

Imitators of God, Pt 1

Studies in Ephesians

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Bible Text: Ephesians 5:1

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Ok, let's take our Bibles this morning and we have actually made it to a new chapter. We are going to be in Ephesians chapter five this morning and I have entitled this lesson. I looked at it and there is so much to be said about, particularly about just these opening two or three verses in Ephesians chapter five. I have entitled this lesson, "Imitators of God, Part One," because that is the call to you and I here that the apostle Paul gives us is that it is our responsibility. Notice how he says it, verse one.

"Be ye therefore followers of God."

And notice how we are to follow him.

"... as dear children."

And when you do a little research and I encourage and I challenge each of you, if you do not have it, if you have got internet access and if you don't have internet access go to a local bookstore somewhere, go to Books A Million, get you a concordance, get you a Strong's Exhaustive Concordance. I know you have all got one if you have. And the good thing is if you have got the internet you can get it online.

Write this down while I am think about it. I think I have told you this before. Write Online Bible dot net. And go to Online Bible dot net and download the entire module that they have got on the whole Bible. It gives you the whole Bible. It gives you Strong's Exhaustive Concordance and you can actually go into the feature and turn it on to where all you have got to do is just drag your mouse down that verse like down a verse like this over each word and it will pop up a little bubble window above each word and it tells you the Greek or the Hebrew version of the word. It gives you all the various definitions of the Word. And then another number. It will have another number behind it and you move your mouse to that and it tells you the tenses of the verb whether the aorist tense or past perfect tense. And then you can get you some ... you can go out there and go to another place and look up what those tenses are, but I didn't pay close enough attention in English when I was growing up to know them, but I can do some research on some things like that.

And you do yourself a serious injustice because I know a lot of people... and it is good to read the Scriptures. Everybody ought to read the Scriptures. But just to read the Scriptures for the sake of reading the Scriptures is like you are reading a [?] romance novel or [?] whatever her name is novel or some other kind of book or *Gone With the Wind* or even some historical book. We don't read the Bible like that. He tells us how we are to read the Bible? Study. You hear that? Study to show thyself approved unto God.

You have to study this book. And so to study this book, since we don't know Greek and Hebrew, what do we have to do? We have to avail ourselves of some of the tools that are out there. And so we read a verse like this in Ephesians chapter five and we read this, "Be ye therefore followers of God..." And when you think about [?] God you think about the way the world talks about following God. What comes to our mind? Just like a sheep would follow a shepherd or something. That is the way we think about it.

But the word in the original language is a Greek word which is the ... and it is imitate. That is what we are to be... we are to be not followers like a mouse following pied piper, we are to actually... we are called on by our God to imitate our God. You think about that. And think about it in your own personal relationship to this one true and living God.

"Be ye therefore..."

In other words, and I have always told you every time we have looked at any part of God's Word and we have studied it together and we have done so for so many years now, any time you see that where therefore, we always ask the question what? That ... I hope that I have harped on you enough over the years that that phrase is stuck in your head. Whenever you see the word "therefore" always ask the question: What is it there for? And so he said it.

"Be ye therefore..."

In other words, based on everything I have said before, because, listen to me. All of our obedience begins where? With that sure and certain knowledge that I am already saved. I am already qualified. I am already fit. I am already fully entitled to all the salvation before I ever start imitating God, Russ.

And, see, that is where the world gets it backwards. Most folks you know, and I am going to tell you. Most reformed folks you know, folks, they are ignorant of this book. Now they are. They have got a few little doctrines and dogmas that they crammed into their heads and they are filled with pride. And I will tell you what. Men and women whose minds are filled with just reformed doctrine, they are the proudest creatures on this planet. Now they are. And that is not what he is talking about when he calls on us to imitate God.

Nothing wrong with reformed doctrine. Don't you dare think your pastor doesn't believe in the reformed doctrine. I believe the reformed doctrine. I believe the reformed doctrine

is the doctrine of God. But, you know, we have to understand and be fully aware before we ever start proceeding to do what the apostle Paul is calling on us here to do, to imitate our God and we ought to imitate him and we are going to see how we are to imitate him this morning.

