

When in Rome: Set Free From Sin

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 21 June 2026

Preacher: Kent Dixon

[0 : 00] Our gracious and loving Heavenly Father, we come to you today in the name of Jesus. On this Father's Day, we're reminded that you are the source and inspiration and example of all fatherhood.

! We're your children and you are our Heavenly Father. And just as you love and care for your children, so those of us who are fathers should follow your example with our own families. We know that we can never be a perfect father like you are with your children, but help us to be the best fathers that we possibly can. We also recognize that we never stop being parents. Even after our children have married and are establishing their own homes, we can still pray for them and offer counsel. Even during times when we wonder what kind of adults they're becoming, during times of fear and questioning the directions and choices they're taking and making, it's time to trust you, Lord.

And time to trust our children. There's so many joys and awesome responsibilities that come with being moms and dads. So we pray your special blessing on fathers and grandfathers and even great-grandfathers who are here today.

[1 : 20] Father, we pray for those in our church and connected to our church who have physical challenges and needs. Lord, you know and see each one and you're concerned about each one.

Please assure them of your love and concern for them. Give them comfort and peace. Now, Lord, may the words you've given me to share this morning be infused with the power of your Spirit, the message that you most want people to receive.

We ask all these things in the precious, powerful, and wonderful name of Jesus. Amen. Amen. Amen. Well, so I'll give you a little confession.

We were at a wedding yesterday and then a reception and someone came up to me and said at about 10 o'clock last night, don't you preach tomorrow? And I said, yes, I do.

I keep trying to get out and I can't escape the gravitational pull of this reception. So I had sleep in a can, as Michelle calls it, which is pop.

[2 : 24] So I had a Coke Zero this morning just to try and get things going. So if you feel so inclined and you feel like I'm flagging in any way, just pray some energy into me.

Welcome here for this Sunday, June 21st, 2026. My name is Kent Dixon and it's my joy to be the pastor here. As today is Father's Day, I want to take some time to recognize dads this morning. Speaking from experience, being a father is one of the greatest adventures and challenges and joys of my life, particularly now as we watch our children as they continue to grow in their adulthood. But this morning we also recognize that being a father can be hard at times. As a father myself, I have made bad decisions. I have said and done things that I deeply regret. And the sad part is once they're said or done, you cannot take them back. Sadly, in our world, we recognize as well that there are broken families and that divorce is more common than we would like.

[3 : 34] We recognize that men can become fathers in less than ideal circumstances without having received healthy models of fatherhood themselves.

For others, they deeply miss their fathers and long for one last conversation. One last shared experience.

My dad's birthday was this past Wednesday. It's been nine years since he died, but I still miss him very much and likely always will.

I've probably shared with you before over the years, my parents are both gone and probably not a day or two goes by without thinking, oh, I got to tell mom rats.

Or dad would, this would, he would really laugh at rats. They know, but that separation is hard. For some men, they may even reflect on the father that they never really knew.

[4 : 35] A father who is never there for them. In fact, maybe they're even glad that that person is not involved in their life at all. We also recognize, though, that Father's Day can be challenging for women too.

If they find themselves missing their own father, father of their children, or any other challenging emotions that may be associated with this day.

So this morning we recognize that Father's Day can be a time of celebration for some. But also a time of grief or longing and maybe even anger or frustration for others.

But regardless of the circumstances, may it be a time of joy and reflection, if that's your situation.

And may God bring peace and comfort and healing to you, if that is your circumstances today.

And in all these things, we can celebrate that we have a good God, who is our Heavenly Father.

And he loves you just as you are.

[5 : 43] Happy Father's Day. This morning we're continuing in our sermon series, When in Rome. We're making our way through the book of Romans. And we're uncovering some really important things, I believe, that God wants us to be reminded of.

So, I have a question for you. You know that I like to ask questions. Some are rhetorical, some are not. Despite your best efforts to resist the temptation of sin, Do you say or do dumb or selfish things that affect other people?

Maybe you're not even aware of the hurts that you cause. Do you dig in your heels for what you want in a situation versus what might actually be best for others?

Do you get frustrated by the fact that you want to be an example for others, but you recognize how you keep falling short? Do you struggle with a sense of being unworthy of God's love or grace or forgiveness?

