

Who Is Your God

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[0 : 00] That is a beautiful song, isn't it? And you know, when you really think about what we just sang, in that song there's three statements! Lord, you are more precious than silver, more costly than gold, more beautiful than diamonds.

It's good. It's sticking in your mind. That's good. So those three things are statements and they're fact, aren't they? He is much more precious than all of those things. But then the last thing that we sang is really a question, isn't it? And nothing I desire compares to you.

Is that a question? Is He the thing you desire most in your life? Those other things are statements of fact that nothing can change, but it's up to you whether that last part is true. Do you desire Him more than all those things? And I hope as we come into God's house, we understand that that needs to be our desire. So many other things in this life we chase after, we hold up as being really important that in the end, they're not going to amount to anything.

The Lord is who we will spend eternity with, and that is what we need to focus on. All right. If you have your Bibles, turn to the book of Romans. We are in Romans yet again this morning. And before we're going to be in Romans 6, but before we do that, we're going to go through that one verse that we've been going through for weeks now. Is it starting to stick in your mind a little bit? Yeah, some of you, yeah, some of you, I don't know. I hope so. We're going to go through it over and over again. Hopefully, eventually, this will sink into your mind. Because as Christians, Romans 1.16, I hope that's the attitude that we have. You know, as Paul was writing this book, it's certainly the attitude that he had. And you can see it in his life. It was evident.

I hope this is our attitude, and I hope it is evident in our life. So let's share it together. You ready? For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. The gospel of Jesus Christ, the message that Jesus Christ had to come and share with this world. I hope that is what our lives are all about and that we're not ashamed of it. That we're not ashamed to tell a co-worker, our family members, whoever, that we believe in Jesus and Jesus has a plan for their life, and that's how we find eternal life. That is kind of the gospel in a nutshell, isn't it?

[2 : 37] And I hope we're not ashamed of that. I hope we share it with everybody around us, understanding that that is the power of God to salvation. That's how we're saved. That's how we find eternal life. And this gospel that we're talking about as we go through Romans, Romans is all about the gospel. And what Romans chapter 6, what we're going to look at this morning, it starts, it talks about kind of the foundation of the gospel of Christ. So look in Romans chapter 6, we're going to start in verse 5, and I'm going to ask if you're able, if you would stand as we read God's word this morning. Romans chapter 6, we're going to read 5 down through 13 and then jump down to verse 18 and read through the end of the chapter. So Romans 6 beginning in verse 5.

For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection. Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, and hereafter we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is free from sin. Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we also shall live with Him. Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dies no more, death has no more dominion over Him. For in that He died, He died to sin once, but in that He lives, He lives to God. Likewise, reckon you also yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in the lust thereof. Neither yield you your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but yield yourselves to God as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. Then jump down to verse 18.

Being then made free from sin, you become the servants of righteousness. I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh. For as you have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity, even so now yield your members servants to righteousness, to holiness.

For when you were servants of sin, you were free from righteousness. What fruit had you then in those things whereof you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death. But now being made free from sin and become servants to God, you have your fruit to holiness and to the end everlasting life.

For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let's pray. Lord God, again, we thank you for this time that we have to share together, that we have to be in your presence, that we have to look at your word. And Lord, again, our lives are all about choice and making decisions. You give us free will and the ability to make choices. And right now there's a choice in front of us. We can kind of tune things out. We can choose to think about activities of later today, activities of tomorrow. We can think about anything we want.

[5 : 56] Or Lord, we can set our mind on you. We can strive to be tuned into your word, to have ears and hearts that are open and listening to what message you have for us this morning. And Lord, I pray that that is the choice that we make. That we would really understand this morning that you have a message for every one of us. It's not for the person next to us. It's not for our parents, our child, our spouse, our neighbor. It's for us. So Lord, help us to be receptive to it. Help us to listen.

In the name of Jesus, we pray. Amen. You can be seated this morning. All right. So I said that in Romans 6, we get down to some really foundational things about the gospel.

