

Romans 6:8–14 "Dead to sin and raised with Christ"

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[0 : 00] Hi, my name is George Sinclair. I'm the lead pastor of Church of the Messiah.

! It is wonderful that you would like to check out some of the sermons done by Church of the Messiah, either by myself or some of the others. Listen, just a couple of things. First of all, would you pray for us that we will open God's Word well to His glory and for the good of people like yourself?

The second thing is, if you aren't connected to a church and if you are a Christian, we really, I would really like to encourage you to find a good local church where they believe the Bible, they preach the gospel, and if you have some trouble finding that, send us an email. We will do what we can to help connect you with a good local church wherever you are. And if you're a non-Christian, checking us out, we're really, really, really glad you're doing that. Don't hesitate to send us questions. It helps me actually to know, as I'm preaching, how to deal with the types of things that you're really struggling with. So God bless. Father, we ask that your Holy Spirit would continue to fall upon us and move deep within our hearts. Father, you know how easy it is for us to be forgetful of what is true. You know how easily, Father, we drift back to believing myths and lies and trusting idols. And we give you thanks and praise that knowing us so perfectly, still you love us, and still Jesus died to save us. So we ask, Father, that your Holy Spirit would bring the truth of your Holy Word deep into our hearts, that more and more day by day we might live out of the truth of your Word, and that you are our Father in Heaven who loves us. And we ask this in Jesus' name, your Son and our Savior. Amen. Please be seated.

At the eight o'clock service, I almost, I didn't go to the clock to set my timer. I went to the calendar, which is really bad if you're looking to the calendar as a timer. It's quite a few years ago now, but my mother and my father, they decided that they wanted to go to a movie on a summer day, a spring day or summer day. I think it was a summer. And my mom looked at the movies and said, ah, you know, there's nothing here in particular I feel like seeing today, tonight. Why don't you just pick the movie that we're going to go see? So my dad looked at the movies and said, well, there's a brand new Will Smith movie and there's a brand new Tom Cruise movie. They both look pretty good. What do you think? And she said, oh, I really, really like Tom Cruise. Let's go see the Tom Cruise movie. So they go to the movie theater. She's standing off to the side. He goes and buys the tickets. They go into the theater. They watch all the, you know, the trailers and the credits. And halfway through the movie, my mom leans against my dad and says,

[3 : 08] George, I have the same name as my dad. This is the weirdest Tom Cruise movie I've ever seen. When's he going to show up? And my dad said, the Tom Cruise movie was sold out. This is the Will Smith movie. She went through half the movie thinking it was a completely different movie. No wonder she thought it was weird. And Tom Cruise never shows up in the Will Smith classic, I, Robot. I mention this, I mention this because what the Bible text today looks a bit weird. And in some ways it sounds like it's not very helpful.

It's still sort of pursuing. It's the second half of pursuing the question of if you put your faith and trust in Jesus, and when you do that, every sin that you've ever done has been dealt with.

The penalty has been paid. And that not only includes the sins you've done in the past, but the sins you will do in the future. And the question which obviously can arise is, and why on earth would anybody do anything good if that's happened? And so he's still answering that question. And for a lot of us, we're a little bit unsatisfied if we're honest with the answer that he gives. But I would suggest that the answer he gives is actually the answer that we really need, and that the world needs to know and understand. And it has to do partially with this idea of what movie is my mom in,

and she thinks she's in a Tom Cruise movie, but she's really in a Will Smith movie. And what Paul is doing is saying that we have to understand what story we're in, and not just what story we're in, because everybody lives by some type of big story. Even those of you who've been in university over most recent years, and they deny the aspect of a big story. The denial of the story is the story. They just don't have the sense of irony and paradox to realize that they're still caught in a story. It's just like a really boring one thing after the other type of story, not a good story. But it's not just that there's a story, it's what reality, what is real? Like, are you living out of the real world or not? And that's a really, really good thing. We ask people, like, what were you thinking? Like, don't you know that's how it works? We want to live in the real world, and that's what this text is addressing first and foremost. So if you have your Bibles, turn in them to Romans chapter 6, verses 8 to 14.