We have got to know our position in Christ Jesus.

So the apostle Paul here in Ephesians chapter five he is continuing his exhortation to these believers concerning our walk.

Now I know a lot of people that they seem to think that anybody who believes in free grace that we don't care how people walk and how they live. Nothing could be further from the truth. Folks, you and I have a responsibility that goes beyond the most moral, sincere, dedicated religious friend you... and I tell you. You got it. And if you don't think you do, those of you who work in a school system or wherever you work, talk with your fellow employees, fellow teachers. I don't encourage it a whole lot because it is most of the time you are going to find out that... but how zealous are they? Huh? I guarantee I... I mean I have got people in my neighborhood and like them, good folks, kind people. And they think it is the greatest thing that their kids they load them up every summer and send them on these missionary journeys to all these various places all over the world and they think that they are really accomplishing something. It is such a great and grand and wonderful and spiritual thing for them to go to the holy land or go...

Folks, you don't have to go to Israel to walk with God. Do you hear me? But they have got all these ideas in their minds about their behavior, about their character and about their conduct and they miss the weightier matters of the Scripture, the weightier matters of the truth.

And, again, we... we have go to realize this. Everybody who believes God's gospel we have an obligation to love God. And I don't... don't... and nobody anywhere can ever accuse us as believers of saying you don't have a responsibility. They think they love God. They give their money. Most of them, folks, most of the... most of my family would not miss a church service. They just wouldn't do it. They are so diligent, they won't... if they had a... if they had an opportunity for something, some of my own family, if they had an opportunity to go on a once in a lifetime fishing trip somewhere and it was on a Sunday. Do you know what they wouldn't do? They would not do it.

My family, I was raised all my life and probably most of you were, too, when it came to a Sunday, what did you not do? Huh? You didn't work any kind of work, right? You had basically one thing you could do on Sunday, go to church. Come on.

Now [?] and, see, this is the thing. This is where religion just burns me up. It is all right. You know, we... we don't work on the sabbath day. That is where they are wrong to begin with. Sunday is not the sabbath day. The sabbath day is when? It is Saturday. It is not Sunday. We don't work on the sabbath day and the men are proud. We won't mow our grass, but we will [?] with our wives do what? Huh? If your wife didn't cook you

Sunday dinner what was it? A problem. And most men in most societies that we live in when Sunday dinner is done, who does the work? It is work. Isn't it? To clean up? Have you ever helped your wife clean up? [?] that is a chore. I whole heaps like rather cook it than clean it.

But, you know, we don't do any work on the Lord's Day. Old mom is in there struggling. And she is making up beds and she is cleaning up everything and that...

Folks, that is just... that is so out there. That is... that is not what he is talking about.

But then they are faithful and they are dedicated. They don't do things. That is not imitating God, period. That is imitating.... it is like if monkey see, monkey do, is what it is. It is not what God said, it is what momma and daddy and grandma and grandpa and all them old dead preachers told us and so we... that... that ... that is just the way we do it.

But listen. Here is the thing. You and I have a responsibility that goes infinitely beyond what they have. Everything they are doing is legal. Everything they are doing they think it... that it either adds something to their salvation or it accomplishes their salvation. Everything. And we included all the different things. We can include faith in that.

I had a man tell me this week that, you know, that faith is what saved us. That is not right. It is not scriptural. I tried to explain it to him and he just... he told me. He said, "I have never heard anybody anywhere ever teach anything like what you teach in [?]."

And I wrote him back and I told him, I said, "You need to get John Gill, William Huntington and Robert Hawker..." And I... I gave him a whole list and he wrote back and I... listen. John Gill is probably the... outside of the apostles, and our Lord Jesus Christ himself, one of the greatest theological minds beyond John Owen was John Gill. And John Gill preached the gospel and John Gill was serving for men and women's souls and John Gill wrote probably the best commentary on the entire Scriptures and has written, has wrote back several hundred years ago the premier body of divinity on scriptural understanding about how who God is and how salvation is accomplished. And I told him. I said... I told him. I said, "You need to read these guys. Quit reading these news guys that you are reading," because he is talking about all these idiots like Piper and MacArthur and Driscoll and Washer and all these guys that I wouldn't walk across the street. I wouldn't let them stand in the pulpit here, because they don't preach the gospel.

