basis of the reality of this truth, what basically the Apostle Paul is saying is if you're a true believer, you're united with Christ and you can live a life of holiness. And remember, this thing is based on chapters 1 to 5 of Romans and we don't have time to go through all that, but chapters 1 to 3 is basically about sin and God's wrath against sin and chapters 4 and 5 is about our justification by faith alone. And when it says we are justified by faith alone, the word "alone" is just another way of saying "apart from the merit of works or the condition of works," which he says back in Romans 3:28, which is one of the main verses that Luther talks about. Romans 3:28, "For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law," meaning apart from the merit or credit of doing good works and thinking you're going to get points with God and apart from the condition of, "You have to do this first and then I will accept you."

This is one of the great wonders of preaching the Gospel to Muslims. Those that have recognized the problems in Islam, the Iranians especially that we've been working with for 24-25 years, the Iranians are awakened to the nature of Islam and how harsh and how harsh it is, how cruel it is, and how ugly it is, and how it affects all their relationships because in their relationships, their whole culture is, "You'd better do that and if you don't do that, I'm not going to love you." And I've heard parents say that, Iranian parents say

that to their kids. "And if you do do that, then I'll love you," which is what basically all religion is. If you first do stuff and work and go to rituals and do things, then – and I tell the Iranians all the time and they love this because they know that's very deep within them. Several people said, "Don't speak any Farsi," before I came up. I've got to say a little bit but don't worry, I'll translate because 1 Corinthians 14 says if you speak in tongues, you're supposed to translate.

What I said was, "Religion teaches you, 'Do this. Do that. Do this. Do that. Do that and maybe if you do it, if God wills,'" you heard that, that means "if God wills, you'll be accepted in the final day." That's what all Muslims live under all over the world. They live under that bondage but what's so great is the Iranian people, not the Iranian government, the Iranian people, what the Iranian government has done has actually been something that has awakened them and made them realize that Islam is false, which many of you have heard me testify to this before.

And Luther was struggling with this too in Roman Catholicism. Then in chapter 4, verse 5, to him "who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited as righteousness." To him "who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited as righteousness." Then chapter 5, verse 1, "Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace." What a fantastic verse. "Therefore having been justified," past tense, "by faith." If you've repented and believed in Christ, you're justified. Only then is there peace with God. Before then, we were at war with God, we were shaking our fist at God.

And chapter 5 is amazing because here is true peace, verse 1. True joy, this word "exult," it means "to rejoice greatly." Verses 2 and on down in other verses. True hope, verse 5, "hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us." And true love, which is what all human beings are seeking these things: peace, joy, hope and love, but they can never find them except in Jesus Christ. And in chapter 6, the Apostle Paul is saying, "You can live a holy life because of the basis of your justification and being freed from guilt, and you can now choose to live holy." So that's the context. That would be the first point of the context around this.

Secondly, I want you to notice about our union with Christ in verse 5 of chapter 6, "For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection." That word "united with Him" is a very interesting word. It means "deeply implanted." And there is a related word, if you look over at James 1 which we know Pastor Ty is going to get to later because he started a series in James, James 1:21, he says, "Therefore, putting aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness," there's a key verse that shows us there is still a sin principle or a sin nature within us. "Therefore, putting aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted." It's got the same root or stem as this word "united with Christ" in Romans 6. "Receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls."

I remember as a young Christian going to Bill Gothard seminars. He talked about, he used the word "ingrafted," and later he says, you know, we look in the law, we look in the word of God, the law of God, and then we go away and we forget who we really are and the Bible when we study the word, meditate in the word and really wrestle with the word, we see who God is and his character and his holiness. We see what sin is but we also see that we are new creatures in Christ but then we also see when we look in the mirror, all the problems of, "My hair is messed up or I have a pimple or blackheads or dirt and I haven't shaved properly." We see the stuff that's still in our lives and that's what James is talking about is: don't forget all of that: the character of God, who God is, what sin is, who we are in Christ and all of the areas we need to work on in our sanctification and our holiness.

So there is union with Christ there. I don't have time to talk about all the other verses but basically chapter 6, verses 1 and 2. And the Muslims say this all the time, the Muslims will say, "You Christians teach that you get forgiveness, you get insurance, and you're not going to go to hell and then you live like the devil." And they all say, the real Muslims, the ones that are not converted to Christ, they'll go, "And we see the results. Look at your culture. Look at the West. Look at Europe. Look at America." They'll say, "Everything is about premarital sex and adultery and everybody is naked." They mean you're not wearing enough, we're not wearing enough clothes. I've had a lot of Muslims says, "That's naked." Not totally naked. And they just can't believe and so a lot of Muslims because of Western culture, will go, "That's what you teach. That's what Christianity teaches." And yet the apostle says, "No. That is not what Christianity teaches."