Romans 6, verses 8 to 14. And I'll read 8, 9, and 10, and then we'll go back and comment on it. And it goes like this. Verse 8, now, if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again. Death no longer has dominion over him. For the death he died, he died to sin, once for all. But the life he lives, he lives to God. So I probably say this, I mean, on one level, I say this a lot. On the other hand, it's so important for us to understand that I hope the day comes when I go into this first part of my little phrase, and you guys all finish the whole sentence, or sentence a half with me. And that's this thing that if Jesus really did rise from the dead, that changes everything. If Jesus really did rise from the dead, that changes everything. It means that

Christianity is true. It means that Jesus' description of God is the true description of God. It means there really is a God. It means there really are right and wrong things that are absolute and eternal. It means that there really is a God who can hear your prayers and answer them. It means that other religions do not have enough truth to be complete and whole. Only those parts of those other religions that are conformity with Christianity are true, and the rest is just not correct. And that's actually, and it means that the real world is a world where the God described by Jesus really, really lives, and he's going to come back, and human beings were created. We're not accidents. We're not slaves.

[7 : 41] We're not worthless. All of these things are true. And it means that for us in Ottawa, day by day, when we watch Netflix and Amazon Prime, and when we read the Ottawa Citizen or the Globe and Mail, and when we listen to Supreme Court rulings, and when we go to the University of Ottawa, or hear other academics, or hear Parliament debate, time and time and time again, most of what they say does not describe the real world. They don't describe the real world. I mean, obviously, they describe bits and pieces of the world that's real, and you can learn from them in different ways, but fundamentally, their whole depiction of the world is a world where there is no God, and there is no triune God, and there is no prayer, and there is no miracle, and there is no...and there isn't life after death, and if there is life after death, it's not one characterized by Christianity, and so their day by day are forming us into understanding the world in a way which actually doesn't match reality.

And so part of our job in discipleship as Christians, and part of the role of why you have mentors and friends and read Christian friends and read Christian books and go to small groups and come to church on Sunday, is that it's a time again and again and again, because the world is forming us into a type of mold which ultimately isn't the real world. Let me just give you a simple example. Every children's cartoon teaches kids that they don't have to pray.

Like all TVs, basically, all shows that we watch are basically forming us to live in a world where nobody prays. Think about it. I mean, you could go on and on and on and on. It just treats you that that's the plausible world, and so we need to gather and come under God's word to be reminded about what the real world actually is. And so that's what's going on here with Paul. He's coming to the end of a really, really big section, and he's just calling us to remember these truths. Like, look at them again.

Verse 8, If we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. And he's talked about this earlier. He's talked about how on one level, when you, not on, yeah, like from one point of view, I put my faith and trust in Jesus, or I come to realize that I put my faith and trust in Jesus, and that's what I've really done.

But from God's point of view, he has now taken me and carried me, the real me, actually into Christ. And he is not, and when he carries me into Christ, he carries Christ into me.

[10 : 25] And there's other texts that the Holy Spirit is now in me, and then the John text that we just read is the Father is now in me. There's this unity, union with, united to the triune God.

And this is real. Why do we think it's real? Because Jesus really did rise from the dead. And so when we put our faith and trust in him, we are actually united with Christ. And it's because we are united with Christ that we can say that the death that I deserve, Jesus died in my place. And the resurrection and grace and mercy that I don't deserve, we receive because I am united with Christ. And Christ, when he did this, died on the cross for us.

And Christ, when he accepted this offer for me to come into him and him to come into me, I mean, he knew every bad thing there is to know about me until he said yes. And he said, that's exactly why I've come, is that you can now be made right with God. And that's just true.