And as we begin in verse 5, it talks about something that we all understand in life. Look at verse 5. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection. When you start talking about the gospel of Jesus Christ, you can't separate that from Jesus' death, can you? Because those two things are linked together. The gospel of Christ is all about the fact that Jesus came to this earth to do what? Ultimately to do what? To die. He came to share His love. He came to teach. But above all, He came to do what? To die for us. Do you think Jesus knew that when He came? Do you think God knew that when He sent His Son to this earth? Yes. He knew that that was the end game. That was really what it was all about. That Jesus would die for our sins. And that He wouldn't stay dead, but He would resurrect from the grave and overcome death so that we could overcome sin and death. That's what the gospel message is all about, isn't it? It can't be separated. And so it talks about death and life. And those are things that we often don't like to think about, but I think things we understand. We understand that right now we have life. Every one of us that's in here, don't we?

Are you alive this morning? Most of you look alive this morning. We have life. We have breath. And who has given you that? God. I mean, it's not an accident. It's not a coincidence. God has given you that. He gives us every breath we take. Do you understand God allows you to take that breath?

God has given you that life. God knew the moment that you were going to draw your first breath. That might have been not so long ago for some of you. That might have been a few years ago for some of you. But God knew when you were going to draw that first breath. But the other end of it, we like sometimes not to think of, but do you know what? Unless Jesus Christ is going to return first, God knows when you're going to draw your last breath. Life and death is a natural thing that we don't always like to think about, but we understand it at least. And here it's talking about not just physical life, but it's also talking about spiritual life because those things are two different things.

[9 : 05] And he talks about Jesus' death. He talks about Jesus' resurrection from the grave. And then we get down to verse 11. Okay? Look in verse 11. Likewise, is what it starts with. So in other words, just kind of like this, reckon you also yourselves to be dead indeed to sin. What does it mean to reckon? What does that word mean? Reckon you also. You know, sometimes we hear people use that word. Well, I reckon. We think it was kind of maybe Southern or something. I reckon. What does that mean? I guess. I think. This is what I understand. This is what I've determined in my own mind. That's what it means to reckon. For I, likewise, reckon you yourselves dead indeed to sin, but alive to God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So this is an understanding we need to have. This is something that we need to think of in our mind, that we are dead to sin. If you're a believer, if you have Jesus Christ in your heart, you are dead. Part of you has died. You are dead to sin.

That means that sin is gone. Isn't that a good thing? How many times have you sinned? How many times have you sinned? Got a number for that? Scott asked today.

How many times have you sinned today? Don't answer out loud, but think about that. How about this week? How about this year? How about in your life?

If you really had to try to come up with a number, that'd be a hard thing to do, wouldn't it? I can only speak in my life. When I really ask myself that question, seriously, how many times have I sinned? That is a hard number to come up with. And I hate to admit, it's a hard number to come up with because it's a large number. Because we fall short in so many different ways.

Times that you maybe have told a lie, times that maybe you have... I don't know. We're not going to go into all the sins. There are a ton of them. But it says when you accept Jesus Christ, you can consider yourself dead to sin. First of all, that means all that sin is gone.

[11 : 30] The Bible says, and I love these verses, that He will separate our sin from us as far as the east. East is from the west. There's other scripture that says He will blot out our sins.

They're just gone. So it says, reckon yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive...what does it say? Alive unto God. Alive unto God through Jesus Christ our sin. What does it mean to be alive unto God?

I guess I was thinking about that this week. What does it mean to be alive unto God? It means to be alive to God. It means to be alive for God. Understanding that is our purpose in life as a believer, to be alive for God, to do His work. You know, there are two births that the Bible talks about. There is our physical birth. You all had one of those, right? Right? We didn't come from an egg.

You're right. We all had a physical birth. Madison, there's one that's going to have a physical birth this week, isn't there? I don't know if you've got a name picked out. I'm not going to ask you in front of everybody. But there is a baby that's going to have a physical birth. We all had that.