We are justified by faith alone, chapters 4 and 5 and the end of 3, but true faith does not stay alone. True faith does not stay alone, it results in good works and fruit and change and growth and hatred of sin. One of the greatest tests for if you're a believer is when you sin, that you hate your own sin. And you sometimes go into depression, even, and wrestle in the word of God and the Lord, by his grace, brings you out of that. We are justified by faith alone but true faith does not stay alone. It always results in a changed life and good works. It doesn't mean we're going to be perfect but it means we're growing, we're changing, we're desiring to change. We desire to grow. We want to repent of sin.

This verse, Romans 6:6, our old self has been crucified with Christ. It reminds us of Galatians 2:20 where the apostle there says, "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh," in the body, "I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me." What a wonderful verse. 2 Corinthians 5:17, "if anyone is in Christ," if anyone is implanted in him, "he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come." That's our union with Christ.

And verse 5 feeds into verse 6 and verse 6 is about knowing the truth, knowing and believing the truth. A truth to know and believe, verse 6a. And this whole Romans 6:6 reminds me of John 8:31 and 32 and 34 when the Pharisees, Jesus' dealing with them in John 8, and Jesus said, "If you abide in My word, if you continue in My word, then you

are truly my disciples and you shall know the truth and the truth will set you free." True freedom from sin. The Pharisees said, "Ah, we're not enslaved to anybody." That was really a dumb statement because Rome was over them and controlling them and oppressing them. It was really funny when you think about it and they wanted to be free from Rome and they said, "We're not enslaved to anybody. What are you talking about, Jesus?" And Jesus said, what did he say in John 8:34, look at it, "Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is the slave of sin." John 8:34.

And what the Bible teaches is that all of us are enslaved to sin. Our will is in bondage to sin and even when unbelievers do good works, they're doing it for their own glory or with selfish motives, and this passage shows us that only in Christ is our will freed so that we can obey God, the end of verse 6, "so that we would no longer be slaves to sin." And then down in verse 20, "when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. Therefore what benefit were you then deriving from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the outcome of those things is death. But now having been freed from sin and enslaved to God, you derive your benefit, resulting in sanctification," or holiness, "and the outcome, eternal life."

Basically, the Bible says when the Lord draws you, converts you, and you repent and believe, you're justified and that justified is like a dot on a blackboard. It's a point in time, but then our sanctification is also a point and it keeps going and sanctification is a process. He's saying here, "If you're a true believer, you've been freed from sin and you can grow until the very end. The outcome, eternal life."

Which is interesting back in verse 6, between each side of verse 6, verse 5, he says, "If we have become planted deeply with Him or united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly," for sure, "we shall be also," we shall be, speaking of our future resurrection, the resurrection of our body and he's saying everything in between our growth and sanctification and perseverance is guaranteed in between because of the grace of God. Then in verse 8, "Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him." Those are both about our future resurrection. Our future resurrection and glorified bodies.

So there is a truth that we should know that our old self was crucified with Christ, we have died with Christ, and that does not mean that our sinful nature is gone, what it means is the old person that I was in Adam, which is what chapter 5 is talking about, we were in Adam, we were unregenerate, we were slaves of sin, we were doing our own thing, that person is no longer. And that's a wonderful thing that you could say, "You mean I'm not that ugly person anymore? Wow. That's great." And that gives us lots of hope and freedom to grow and to choose the Lord, choose the way of holiness.

We need to know also the purpose of the truth, the truth that our old self, our old unregenerate self, was crucified with Christ. The purpose of that, "in order that our body of sin might be done away with," and I've already talked about this. The body of sin does not mean that our bodies are sinful, are naturally sinful, what he's saying is another way of talking about our mortal body. Verse 12, "Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal

body." The end of chapter 7 where he says, "Who will set me free from this body of death?" Chapter 7, verse 24, "Wretched man that I am, who will set me free from the body of this death?"

So the body of sin, we need to distinguish between the body of sin which is about the sinful nature, I'm sorry, we need to distinguish between the old self which is gone and the body of sin which is still with us, the sin principle which is still with us. Look at Romans 7:21 and Pastor Ty talked about this a lot. "I find then the principle," or law, "that evil is present in me, the one who wants to do good. For I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man, but I see a different law in the members of my body," there it is again, "waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin which is in my members."