So again, if we have died with Christ, in a sense it's since, right? Since, another way to put it, is like a bit of a question to make you think, but we have died with Christ. We believe that we will also live with him. That's how I should think about myself, that I have died with Christ and I'm living with him into the future. And then it goes on in verse 9, we know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again. Death no longer has dominion over him. And this word dominion is going to return a couple of times. I don't know if it still is, somebody can tell me later, is Canada still called the Dominion of Canada? I don't know if they ever got rid of that. It still is called the Dominion of Canada? If I'm not mistaken, you know, this church was planted in 1865 and the first building was built in 1867. And several of the Fathers of Confederation were part of that founding congregation. And I believe that the Father of Confederation, that God can it be called the Dominion, based on Psalm 72, I think it is, and other biblical teaching. I think he was part of the founding congregation of this church, actually. And the Dominion idea is this idea that you are part of a realm under a rule, a ruler. And so what the text is saying is we know, verse 9, that Christ, because he's been raised from the dead, he'll never die again. And that death no longer has dominion over him. And the implication is that on one hand, you and I live under the dominion, the rule, the reign of death. We are part of the culture of death, so to speak. Death reigns, it sets the criteria at different levels for us. It's under our power. And so the picture is that God, the Son of God left his glory and splendor and entered into this dominion of death. It's also called the dominion of sin. And he came into this, but he came into this to reclaim the entire universe for the God who created the entire universe. He came to completely and utterly reclaim it to defeat death, to defeat sin. And so he tastes all there is to taste of death. And part of the reason we know that is he didn't just sort of die on the cross for 30 seconds and then open his eyes again. Three days in the tomb, he's dead, dead, dead, dead. All the stories emphasize it. And he rises from the grave.

[13 : 54] And now he is risen. He's on the other side of death. He's defeated death. He will never die again. Death no longer has dominion over him. And on one level, the way that I am to understand my death, when that time comes, if I have a moment that I can think about it, is to use that imagery, on one hand, I fall asleep. And the moment I fall asleep, I awake with Christ.

That's how I am to understand my physical death, that I have been resurrected. And the final word about me will not be worms, but will be the resurrected body with Christ. And then it says, for the death he died, verse 10, the death he died, he died to sin. And once, sorry, for the death he died, he died to sin. Doesn't that have a sort of a neat rhythm? For the death he died, he died to sin.

In other words, he came towards sin. He came here specifically to die. He came here specifically to die, to deal with sin. And he did this once for all. Doesn't do it over and over and over and over and over again. But, and in the original language, you can't actually make the but too bold and too big in font to emphasize the huge contrast. He came towards sin, and he died to defeat sin. He did it once for all. But, you know what means that next is way more important. The life he lives, he lives to God. He lives towards God, oriented towards God. And these are fundamental truths. And if you think about the fact that I, when I put my faith and trust, when you put your faith and trust in Christ, he really takes you, he brings you into himself. In some ways, he brings you into the divine light of, life of the Trinity. And, and, and, and, and these things are fundamentally true. And it means if, if Christ's resurrection was so he could live towards God, and he could live, like live, that's the fundamental word written over us, is live, be alive, know you're alive, live, live. God wants you to live. That, that, that's the fundamental call of the gospel. He wants you to live. These are all these profound truths. Now, verse 11 is very, very interesting. And, and so, first of all, I think, so here, here's one of the problems I have when I try to get to the point where

I can talk about my Christian belief with my friends who are outside the Christian faith. The problem I have is that if I was to say, well, no, no, like, I mean, a lot of Christians, people who say they're Christians on, on surveys, not really Christians. Like, I, I really, I take the things very true. I, I believe these things fundamentally true. I'm, I'm in a sense, conservative or orthodox. And the problem I have is that as soon as you say words like that to people outside the Christian faith, what happens is they think of, if you're Jewish, they think of the orthodox, super orthodox Jewish people. And if they're, if they're Muslim, they think of the super orthodox Muslim people. And if they're, you know, if they're Buddhist, they think, or Hindus, they think of monks and, and vows and, and celibacy and, and a life that's very, very constricted and having to look weird. And I, I don't know. And, and, and even because Christianity keeps falling away from the gospel into religion, they, if they're Christian, they might even think, oh, okay, like real Christians are like contemplative monks or nuns who live wearing weird clothes way out just praying all the time and, and basically having no fun. And, and I don't know how to communicate to them that that's not what being, belonging to Christ means. And, and part of it is, it'd be a bit of a shock to understand that here Paul is mainly saying to people that they, they need to understand that if they put their faith and trust in Christ and union with him, they, they actually died with him, but they're, he, Christ lives. And that's what God wants, is you to live, to be alive, to live.