And he wrote me back and he said, "Well, you quote and told ... make a bunch of obscure theologians that nobody in this generation would quote."

I wrote him back. I told him, "You are right. Nobody in this generation quotes these theologians because nobody in this generation for the most part knows these God these theologians preached and taught."

They are more.... they... they like this social thing of well God is trying to save everybody. That... and that is the thing that troubles me with all these reformed folks

now. They have grasped this thing of the five points of Calvinism. They hold on it tenaciously, but there is no big deal. As long as you believe in Jesus, as long as you have accepted Christ. They [?] how screwed up your theology is, come to Jesus.

I am telling you. You can't be saved by a Christ you don't know. And that is what is wrong is we have got all these self professed theologians running out there who has got a little bit of knowledge, ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. Don't see the particular in the implications of it. They don't understand that they are... they are calling. See, because this is the thing.

Like I told that guy who said we are saved by faith. I said, "Oh, we do believe and nobody is going to heaven apart from faith. You hear me? You will not be saved except you believe on the Lord Jesus Christ." Is that not scriptural?

But now answer me this question. Answer it at least in your mind. Is your faith in Christ what makes salvation effective and effectual you? Is faith what makes the difference between life and death? If you think it is, folks, you haven't heard a word I have said over the last 24 years. Can we not agree on one thing? Would you consider faith a work of righteousness? I would, wouldn't you?

Titus said this.

"Not by works of righteousness which we have done."

And here is the key.

"But by his mercy he saved us.

Titus three verse five.

"Through the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit."

Now listen. We do believe. I told [?] we do believe, but what do we believe?

Where is all my hope? See, and then he wrote back and he said, still, he got... he got. .he got rid of [?] Gill and I got defensive and I am not really that defensive of dead men, you know, that are gone on. I think Gill is with the Lord. But I told him, he said, "Well nobody ever quotes Gill."

And I wrote him back. I found the Eulogy of Augustus Toplady. Do you know who Augustus Toplady is? What is one him that everybody just about outside of *Amazing Grace* what is probably one of the best known religious songs out there?

Rock of Ages, cleft for me...

And Augustus Toplady gave the eulogy at John Gill's funeral. And I cut and pasted Augustus Toplady's eulogy of John Gill and sent it to him and I told him, I said, "Number one," is said, "if you really knew anything of the gospel you would shut your mouth and you would quit talking about these great men of God that are truly with our Lord right now." But I said, "Number two, because you don't know who Augustus Toplady's and obviously you don't know the God that Augustus Toplady preaches and teaches, you need to quit singing *Rock of Ages*."

I am going to tell you all these folks that run around in religion singing *Amazing Grace*, they are not worshipping the same God that John Newton was worshipping. They are worshipping another God and another Jesus and they are following another gospel.

So we have got to get that straight. Now we have got to understand our call and we have got to understand the hope that we have and based on that hope, listen, folks. We are to have a diligent, determination in our hearts and in our minds to obey God's revealed will by way of commandments. And we are to seek to bring our character and conduct into conformity to Christ. That is our responsibility.

Have you prayed this week? Don't answer. Have you really prayed this week, one time, two times, 10 times? Have you read this book this week? Think about it now. Think about what you say to people and what you profess and what we claim.

You know, we claim, oh, we love the Lord. We love the God of... Have we prayed?

I mean it is sad. It is sad and it is just... it is just as true of me as it is of everybody else in this church family. Isn't it sad that usually some of the most intense times we ever spend in prayer [?]. Huh? Trouble. Isn't it amazing?

I will guarantee you. Let any one of us here in here, if you haven't prayed like you should... and listen, how should you pray? How does Scripture tell you pray, need to pray, all of us pray? God's children, not the world, everybody is praying. I am talking about how are we to pray? Continually. How are we to pray? It says our Lord says without ceasing.