Now, this word "principle or law" is the same word as "law, nomos," but in this context, it means something different which is the word "principle" is a good translation. It's a power, it's a principle, like the law of gravity or the second law of thermodynamics. And I'll never forget after September 11, 2001 when the Al Qaeda, the Muslim terrorists attacked in four different places, and I began hearing this word "al-qaeda" and I said, "I know that word. We have that word in Farsi," without the "al, al" means "the." And actually we do and so I got my Bible out and I went to Romans 7:21 and I said, "Wow, there it is." It's a base. It's a principle. It's a base. They use it for the idea of the base in Afghanistan at that time. The Iranians say it differently, we say... And I went, "Man, boy, they really corrupted an interesting word that helps explain Romans 7 and the battle against sin." But in another way, it's very graphic and illustrative of sin within us. There is this base. There is this principle just as evil as those people that do those kind of things. The evilness of just killing people and cutting people's heads off and stuff. The wickedness of Islamic terror.

And one of the reasons why there is so much war in the Old Testament is it's an illustration of our battle with sin now. The church does not have the authority to wage war but all those lessons in Joshua and Judges and Kings and Samuel about war, have a lot of spiritual principles of our battle against sin and that's why in the New Testament he says, "Our warfare is not fleshly, it's not physical." It's not like fighting WWII or fighting against Islamic terror or what governments do or what soldiers do, "but it's mighty through God for the pulling down of strongholds and taking captive," that's 2 Corinthians 10. "Taking captive every thought to the obedience of Christ, for though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ." So knowing the purpose of our crucifixion with Christ can help us in our battle in holiness and victory over sin.

This word "rendered powerless," notice that back in Romans 6:6, we know this because the way it's used in Hebrews 2:14 is the key. Turn to Hebrews 2:14 talking about Satan, the devil, and when I first learned this and studied this, I went, "Ah, this is the proof that we still have a sinful nature." Hebrews 2:14, "Therefore, since the children share in flesh

and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless," there it is translated very accurately, "He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and might free those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives." Well, the devil still exists so it obviously doesn't mean he's annihilated or totally destroyed, but he's been judged just as our sinful self has been judged definitely, and then now we are in the process of, until the final day, on judgment day, Revelation 20, when the Lord judges everyone, the day of judgment, and the devil is thrown into the lake of fire and all those who have not trusted Christ as their Savior and Lord will also, unfortunately, be thrown into the lake of fire.

And another thing that really helped me understand this is in Genesis 2:17 where God said to Adam, "In the day that you eat of the fruit, you will surely die." But he didn't die yet physically until chapter 5 and he lived 930 years. It's amazing. But the process of death started in Genesis 3 after they ate of the fruit. So the process of our death with Christ started also and now we have to live it out practically until we die and follow after, pursue holiness. That's a great passage.

Other verses that show us that we still have a sinful nature, 1 John 1:8, he says, "If anyone says I don't have sin," he's not talking about sins, "If anyone says I have no sin, he deceives himself and the truth is not in him."

In 1 John 2:15, he talks about that we still struggle against the lust of the eyes, the lusts of the flesh, the desires of the flesh, and the boastful pride of life. That was another thing that I always couldn't understand about these guys that taught we don't have a sinful nature. They would say, "Well, the sins are just these tracks or memories that are still in our brain or in our body." I was like, "Yeah, but pride is a lot deeper than just habits and tracks in our brain." And one of them would say, "The sinful principle is like a splinter in you." I said, "That's ridiculous," you know, because I can get the splinter out. So all that kind of teaching never made sense because the sin principle is still deep within us, the boastful pride of life, the lusts of the flesh.

2 Corinthians 7:1 is another verse that proves we still have a sin principle or a sinful nature that's pulling us to sin. In 2 Corinthians 7:1, he says, "Therefore," brethren, "having these promises, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." What a powerful verse. What a convicting verse.

So we have to distinguish between the old self and the body of sin in verse 6 which shows us there is a difference between the two and that's one of the keys to understanding this passage. Then, next, we need to know the truth and know the result. The result is, he says, "so that we would no longer be slaves to sin." And this is in two ways: we're enslaved to the guilt of sin and we're enslaved to the power of sin that pulls us to do sin, it tempts us. And we've been freed, "for he who has died is justified from sin," and he's saying, "If you really understand your justification, you're going to be free and then you're going to just be so joyfully free that you want holiness and you want to obey God and you want to follow after him."

It's just an amazing thing. It reminds me in this book, "The Legacy of Sovereign Joy," reading about Augustine. In his book "The Confessions" where he's confessing his enslavement to lust and he lived with a concubine, he was not married to her, for 15 years and he said, "During all those years," this is in his "Confessions," which is an amazing book. I used to not like it and I would try to read it and I didn't understand it and the more I've wrestled with it over the years, the more I like it because the translation is a little hard but the reason why we read Psalm 145 is that Augustine starts with quoting verses from Psalm 145 and 147 and then, like a sentence later, he says, "Our hearts are restless until they find their peace in You." Then later he's describing his life of fornication and sexual license and he says, "During all those years of rebellion, where was my free will? What was the hidden secret place from which it was summoned in a moment so that I might bend my neck to your easy yoke? How sweet all at once it was for me to be rid of those fruitless joys." That reminds me of Romans 6 where he says, "what fruit, what benefit were you deriving from the things which you are now ashamed?" "To be rid of those fruitless joys which I had once feared to lose. You drove them from me." So he's talking to God and he's constantly, everything is in the form of a prayer. "You drove them from me," those fruitless joys. "You who are the true, the sovereign joy." And Piper makes the comment, "That's the key phrase and the key reality for understanding the heart of Augustinianism."