Now, I, I mention all of this because it fits with the second thing, is people on the outside of the Christian faith, they tend to think that if you're serious about religion or whatever, and they would just include me in that, that means that I, I learn a whole pile of new rules. And the more serious you about being Christian is the longer the list of rules are. You know, so an unserious Christian, you know, maybe it's just one school, a screen of rules, but if you get really into it, there's like 153 screens of rules, you know, because that's what real, real religious people are. But that's not what the gospel is talking about at all. In fact, we're going to see at verse 14 that that's actually completely and massively rejected. I'm saying all of this because we've now gone to chapter 6, verse 10 in the book of Romans, and verse 11 is very, very, very, very, very unique. Add a few more various. You know why? It's the first command in the book of Romans. The very first, or more technically, the first imperative. There are no imperatives in the book of Romans up until this moment. And it's the very, very first one. So what do you think the very first one is? Well, look, it's very interesting. It's all about how to think. And this is also very interesting because, you know, the general way that people in our culture think about religion and spirituality is that as religion goes up, thinking goes down. You know, as you become more spiritual, you believe more nonsense. And it goes down. But the whole text is about what's the real world. And in fact, the whole book of Romans is evidence for the reality that Jesus really did rise from the dead. It's part of the evidence for it. If you treat it like Molly Werther did or others have done as just a historical document, not as a sacred text, it's evidence for the resurrection. And so what's the very first command?

[20 : 12] Look at verse 11. It is, so or therefore, you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus. So what's the first command? Consider. Think. Remember. Ponder. Retain. Consider.

Consider. That's the very, very first command. Consider. And it's really, really an interesting word because, you know, consider can be done by people with low IQs and very high IQs. It can be done by children. I mean, we, parents will say to their children, like, think of the consequences, like, consider what you're about to do. You know, we say that to a five-year-old or a 12-year-old, you know? And it's a very, very interesting word. And that's the very first command. Consider.

And what am I supposed to consider? I am supposed to consider that if the Bible is describing the true world, then how I need to consider myself is that I am dead to sin. The word is very interesting because it doesn't say just start thinking about how you're going to die to sin, how to start dying to sin.

It isn't a process word. It's a reality word. Not because I am perfect. I am not, I am a sinful man. But I stand before you as one because I put my faith and trust in Christ.

I have died to sin. Like, I'm dead to it. I died with Christ. And the other thing I need to consider is that I am alive to God. That God sees me as alive. That I am born again. My destiny is not only to live right now, but that the eternal life that is given to me will only increase. It will only clothe me more and penetrate me more. And that the fundamental way for me to understand myself is that when Christ died on the cross and I put my faith and trust in him many years later, that was my death. I am both standing before you as a dead man to sin and as a man who's alive to God.

[22 : 41] That's what I'm to consider. That's what I'm to think about. I have to confess to you folks, you know, this is one of the things I, you know, I don't tell, one of the things I tell guys and gals when I'm helping them to understand how to teach the Bible is I say, you need to always make sure that the Bible says something to you.

If you just go to prepare your talk as to, okay, I'm looking for cool things to say to all these people and oh, I, boy, I, that person, oh, I, that's what that person means. If you do that, your sermons will suck. Now, by the way, you might end up having a mega church with 25,000 people, but it's, you need to all know. And so every week, pray for me that the scripture always addresses me.

And sometimes it addresses me in ways that are way too personal for me to share with you. It would be inappropriate sharing, you know, because it really goes at maybe a sin in my life or, you know, envy or unforgiveness or something like that, that it just wouldn't be appropriate for me to share. But gosh, I have to realize I, I so needed to be reminded about this piece in Romans because I'd completely not thought about this enough. I don't consider this truth enough in my own life. I really don't. I really need to. Now, just to be fair, the, the, the Bible text does go on and give you two other basic commands. So this is the first one. And the, the first, the, and it's going to give you two more commands. And one of them is going to be a don't, and one of them is going to be a do. And so the first command, it could really be described, the next command could really be described as, described as don't let and don't do. And that's in verses 12 through 13.

So, but the beginning one, it all, the first command to consider is what is permeating all of the rest and all of the rest of the book. And it's to consider the real world. Consider what God has done for you and in you and is doing for you when you put your faith and trust in Christ. The next is don't let and don't do, verse 12. Let not sin, therefore reign in your mortal body to make you obey its passions.

Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness. Now, we'll just sort of pause there and try to explain a little bit what this, what this means. So the first thing is, don't let it reign in you. By the way, when it says that obey its passions, it's really interesting.

[25 : 27] If you look there again at verse 12, if it's up on the screen, obey its passions. One of the way, one of the things here which is really interesting is the Bible isn't saying that passions are wrong. We're not Buddhists. What it says is that there are passions that are connected to sin, but it implies that there's other passions which are good. I mean, it's a good thing to have a passion for justice, a passion for compassion, a passion for generosity, a passion for beauty, a passion for truth. The Bible's not saying don't have any passions, just warning you. And this idea of don't let sin reign. Don't let, don't sort of allow, realize that because you have lived all of your life and you're surrounded in a culture which is ultimately, whether it's understood as sin reigning or death reigning or whatever it is, it's constantly trying to form you in its mold. Christ has reigned, it now is the one who reigns over you. He's the one that you look to for direction. He's the one that you need to obey. Don't go back to allowing this to happen. Now, just a couple of illustrations.

By the way, this is really hard. I'm not saying it's interest. It's easy. And you have to take this the right way. I'm not saying that this example is, is that, that he's, he's the devil. I think here in the church, the only one who could maybe appreciate this is Andrew and Lisa. But the church that we're part of, for many years we were called a different thing, had basically come to almost death. They only had like 25 people in church. And then there's a guy who came to the church by the name of Kent Doe. And he built the church up to about a hundred people. And in some, he was, he was a very charismatic figure in the psychological sense, not in a spiritual sense. And he almost like cast a spell on the congregation. Like, I'm not making this up. One of the things that happened when I came to the congregation, and I had my first meeting with the treasurer before my first business meeting, and I had been part of a national board that had a, a really smart chartered accountant type who could make, because he could do depreciation and appreciation things, could make like, it looked like we had lots of money. And I just never understood it. And I said to him, I said to the treasurer, I said, I don't understand complicated financial reports like this. And he said, no, no, it's a very simple one. And I said, well, what's this figure here? And there's a figure of a debt that we had that we'd inappropriately and inappropriately and slightly illegally borrowed money from a trust fund. And the amount of money that we'd borrowed, I'm not making this up, was twice our annual income. So it would be as if I managed to convince you folks over four or five years, if we had the reserves, to take \$900,000 in debt.

Right? And this is the congregation told me they were spectacularly financially helpful. So anyway, that's the type of guy. He had, he had really good things about him, but he had these weird things about him. And the congregation was almost in, like, he almost like had them under a spell, right? And so I'm not making this up. For the first two years that I was here as the rector, I would regularly hear in the council meetings, people say to the council, oh, by the way, with this plan, I ran it by Kent, and he thinks it's a good idea. And I'm sitting there thinking, like, Kent's been gone three and a half years at this point in time. He's still thinking he can run the church, and they're all still letting him run the church. Now, you hear that, and you think, well, that's a terrible thing that the church did back in those days. But that's, in a sense, what the Bible is saying. Why do you keep going back as if sin is going to be the one running your life? Now, obviously, there's going to be things you can say about that. You can say, but I, you know, I, you know, like, like, why, why is it that people keep going back to porn? Well, you know, because, you know, when I'm in it, it numbs my feelings. I can't imagine a life without porn, and those feelings of power that I have, and all of that type of thing. But as we all know, that porn just ruins you, right? It just ruins you, messes you up, messes your relationships up with, with the, the other sex. And, but why do you keep going back?

Like, if you have that thing that you can't feel that there's going to be any comfort apart from that, well, like, don't let that, don't let sin run your life. Like, don't let it. And then the second aspect is, is a connected thing. Look, look again at, at the beginning of verse 13.

[29 : 57] Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness. Now, a couple of things which is really interesting about that. First of all, so now it's saying, like, the first one is don't let this happen. The second one is don't show up and, and immediately go asking, asking for advice.