Guilty. How about you? Huh? That don't make it right. I am not excusing it. We are to study to show ourselves approved unto God. And we... have we... can you define and tell other people about the particulars of what you believe? Can you do that?

You know, I know, I know, we can ... we can tell people how to hunt and how to fish and how to work on a car and how to mow the grass, how to cook meals. We can learn intricates of math and science and yet we who have been given the Spirit of the living God, Christ in us the hope of glory, who have been given the mind of Christ, we can't tell people? I just not qualified. Well, who is?

You say, "Well, I can't do it."

Listen. John Bunyan was uneducated. Read about it. God takes the dull knife in the world and makes it what?

See, that is where our problem is. We keep thinking it is... remember back in the beginning? Moses when our God, you know, he... first of all he wanted to be the spokesperson for God. Remember when he killed that soldier? And then God set him on the back side of the desert and humbled him and brought him low. And when God called him and telled him, "You are going to be my chosen vessel to go there and set my people free," what did he say?

I can't do it. I don't know how to speak. I can't express these things that.

And, listen. He had been with God. Hadn't he? He... he saw him out in the burning bush, talked with God, heard God's voice.

Take off shoes. The ground you are working, walking on is holy ground.

I can't do it.

But I know who can. Send my brother-in-law, too. Let Aaron go with me.

First mistake as far as man. We know it was God's will and purpose. And I can't explain that. He takes Aaron.

Who was the one who built the golden calf?

[?]

The very one he said, "I can't speak for you. Send Aaron with me."

They brought all that gold and stuff to Aaron and Aaron helped fashion that god of their imagination. Aaron did.

So here is the thing. You look through this book and everywhere and every place God always chooses the weak and the foolish and the base to confound the wise so that who gets the glory?

Because, see, this is the thing. So many times when we start trying to share these glorious truths with somebody, we are worried about how they are going to think about who? Worried about what they are going to think about it. They might think I am just not smart.

I want to tell you what. If God is pleased to use you and you open your mouth and you speak his glorious truth, his Word, and you know the particulars and implications of it and you define it, he will use it. And people won't be ... people... I... I hope and I pray that after all the years we have been together that when you are sitting [?] I was studying

this morning and I told her, I said, “I bet after 24 years you have gotten tired of hearing me.”

And she said, “No, when you are up there,” she said, “All I think about is I am wanting to hear a word from God.” And that is... whoever is up here. I don’t care if they... and we have had many. But, folks, if the content is right, please don’t be listening to the eloquence or the ineloquence of the speaker, because it is not about the speaker. Huh? It is not about impressing. I am not trying to impress you. Nor should any man seek to impress another man. I ... think if I did impress, you what have I done? I am one worm of the dirt that has impressed another worm of the dirt. That is like one piece of dung trying to show another piece of dung he is better than that. It is just foolishness.

So here is the thing. Our responsibility is to bring our character and conduct into conformity. Pray without ceasing. Study to show thyself approved unto God. Be a witness of him in this world. That is our responsibility.

But we are not Legalists and, you see, that is the thing. What is a Legalist? That is all we want to talk about this morning. What is a Legalist? Because I have been accused of that. I have been... most of the time I am accused of being the other end of it, that I am ... they ... they... they... they accuse of me being Antinomian which is against the law, which you know better than. But we are not... we are not Legalists when it comes to the gospel. No, what is a Legalist? A Legalist is somebody who vainly imagines that righteousness and holiness is obtained or improved or conditioned where? On our personal obedience to God’s law. That is what a Legalist is. Pure... that is the simplest definition of Legalism, that they think that righteousness is obtained, it is improved, or it is conditioned on who? On me. A Legalist isn’t one who simply seeks to live by the rule of God’s revealed will by [?] Remember a Legalist is not somebody who just wants to keep God’s law.