And when we are physically born into this world, do you know what we're born with? A lot of things. Sin is one of them. But that sin is because we're born with free will, isn't it?

[13 : 01] We are born with free will. We can make our own decisions. We can do what we want, can't we? For the most part. Right? Now, there may be consequences, but we can do what we want. Isn't that true?

We are born with free will, with the ability to make decisions, with the ability to do what we want. And here's the thing. Most of the world never really moves beyond that.

They live their whole life doing what they want to do. I say many and I say most in this world because you know what the Bible says? Narrow is the road that leads to salvation, that leads to life.

But the road that leads to death, what does it say it is? Wide. And it says many there be that find it. So many people never move beyond that point of being born physically and then spending their lives doing what they want. That should not be a description for a Christian. Being alive unto God means being alive to God and for God. Because we've all been born physically, but then for a Christian, we're born again.

Jesus talked about that. He said, we're born again. And what does it mean to be born again? What does that really mean? Our sins are forgiven. What else does it mean to be born again?

[14:26] You have to die first. And again, it says you're dead to sin. That's the death it's talking about. Dying with Christ and resurrecting, you're given a new life. You are born again.

But here's the difference. You still have free will, right? But you understand when you're born again, it's not just to do what you want.

When you're born again, you are born to do what God wants at that point in time. And that is the difference. That if you are a believer in Jesus Christ, you have been born again, not to just do whatever you want in life, but hopefully to do what God wants you to do in life. Are those two things different sometimes? Doing what you want to do and doing what God wants to do. Is that ever different?

Does God ever show you something in life and you say, well, I don't really want to do that. That happens, doesn't it? Think of Jonah in the Old Testament. Did God have something for Jonah to do?

Yes. God told him, hey, these Ninevites, they are sinful. I want you to go. I want you to ask them and tell them that they need to repent. That's what I want you to do. What was Jonah's decision? He had free will, so what did he decide?

[15:45] Yeah, I don't want to do that. I think instead of going that way, I'm just going to head this direction over here. Now, it didn't work out well for him. We know the whole story.

But again, we have a choice to do what we want or what God wants us to do. Those two things will not always be the same. I have admitted to you before, and I will admit again, many, many years ago when I started feeling called to the ministry, you know what my first response to that was?

Yeah, I don't really want to do that. And you know, the more that God kind of tugged at my heart and pulled at my heart, I realized I needed to do that.

But I still didn't really want to. So you know what we can start doing then? We start bargaining with God. You ever do that? All right, God. Well, I'll do it, but only if, as a youth minister. That's it.

Anything other than that, you know, that's the only thing I really want to do. How does it go when we start bargaining with God? Yeah, nothing really changed until I finally in my heart said, all right, God, whatever you want in my life.

[17:04] And then you know what, at that point really doors started opening and God started really just taking the reins and doing what God does. But it is only when I got to the point of finally saying, all right, God, whatever you want.

It's not about what I want. That's a hard spot to get to sometimes. Because we want our way, don't we? You know, we look at little children.

We watched our granddaughters Friday night. And I love my granddaughters. And I love Ridge and Sophia, my grandson and my other granddaughter over here. But you know what?

Sometimes they want what they want. Sarah, Caleb, is that true? Once in a while. Right, Ridge? It's like, why are you talking about me?

And we understand that. That's normal, right? Little ones want what they want and they have to learn. You know, for us, we're often as adults no different than that.

[18:03] We want what we want. We want it our way. And if not, we sometimes throw a little bit of a tantrum, don't we? Even as adults in front of God. And say, no, I want my way.

Well, folks, being born again is understanding that we live unto God. We live to Him and we live for Him. To do what God wants in our lives, not just what we want. And look on down.

It talks more about this. Look in verse 13. Neither yield you your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin. It talks about a word there that I think is important.

That word is yield. You understand what it means to yield, right? You know, there are places that we have to yield. There are roundabouts now in defiance.