You know, like, it would be like the council. Like, it's one thing if, if, if, if that, the former rector kept calling people and telling them what to do. It's another thing if they call him up. Like, why are you doing that? Why are you doing that? And, and that's, and, and, and the word members here is just basically all the little bits and pieces that make you, you. There's sort of a balance here in the language, the original language, that there's a you, but there's bits and pieces of you, right? There's your sexuality, your, you know, your financial acumen, your, there's, you're obviously your body. And don't present all the bits and pieces of you. Ready, and, and the word instruments is really cool word. It can also be translated as tools. The other thing can be translated as weapons. Don't, don't come with the bits and pieces of you to sin, to be weaponized, or to become a tool of it. And, and the whole thing about righteousness versus sin, which sounds really corny to a lot of people, but it's really good language. The thing which unites the two of them is that they're both language, they're both words that emphasize relationship. So sin is, I mean, there's other types of words like transgression, etc., which sound like you're just disobeying a standard. Sin emphasizes the personal rejection of God. And righteousness emphasizes the being right in relationship with God.

And so that's what the text is saying. So the first command, if it's true that Jesus rose from the dead, if when you were united with him, you're, you've now died that death, sin has been defeated, the end of your story is not sin and death, the end of your story is alive to God and made right with him. That, and you need to think about that, and think about that, and think about that, and think about that, and consider it, and consider it, and consider it. And the, and that's part of the reason why you have small groups and, and church is to help remember these things, to live in the real world. The second thing is, you know, in a sense, when sin calls you up to tell you how to reign, don't answer it.

[32 : 18] And definitely don't turn around and walk towards and say, by the way, sin, I need some advice about how to deal with this situation, right? I'm feeling lonely, I'm feeling depressed, I'm feeling shame, I'm, you know, what do I do? Don't, don't come and ask its advice. And then the, the third command is that there's something to pursue, that it's not just don't, I mean, there is the consider, which is a something to pursue, and there's not just the don't, but there is a do. Look at the second half of verse 13, and it goes like this, but, and this is a word that, as I said before, it could be also translated as a big emphasis on it, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments or tools or weapons for making yourself and the world right with God. I mean, now when it, this, this word righteousness now, then it's a, it's a huge word. It means to be, you're, to, to work in your company, your office, in a way that there is harmony, that there's peace, that there's creativity, that there's thriving, that there's blessing, that there's, the world is right with God. You're trying to, to do things in such a way,

it's, it's not just a, a, a Christian thing. This word righteousness and presenting yourself to God is cosmic, it's historical, it's political, it's social, it's aesthetic. It's, that's this huge calling. You see, when you give your life to Christ, the thing is, you don't enter into a small, narrow crack or crevice. Most of us, our God is too small, but when we give our lives to Christ, and as these truths become more real to us, our world explodes. It's galaxy shaping. It's true and good and beautiful in creation, in, in gardens, in businesses, in classrooms, in marriages, and in families, and that's what we're now trying to present ourselves to God. And remember, and we present ourselves to

God not as a miserable worm, not as a complete and utter failure, not as one who is completely and utterly hopeless, not as one who is completely and utterly weighed down to shame, although those might be the things that you are thinking and feeling, but you are to remember before God. How is it that it puts it? I come to you, Father, now as one who has been brought from death to life by you. And you know, Father, how bad I, this week I has. Maybe today is going to be the first day you've prayed in a week or two weeks or three, and you might be saying, God, I have had, boy, I mean, if I was, I, I, the things I've done and the things I, good things I failed to do, I can't even begin to list them.

But you knew all that when you took me into yourself and I, Christ died my death for me. So I stand before you, Father, once again, pledging my allegiance, making myself available to you.

And I stand before you as one who has passed from death to life, not because of the virtues of my life, but because of what Christ has done for you. But he wants us to stand before him as one who's passed from death to life. The problems with legalistic churches is they want to make you feel like garbage. And it sounds profoundly spiritual, but it doesn't line up with what the Bible is telling us.

[36 : 04] I'm not saying you should never feel guilt. We need to feel guilt. We do wrong things. I do wrong things. Sort of trying to wrap this all up. It's so, I want to say one other thing. You know, when we understand here that we're making ourselves present to God and that this is huge and universe shaping, one of the problems we have is, so if you're like me, I think, George, maybe, so I'm telling you that this is what I'm like. George, I do a lot of sin. And, you know, there's some sins that I've struggled with for a long time, and partly this text, and I'm going to talk about more in a moment, is it's telling us not to surrender to sin. It's probably hard to remember the sins I used to always struggle with, which I now have had some type of victory over, but I know they're there. But we sort of wonder why isn't the Christian life simpler and dealing with sin simpler? And it's really, we think of the whole issue as if we're playing checkers with a six-year-old.