See, here is the thing. You believe the gospel. You rest in Christ as the Lord your righteousness. You can as a child of God... don’t you seek to love God and in his law? Are you a Legalist? No. Why do you do it? I... Don’t... I hope all of us don’t... doesn’t he tell us thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain? Don’t you try to not do that? But you are not a Legalist because you are trying to live by way of God’s revealed will. He has told you what... don’t commit adultery. Don’t lie. Don’t steal. Don’t have any false gods before him. Honor your father and mother.

You know, we... when... there is nothing wrong with the law, never has been, never will be. But, see, a Legalist isn’t one who just simply seeks to live by that law, but one who makes his obedience to the law of God the basis of his justification. And a lot of them don’t make it the basis of the of their justification. They say, “Oh, I am justified by faith.” But then they turn around and make it a basis of their sanctification.

A big one I hear a lot about from different people that write me all the time just begging and pleading for information on it is their question is: Do you believe in progressive sanctification? Do you believe we are progressively getting more holy and more righteous if we are beating down the flesh and we are conquering the flesh? And the

answer is no, no, no, no a thousand times no. The flesh cannot be improved, folks. Adam has got to die. And Adam will ultimately die when?

Oh, we know he died as far as the guilt, penalty and condemnation. He died in Christ. But I still have got Adam. I have got my old nature. And he is not going to die. That which constantly draws me away from God is not going to die until I die. You have got to kill this flesh because flesh and blood shall not inherit the kingdom of earth, of heaven. It is not going to happen. You have got to be made a new creature. You have got to be made a new flesh.

Or they think that it makes up some part of their fitness for heaven.

Listen. Let me read you a verse. Listen to you. Here is a Legalist. Write this verse down. I am going to give you a scriptural, biblical example of a Legalist. Write down John chapter six verse 28. And I would encourage you to read right before it because our Lord tells them:

“Verily, verily, I tell you. You seek me not because of the miracles or you seek me not because of you saw the miracles, but because you want to eat the loaves and you are filled.” And he tells them, “Labor not for the meat that perishes, but labor for that which endureth unto everlasting life.” And after he told them that. He says, “Quit laboring for what is going to burn up.”

Here is a Legalist.

Then said they unto him, in light of what he just said, “What shall we do that we might work the works of God?”

And our Lord answers them.

“This is the work of God.”

What I the work of God? That you believer on him whom God hath sent.”

And literally the way that work... that verse breaks down, this is the work of God. It is not... he was not telling them you do this work you are going to get saved, but you have got to ... he is saying this is the work of God that what? That you ... if you ... if you believe this morning, this is... that is God’s work in you. This is the work of God, that you believe on him whom God hath sent.

See, a Legalist is anybody who seeks to add his obedience to Christ’s obedience to either gain or improve a favorable relationship with God. And in so doing, do you know what they do? If you add anything to Christ’s perfect accomplished death at Calvary, you make the blood of Christ and the grace of God non effective.

He says, "To you who are circumcised," Paul writes Galatians chapter two verse 21 or chapter one verse one through... where he says, "If you be circumcised," in other words, if [?] I have told you this before and we will tell you till we die. There is nothing wrong with circumcision. A lot of people were circumcised back then. A lot of... Paul was circumcised. But he said, "If you believe... if you think that circumcision makes a difference between life and death, if you be circumcised... for what were they being told? Except you be circumcised after the law of Moses, you can't go to heaven. Can't be saved.

And he told those Galatians, "If you be circumcised," in other words, if you bow to that, that you have got to be circumcised to go to heaven, and you can plug anything in there you want to. You say, "Circumcision, I don't relate to that in my generation."

If you think that by your listening to or not listening to rock music you are going to go to heaven, or if you think that by your going to church or not going to church you are going to go to heaven—and you should go to church. I didn't say that. But I am saying if you think that your being here this morning is what makes up any part of your acceptance before God, Paul writes this. Christ profits you nothing, nothing.

The believer's only righteousness before God is what? The righteousness of Christ imputed. Always has been. Always will be. That is why he is called Christ is called the Lord our righteousness. He is all of it. [?] every bit of it. Our motivation to godliness and holiness is what? The fact that I know that I am saved, the fact that I know that I am accepted in the blood. And with this ever in mind, the apostle exhorts these believers, these saints of God, he says, "You be imitators of God."