Then Augustine continues, "You drove them from me and you took their place, you who are sweeter than all pleasure, though not to the flesh and blood, you who outshine all light yet are hidden deeper than any secret in our hearts, you who surpass all honor though not in the eyes of men who see all honor in themselves. O Lord my God, my light, my wealth, my salvation." "Grace is God giving us sovereign joy in God that triumphs." This is Piper's statement, "Grace is God giving us sovereign joy in God that triumphs over joy in sin."

So the more we worship God and focus on him, this is why it's another great evidence of a true believer is they long to worship the Lord for who he is and they thirst for holiness. It's not just head knowledge. We need knowledge of the Scriptures, deep study, intellectual rigor in the structure and the context and principles of interpretation but there's got to be that reality that's going to move us and drive us to obey God and to rejoice in him and to proclaim his name.

"O the deep, deep love of Jesus. Spread his praise from shore to shore." A long time ago, I just was really frustrated with Christians who, you know, I would say, "Yeah, I'm going to go to the Muslim world. The Muslims need Christ," and people would go, "Oh," and I couldn't understand why at least go, "Yeah, we need to pray for them." You know, when the Lord saves you and puts grace within you, you want to witness. You want to at least pray for people. When you see the news, you should go, "Oh, we need to pray for Syria and North Korea and the stuff that's going on." This is what he's talking about here is that true faith results in action and love and truth and holiness.

And lastly, we can choose to obey God, which I've already said. John Stott in his commentary says, "The secret of holy living is in the mind," and there is a lot about that.

"Consider yourselves dead to sin. Knowing this..." So there's a lot in chapter 6 and chapter 8 where he says, "The mind set on the flesh is death but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace," chapter 8, verse 6. And that's true, the secret of holy living is in the mind and meditation and study and knowing the word, but then also Piper says the key to Christian living is a thirst and a hunger for God, a desperation for worship and holiness, and both together are a wonderful thing.

I want to close with a quote from Randy Alcorn who wrote a book I read a long time ago talking about sexual sin and lust which is an application for this passage for us, because then he says, verse 11, "Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus. Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts, and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law but under grace. "

Randy Alcorn says this, "Sexual sin never comes out of the blue. It is the predictable result of a long natural process in which a mind susceptible to sin is granted unguarded exposure to immoral input. Sow a thought, reap an action. Sow an action, reap a habit. Sow a habit, reap a character. Sow a character, reap a destiny. We are what we think. Today's thoughts are the stuff of which tomorrow's character is made. Temptation may come suddenly but sin does not, neither does moral and spiritual fiber. It is the result of a process, a process over which we do have control because we are freed in Christ. The best way to guard against tomorrow's sexual temptations is to cultivate a pure mind today, a mind saturated not in the world's input but in God's. Our sexual morality is the sum of a conscious series of choices, decisions and actions." And I would add: affections. "Including all those tiny indulgences and minuscule compromises. Like a photographic plate accumulating light to form an image, our mind is the cumulative result of all that we expose it to whether godly or ungodly. The enemy is lust. The stakes are high. The reward is the peace and pleasure of purity. And the battle is in our minds."

So I just want to encourage everyone to go back and listen to Pastor Ty's series, 12 parts, "Winning the War Against the Sin Principle Within Us," remaining sin, and cry out to the Lord for growth.

Let's pray.

Father, I praise you for Romans 6:6. Thank you that we are new creatures in Christ, that you crucified our old, unregenerate, enslaved, rebellious, ugly self in Adam and we are new creatures, but we still have the sin principle, remaining sin, remaining corruption, and we're still fighting. We all confess, Lord, we want to fight sin and we want to worship you. We want to grow in holiness. And I pray for each saint, each believer here that you will cause this to go deeper and encourage them in their walk with you and in their walk in sanctification. And for any who don't know you yet, I pray, Lord, that you would work in their hearts with the Gospel. Thank you for your grace that you poured out at the cross and the resurrection and in justification and in the process of sanctification. And we

praise you that one day we'll be resurrected and we'll get new bodies, for if we have become united, implanted deeply with him in the likeness of his death, in the future we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection. We thank you, Lord, that all of grace is subsumed in all of this, our union with Christ and the reality of being one with you, that we are in Christ and that you are in us by your Holy Spirit. We praise you in Jesus' name.

Amen.