And you can drive other areas and you find roundabouts. What is necessary when you come to a roundabout? You yield. What does that mean to yield? Okay, here's a pet peeve of mine.

[19:03] It doesn't mean stop. That's a whole other discussion. I get aggravated in traffic a lot. It doesn't mean just stop. It means use caution.

It means if there's another vehicle coming around... You're all getting a lesson this morning. So if I'm following you in my car, don't stop. It means if there's another car coming around, you yield. You slow down.

They have the right of way. You let them go first is what it means to yield. Not to say, I'm going first no matter what's happening. Sometimes in life, that's our attitude.

But here it says, again, verse 13, Neither. It means don't yield your members as instruments of unrighteousness. When it says members, do you know what it's talking about?

Body parts. That's the word in the Greek that it's talking about when it says members there. Don't yield or allow your body parts to be used as instruments of unrighteousness.

[20:02] That's kind of an interesting thought. You think about your body parts. How can those be used for unrighteousness? Well, think about all the different body parts you have.

How can your eyes be used for unrighteousness? Well, that one's pretty easy when you think about it. Looking at things you shouldn't be looking at. Period. Whether it's walking down the street.

Whether it's watching TV. Whether it's scrolling on your phone. Can your eyes be used as an instrument of unrighteousness in those situations? Yes. Is that easy to allow to happen?

Is it easy to yield to that? And let that be first in your life? Yes. The Bible's saying don't let that happen. Don't yield your members, your body parts, as instruments of unrighteousness.

What other body parts? What about your ears? Can you listen to things you shouldn't be listening to? Can you listen to people you shouldn't be listening to? What about your hands and your feet?

[21:07] Can your feet take you places that you really shouldn't go? And in that sense, you're using your feet, that part of your body for unrighteousness? What about your hands doing things you shouldn't be doing?

All these are ways that our body parts, that we can yield them to unrighteousness, that we can let that go first and follow that path. We have the choice and we can do that, can't we?

And our minds. That's a body part, right? Your brain a body part? Everybody go like this. I'll get Tammy up here and she'll give you a biology lesson.

Believe me, you don't want that. She'll want to dissect something and show you. We don't want that. But our brain, that's a body part. It's a member. Can we use it for unrighteousness?

Yeah. What do you think about? What do you focus on? So it says, neither yield you, your members, as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but...

[22:09] So in other words, here's what we are supposed to do. Yield yourselves to God. Again, yield means letting somebody else be first, right?

Yield to God. Let Him be first in your life in front of your own will. In front of saying, I want to go and I want to go now and I'm going to do it my way. If you do that at a roundabout or an intersection or an on-ramp or whatever, what is eventually going to happen?

You're going to crash. It's not going to be a good situation, is it? When we try to always put ourselves first, we need to yield. And here it says, but yield yourselves to God as those who are alive from the dead.

And your members, again, your body parts, as instruments of righteousness to God. We are to yield those things to God, those things we just talked about.

So how do you yield your members, your body parts, how do you yield those to God? Let's go through that list again. What do we do first? Our eyes. How do you yield those to God?

[23:12] How do you use those for righteous things? To seek Him? To see a need and take care of it?

To see somebody that's hurting and go to them and share with them? To watch what you're putting in your eyes, what you're looking at, whether it's on the TV screen or on your phone. What are you putting in there?

Is it going to glorify God? Or not? If you're looking at things that are going to glorify God, then you are yielding your members, your eyes, as instruments to God.

Your ears, what are you listening to? Is it stuff that pleases God? Are you listening for needs in others so you can help meet those needs? Is that what God wants?

Yes. What about your hands and your feet? How can you yield those to God? Helping others? Do His work? Are we doing that?

[24:09] And I'm asking myself that question all the time. And it's a question we need to ask ourselves. Am I yielding these things to God? Am I using this for God? That's what it means being alive for God.

He has given you life. He has given you breath for a purpose. And it is not to do whatever you want. It's to fulfill God's purpose. Are you using your hands and your feet for God's purposes?