You know what that makes you? Human. Welcome to the club. Our passage for this morning is Romans 8, 1-25.

[7 : 03] Bless you. Romans 8, 1-25. You can turn in your Bible, turn your Bible app on or listen to the upcoming audiobook version. Romans 8, 1-25 says, Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus, the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death.

For what the law was powerless to do because it was weakened by the flesh, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh to be a sin offering.

And so he condemned sin in the flesh in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fully met. Those who live according to the flesh have their minds set on what the flesh desires.

But those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. The mind governed by the flesh is death, but the mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace.

The mind governed by the flesh is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. Those who are in the realm of the flesh cannot please God.

[8 : 32] You, however, are not in the realm of the flesh because you are in the realm of the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, they do not belong to Christ.

But if Christ is in you, then even though your body is subject to death because of sin, the Spirit gives life because of righteousness. And if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of His Spirit who lives in you.

Therefore, brothers and sisters, we have an obligation. But it is not to the flesh to live according to it. For if you live according to the flesh, you will die.

But if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live. For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God.

The Spirit you receive does not make you slaves so that you live in fear again. Rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by Him we cry, Abba, Father.

[9 : 49] The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. Now, if we are children, then we are heirs.

Heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in His sufferings, in order that we may also share in His glory. I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that

will be revealed in us.

For the creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed. For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God.

We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption to sonship.

The redemption of our bodies. For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all.

[11:16] Who hopes for what they already have? But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently. Our sermon this morning is titled Set Free from Sin.

And we're going to be considering what it means to truly be set free from sin through Jesus Christ. And then how that freedom should shape everything about us.

Our attitudes, our perspectives, our priorities, and so much more. Maybe you remember our sermon series from a few years ago that was called Respectable Sins.

You can definitely search it on our website or hear it again for the first time if you haven't heard it.

So as we were going through that series together, I'll never forget that someone in our church said to me, I haven't heard a sermon on the topic of sin since I was a little girl.

This was a lady who is not a little girl no longer. So that both encouraged and shocked me at the same time because I believe if we don't consider our sin, if we don't take the concept seriously, we're missing a central aspect of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

[12:39] Would you agree? How seriously do we take the problem of sin? Do we really consider the guilt of sin, its power and influence potentially in our lives, the corruption and destruction it can cause?

Do we really appreciate what it means to be set free from sin? Do we appreciate that being set free from it in our lives now that we can also look forward to the freedom, that freedom continuing throughout the rest of our lives?

Maybe you're starting to think, what is this rhetorical question Sunday? I thought it was Father's Day. I'm just challenging all of us to think about some of these things. In Romans 8, 1 to 25, Paul talks about the freedom from sin that someone can experience in Christ.

And this morning, we're going to consider some things that should help us to better understand and appreciate the blessings that we have in Jesus. So starting at the beginning of our passage, in verses 1 to 4, Paul declares freedom from the condemnation of sin.

What does it mean to be condemned by sin? Well, every one of us are guilty of sin. No one is exempt.

[14:08] And if someone even potentially committed one sin over their entire lifetime, good luck with that. That assessment of sinfulness is the same.

Isaiah 59, 1 and 2 says, Surely the arm of the Lord is not too short to save, nor his ear too dull to hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your God.

Your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear. Isaiah makes it clear there that unforgiven sin, sin that we're not repenting from, actually separates us from God.

And there are no exceptions to that. And then both Romans and Revelation make it clear that the ultimate condemnation for sin is what? Death.

The fact that all people are guilty of sin is actually the main point of Romans chapter 1, 2, and 3. That's the main core theme.

[15:17] So fortunately, though, neither Paul nor God leave us in that hopeless realization because there is freedom from the condemnation of sin.

Well, what does that look like? There's freedom from condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. Paul talks about this in Romans 8, 1, and in Galatians 3, 27.

There's freedom because in Christ, God's wrath against sin is appeased. We are redeemed, and we are declared righteous and free from guilt and shame because of Christ.

We have freedom because in baptism, we die to sin and are given new life. So the fact that there's no condemnation in Christ is the theme, then, of Romans 4 to 7.