In other words, imitate God in your conversation. Boy, you think about what that is [?]. You imitate God in your words and imitate God in your behavior and walk.

So who is your pattern? Your preacher is not. Some old dead preacher is not. Look. The apostle Paul wasn't even [?] the pattern. What is the pattern? He tells us who are we to imitate? Who? Paul didn't say, "Imitate me." Who did he say to imitate? Imitate God.

Now this is... to me this is amazing. You know, God has certain attributes that are incommunicable to humanity. God is sovereign. You can't be sovereign. You can't imitate sovereignty. We... we can't... listen. God is immutable. You can't imitate that, because I will tell you what. We sometimes hot sometimes cold, are we not? God is infinite. You can't imitate that one. God is omniscient. He is in all... Remember his eyes are in all places beholding the good and evil. I can be where? Here and in a little while I will be back over there, right?

So there are some attributes of God that we can't imitate. We are not called on to imitate God there. But God has some communicable attributes that are displayed and where are they displayed at? How do we see the communicable attributes of our God? In other words, what... who ... how do we see God? You have never seen God spiritually, have you? Where do we see God at? In his attributes. What do you require? We see it one

place. In Christ. We see all those attributes that we are commanded to communicate, to imitate.

See, the ones we are commanded to imitate are what? His love, his mercy, his forbearance, his faithfulness. God is love and if God is love, what should you be? Be ye therefore imitators of God as dear children. God is love. What is your response to that?

Well, we have, man, we have messed this thing up, haven't we? We... and, remember, we just ... we just read last week he says, "Be ye kind one to another, tender hearted, forgiving one another even as God for Christ's sake has forgiven you."

And I... don't we have trouble forgiving folks?

God is merciful. And I tell you. I know this from studying through the Beatitudes. What are we supposed to do? What is one of the Beatitudes? Blessed are the who? The merciful. For they shall receive mercy.

God is patient. And, boy, this is one that just tears my heart out. He is so patient with us, is he not? And I... you let some little thing go wrong in our life and we are the most impatient people on this planet.

Don't want... we want every problem and difficulty over when? Number one, we wish we didn't even have any problems or difficulties. And when they come, we want them over when? Right then.

Don't you know he knows what is best for you? We sit there and we talk about God's sovereignty and we know all things work together for good to love... to them that love God to them who are the called according to his purpose. But when he sends some of his purposes into our life and they clash with ours, what do we do? We... don't... don't you find yourself asking this question a lot? Why? Even his children.... and it... what is that? Sinful unbelief.

Listen and I... it is hard for me to learn that lesson. I... you know, I... Pam and I were talking this morning. This has been one of the most eventful years in our life that we have been married. And, you know, you are trying to look at everything that God sends your way as... as his children and you think, well, because I know it is not punishment, because he doesn't punish his children. He chastens us. But everything he sends our way what is it seeking to do? It is teaching us a lesson. It is teaching us to rest [?] which one of us is not learning the lesson? You know? It just seemed like things just... just... when it rains it pours.

But I... there... there is a reason for it. I... I don't understand it. Do you need to get upset and throw your hands up and say, "I am just fed up with...?"

Or you can just ... just ... just bow and just sit down and say, “Lord, I know it is... I know it is for a purpose and a reason. I don’t understand it and I know, I... my flesh hates it. I don’t like it. I don’t like having a life turned upside down no more than you do.”

But listen. When it is all over and said and done we will pop out on the other end of it. There is going to be something good from it for our good, for his glory and the for the advance of his kingdom.

Either you can sit back and enjoy the ride and marvel at the grace of our God in carrying us through it, or you can sit there and murmur and cry and belly ache and almost said something more about it and... and... and. be miserable the whole time. I... I... I tell you what. Miles McGee, for me to think about him losing that son and be able to take the position the Lord gave and the Lord takes away, blessed be the name of the Lord.