And there are lots of ways we can do that. Giving somebody a hug and showing them His love. Are you using your hands and feet for God when you do that? Yes. Using your mouth and talking with somebody and sharing with them about Jesus Christ.

Is that using your mouth? A part of your body? Is that using it for God? Yes. These are the things we should be doing with this body and your body that God has given you.

Allowing God to use it. We can even talk about simple things like these shoeboxes. This message isn't all about shoeboxes, but this is an example. What part of your body are you using for this?

[25:15] You're using a lot of things, aren't you? You're using your mind, first of all, to think, okay, I want to do that.

That's using your mind. You're making a decision. That involves your mind that God has given you and using it for God. Your eyes, you're saying, yeah, I can see the box. I want to use that. I want to fill it up. So I'm going to go out and do what?

Get things to put in it. Do they just magically appear in your house? Well, Amazon can. I don't know why my mind went there.

Things don't just magically appear to put in the box, do they? No. You either have to get in the car, go out, go shopping, buy it, or you can get on your computer and then you're using your hands and your eyes and all kinds of things to get on Amazon or wherever you get on and order it.

And then you have to go out and get it from the box or the front porch or wherever it's delivered and you have to unwrap it and put it in the box. You are using a lot of things, aren't you? And your heart, you're using your heart, what God has given you.

[26:17] All of this, using your members, your body parts in the way that God wants you to use them. Yielding to God what He wants, not what you want.

And it even goes a step beyond yield. If you look on down beyond yield, look in verse 18. Being then made free from sin, so after you're not serving sin anymore, you became the servants of righteousness.

So even more than just yielding, you become a what? A servant. Well, what's the difference? What does it mean to be a servant? I know, sometimes we hear that and you don't think about yourself as being a servant, do you?

What does it mean to be a servant? To serve others. That's your purpose, but what does it mean to be a servant? Who's in charge?

Let me put it this way. Who is in charge when you are a servant? Every servant has a master.

[27:28] That's what we have to understand. Every servant has a master. Everybody on this earth has a master. Do we understand that? Everybody. Everybody has a master.

The choice isn't whether we have a master or not. That is not the choice. Everybody has a master. The choice is who is your master? If you are a believer, if your sins are forgiven, and if you have Christ in your heart, who is your master?

God. We don't like to think of the other end of it, but if you don't have Christ in your heart and you're not living for Him, who is your master? In the end, Satan.

When you're serving yourself, you're not serving God. It says you're on one side or the other. There's no middle ground. And I know we don't like to hear that. We like those gray areas. There isn't one, folks. There's not.

The Bible says you serve one or the other. As a believer, it says when you were freed from sin, you became. That means if you're a believer, this has already happened or should have.

[28:30] You became a servant of righteousness. You accepted God as your master. And that means saying it's not our will, it's His. It's not about what we want.

It's about what He wants. And folks, that means in all areas of our life thinking not just what I want to do, but God, what do you want me to do? When we get up in the morning asking God, what is it that you want me to do?

And I know we have obligations. Listen, if you have a job, God wants you to go to your job. Right? Right? Yeah, God wants you to be at work. That's a responsibility that you have.

But how does God want you to be at work? Does He want you to do it with all your heart? Does He want you to do it in a way that would please God? Does He want you to cheat at hours at work and not work the full day?

Or does He want you to not really put your heart into a half-hearted job? Is that what God wants? No. So again, it's not what you want because sometimes you may feel like doing it half-hearted, right?

[29 : 34] It's about what God wants. He wants you to put your all into it. It says in the Bible, whatever your hand finds to do, do it as unto the Lord. Do it right. Does He want you to, while you're at work, to be an example for Him?

Does He want you to share with your co-workers if you get an opportunity? Yes. Does He want you to share in a loving way and in a kind way? Yes. Maybe you get up and go to school.

You don't have a choice in that, do you? But again, how does God want to use you at school? To be an example to your friends. To do what is right even when everybody else may be doing what is wrong.