That's the main focus of those chapters. The freedom from sin that we enjoy in Christ involves more, though, than just freedom from the condemnation of sin.

[16:28] We see it in verses 5 to 17. Paul spends a lot of his focus on declaring freedom from the power of sin.

That's his next point. The problem of sin isn't just limited to guilt. That's not it. As if the guilt of sin weren't bad enough. I'm sure you've experienced it.

I sure have. But sin also has power. It has the power to enslave a person so that they, as Paul talked about, can't do what they want to do.

John 8, verses 31 to 34 says, To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples.

Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free. They answered him, We are Abraham's descendants and have never been slaves of anyone.

[17:28] Missing the point, right? How can you say that we shall be set free? Jesus replied, Very truly I tell you, everyone who sins is a slave to sin.

When someone commits a sin, they become a slave to sin. As we saw when we looked at chapter 7 last week, Paul described in detail what it was like for him to discover his own personal bondage to sin.

He described it in a few different ways. He talked about being sold under sin. He couldn't do what he wanted, remember, and what he didn't want to do, he did.

He found that, as Paul says, sin dwells in me. Though Paul wanted to do good, he found it very difficult.

Can you relate to that at all, ever? He was brought, as he said, this is a quote, into captivity to the law of sin, which is in my members.

[18:35] So he's saying in his very being, sin is inherently at work, trying to distract him, trying to pull him away from God. He also saw it as making him wretched, right?

Paul uses very strong language often, and often directed at his own personal awareness of his circumstances. He cried out for what he called deliverance from this body of death.

So he was recognizing his flawed humanity and his tendencies to sin. So simply put then, sin has the power to enslave, and mankind needs deliverance.

So thankfully, there's freedom from sin's power. There's freedom for those who live according to the Spirit and not the flesh.

There's freedom in setting our minds on the things of the Spirit, not things of the flesh. There's freedom through Christ to enjoy a life of peace and not one that ends in death, eternal death.

[19:50] There's freedom for us to submit to God and please him. But those who are in bondage to sin can't, right? You can't see sometimes the forest for the trees.

So freedom from the condemnation and the power of sin. What more could we ask for than that? Well, there's more. What Paul focuses next on verses 18 to 25, that last chunk of our passage this morning, there is freedom from the corruption of sin.

So because of sin, mankind experiences physical death. That's why we die. Adam and Eve were cast out from the Garden of Eden.

Humanity lost access to the Tree of Life. And facing physical death and decay became our reality. As I've often said in funeral messages that I give, this was not the plan.

[20:54] We're here mourning and grieving together and we're sad because part of us recognizes that this was not the plan. It never was. And the reason we grieve is because in our soul, we know this is not the way it's supposed to be.

Because of sin, even creation was put under a curse. It became subjected to futility. It became in bondage to corruption.

Scripture, as we heard this morning, even describes it as groaning and laboring with the pangs of birth. So all of creation then, ourselves included, have been permeated by the effects of sin.

But there will be freedom. Paul speaks in his writing about the glorious liberty of the children of God that will be revealed one day.

This is the hope that we have that we look forward to. It makes any present suffering pale by comparison, is what Paul says there. 2 Peter and Revelation tell us that the present heavens and earth will what?

[22 : 14] Pass away. And there will be new heavens and a new earth. So this amazing renewal that we have hope for will also come and will involve the hope of resurrection for everyone who has placed their hope in Christ.

The end of our story can be rewritten. With the resurrection of the dead, the creation of a new heaven and new earth, sin's corruption will finally be undone.

Period. So being set free from sin in Christ involves some important things. Here's the if you remember nothing else section.

There's freedom from condemnation of sin. There's freedom from the power of sin in your life. And there's freedom from the corruption of sin ultimately. But unless we receive that kind of freedom of sin that is only found in Christ, freedom from sin, we remain guilty of sin.

[23 : 32] we remain enslaved to sin. And we remain under the corruptive influences of sin. But by responding to the gospel of Jesus Christ with an obedient faith, we can be freed from the devastating effects sin can have.

And we also have the hope of glorious and eternal freedom when Christ returns. Amen. Amen.