What if God took one of your children or took your spouse from you? Because I am going to tell you what. If they go, who took them? And we all... we all want to experience this one day, folks. One day somebody close to you is going to die. Your momma, your daddy, your friends, your children. I hope and pray that I live ... my kids live well beyond me. I do. I can’t envision that, but I tell you. Don’t you want the kind of faith that when that type... I think about Henry. I think one of the things that I think about with Henry more than anything was when he sent that son to Vietnam and like 14 days late got his son back from Vietnam in a body bag. He preached his funeral.

I don’t know if I could do that. I hope I am not ever called on to do that. But I tell you what. That is the thing. We are to be patient. God is faithful. And I tell you what. We ought to be faithful. We ought to be faithful to one another. We ought to be faithful to the gospel with our time and with our energy and with our effort. We ought to be faithful to people, to be honest with them and tell them the truth. And I... and we know, sadly, that we all come short in every area of that life, don’t we?

All have sinned and come short of the glory of God.

But notice this and we will quit with this right here. He says... he uses this phrase.

“As dear children.”

And that is the key to understanding this whole thing. We are to be imitators of God, not legally, but how are we to do it? As dear children.

See, religion, they are trying to get to be children by doing things. We do things because what are we already?

Look over at Romans chapter six. Let me show you this and we will [?].

The Scriptures, if we just let the Scriptures explain things to us, so many times we would be out of trouble.

Look at Romans chapter six verse 12.

He says, “Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.”

That is a good thing, is it not? He goes on.

“Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God.”

Underline this next phrase and read it for yourself.

“...as those that are alive from the dead.”

Not as those who will be made alive from the dead, but we are to not let more sin reign in our mortal bodies. We are not to yield our members, our hands, our mind, our eyes, our ears, our walk, our character and our conduct to unrighteousness, but we are to yield or imitate God as those that are...

Here is the thing. What are you right now? You are alive unto God. You are not seeking to get made alive. We are alive. And, see, this is the thing. We have got to notice here that everything that precedes and follows this exhortation with the ... it always proceeds from this. You are those who are alive from the dead.

He tells believers to avoid sin and immoral life, not to save themselves or keep themselves saved or even recommend themselves to God, but those who are ... that are... and that word “are” is in aorist tense. It is an event that has already occurred. We are already alive from the dead. And that is what is wrong with so many in religion today. They are trying to get life by what they do, by their faith or their obedience or their morality or their sincerity. You can’t make something alive that is dead. Adam didn’t make himself. And we don’t make ourselves alive spiritually by activity. God makes us alive from the dead and we obey God’s commands and we avoid sin based on the absolute certainty of our salvation conditioned on the Lord Jesus Christ because we are dead to sin, not to its power, not to its presence and not to its influences, because we still have that. But we are dead to its guilt and we are dead to its condemning fire.

The old...

Remember the book of Revelation? How did they overcome? They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb by the word of their testimony.

What is the word of their testimony? Here is the word of their testimony.

There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.

Here is the word of their testimony.

Who is he that justifies? Christ hath died, yea, rather that is risen again who is even at the right hand of God who also maketh intercession for us.

Here is their testimony.

Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?

So when Satan overruns you and he has ground you, I remember our Lord looked at Peter and he told Peter, he said, "Satan has desired to sift you like wheat."

And thank God our Lord said, "But I have prayed for you that your faith fail not."

And then he told him this. "When you are restored, you go tell your brethren."

And I am going to tell you what. Satan sometimes and God in his infinite wisdom and power and plan, sometimes, folks, he lets Satan grind us like powder. Problems and difficulties arise.

And I tell you what? Sin overruns us at times. The thing is, what do we do in those times? When sin has you in its grips and you have fallen as far as you think you could ever possibly fall, where do you find relief? Where do you find comfort?

Aren't you grateful that in Christ Jesus he will never leave you nor forsake you, that he will not cast you away nor will he take you, his Holy Spirit from you. He will not do it.

To obey God as those who are in a perfect state of justification based on the perfect unchangeable righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ. I promise you. You will never go wrong. You never will.

God help us be those kind of people. We will come back next week and we will pick up on verse two.

I appreciate your presence. You are dismissed to the worship hour.