As a teacher, to teach with compassion and love and to share your love with the students. These are things God wants in your everyday life. It is not about what you want because you know what? Sometimes you may just feel like being grumpy.

You may just feel like being short with people. Is that ever, anybody ever in that category? You may just get up and just think, I don't like people today.

[30 : 40] So I'm taking the day off from liking people. That may be what you want. Is that what God wants? No. Folks, all of this, the gospel that we're talking about, is the understanding for us as believers that it is not about what we want.

It is about what God wants. He has given us not just physical life, but as believers, He has given us new life, spiritual life in Him. That means we're dead to sin, that we're released from that, and we won't spend eternity in hell.

But it also means that we should have a desire to serve Him, to understand how much He loves us, how much He's given for us. And it should put within us a desire to say, God, what do you want me to do for you in my life?

I hope that's our attitude. I hope that's our, the desire that God gives us. Because folks, God has given us so much, hasn't He?

And this chapter really ends with it, and there's no better way of putting it. For the wages of sin is death. If we follow our own way, if we follow our own path, if we do what we want to do, there is an end there.

[31 : 59] It says in the other scriptures, it says that there is a way that seems right unto a man, but the end thereof leads to destruction. The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God, salvation through His Son, Jesus Christ, is what?

Is eternal life. That means a full life here, and it means a full life for eternity in heaven with Him.

Folks, I pray this morning that you're alive, not just physically, but I pray that you're alive unto God. That you're alive to God and for God, and that you recognize that in your life, and that you have a desire to live for Him.

Let's pray this morning. Lord God, thank You again for Your Word. I thank You for what it can teach us and what it can challenge us with. And Lord, this morning, the challenge is in our lives not just to live for ourselves, to live for what we want to do each and every day, but Lord, to understand that if we're a believer, we're a servant.

Lord, that our desire should be to live for You, for what we can do for You. In our jobs, in our homes, at school, wherever we're at, what we can do for You in this life.

[33:19] Lord, give us that kind of heart. And Lord, if there's anybody here that hasn't accepted Jesus Christ, help them to realize that, Lord, there's only two sides. We're either living for You or we're living for ourselves, and that will lead to death.

So, Lord, if there's anybody in here that hasn't accepted Jesus, I pray that today they would accept Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior, that they would accept that free gift that You offer to us. Just speak to our hearts, Lord, and we ask and pray these things in the name of Jesus Christ.

Amen. This morning, as we sing, the altar is open. This altar is a place to come and talk to God. If you just want to come and talk to Him and say, Lord, I really want to live for You each and every day.

My hands, my feet, my eyes, my ears, I want to live for You. Come and talk to God and tell Him that. Maybe you've never accepted Jesus. Come and ask Him into your heart. Maybe you have a need, a burden, whatever.

The altar is open for you to come and talk to God. If you want me to pray with you, I'd love to. If you just want to pray on your own, that's fine too, but the altar is open. Amen. Let's bow our heads as we close in prayer.

[34:24] And as we close this morning and your heads are bowed and your eyes are closed, we make choices. And as we leave here, we're going to be making more choices. But if you have a desire to yield yourself to God, to be used by Him, I just want you to raise your hand as we close in prayer today.

Just as a way to show God, Lord, I have a desire in my heart to be used by You. Lord God, as we come this morning before You once again, we just thank You for Your Word. I pray that You've taught us from it this morning.

And Lord, I pray that each one of us leaves here with a desire in our heart. A desire not to just do whatever we want, but a desire to do what You want. A desire to allow You to use our eyes, our ears, our mouth, our hands, our feet, to build Your kingdom, to share Your love, to spread Your gospel.

Help us not to be ashamed, but Lord, use us in whatever ways You see fit. Thank You, Lord, for the job that You have given us. Help us to do it faithfully. In the name of Jesus Christ, we pray.

And all God's people said, Amen. God bless you. Have a wonderful week.