Now, by the way, most of us could probably beat most six-year-olds in checkers. And by the way, if you boast that you're great at checkers because you can beat six-year-olds, you have a problem. By the way, my wife would always let the kids win, but she would play her hardest to make sure I didn't win. And it's just fine. That's part of what makes her adorable, as far as I'm concerned. But anyway, why was I saying this? Oh yeah, so we tend to think of why isn't like getting better in life and doing few bad things? Why isn't it sort of like playing chess checkers against a six-year-old? But what we don't understand is this, God is playing a different game. I looked online to see what the most complicated game is, and there is a debate online between the ancient Chinese game called Go and chess.

So whatever one you think is more difficult, God is not just playing multi-dimensional chess, and he's not just playing three-dimensional chess, but given how many dimensions it makes a human being, he's maybe playing 12-dimension chess or Go.

And we don't know the game he's playing, and so we don't know why he sacrificed that pawn, which is so important in our lives, and why this particular sin is just so hard for us.

[38 : 33] But God isn't just trying to get us to be a little bit better at moral things. He's fitting you and me to live with him for all eternity. He's fitting us to bear an eternal weight of glory.

That's the game he's playing. Have to finish the text. The text ends with hope. There's the truth. Consider the truth.

Consider the truth. That's the first command. Don't let and don't do. Do this. Show up to God. By the way, how this could work practically is one of the things you can... Oh, no. And then the third thing, the way it all ends, is with more truth, but truth which is hopeful, to live in hope. God wants you and me to live in hope, because Jesus really has died. He really did rise from the dead. Sin really was defeated. We really will appear before God with resurrected bodies. That's the truth. And look how it ends in verse 14. For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law, but under grace.

I'm going to talk about that more. But what it's saying here is that sin is diminishing in you, and sin has already lost, and it will be finally viewed as being completely gone. And what I am, in fact, under is under the dominion of grace, and grace will win. It is winning, and it will win.

This is a text of hope today, and every step along the way until we appear before God, is that grace wins. Grace wins. And this isn't to make me presumptuous and lazy, but it means, you know what? I had a really bad day. I did a lot of things I shouldn't have done yesterday. I thought a lot of things I shouldn't have thought, and I didn't do the things I should. But Father, I ask your forgiveness for these things, and I ask that you would help me to amend my life and to live a life which is more godly. And you know what? It's worth it to pray that prayer every day, because I'm moving in the direction of the real world.

[41 : 00] You see, promises like this aren't to make us lazy, but to say, you see that? Hear that promise? It's worth it. It's worth it. Keep it up. Keep doing it. And the fact that you have to do that all the time means God knows how hard it is. It's worth it. Keep doing it. Press on. And the whole thing about this text is all of the yous are plural. So if this text was written, I mean, in heaven, we'll all probably speak with Irish accents. I'm just joking. But if the Irish were to translate this, the word you would be yous, because Irish has the plural for the singular you, yous. And it's yous all the way through it. This is something for me personally and for us together and us as a church to manage.

Please stand. Bow our heads in prayer. Father, we give you thanks and praise that you sent Jesus to be our Savior, God, the Son of God, taking on our human nature. Jesus, perfect God and perfect man, one person, one Savior. We thank you for his life of perfect obedience. We thank you for his triumph over death. We thank you that he dealt with the sin that besets human beings. We thank you that when we put our faith and trust in him, that our sins are washed away and done away, that we are born again, that we have died with Christ, and that we are living with him, and we will live with him. And we give you thanks and praise that the final word about each one of us is going to be because we are in Christ is welcome. And we give you thanks and praise that you are preparing us to bear and to show forth an eternal weight of glory.

And that you are at work in our lives. And we give you thanks and praise for these. And we ask, Father, that you help us to consider, help us to think and remind each other and pray in these ways for each other. And help us, Father, not to show up to do those wrong things, to have more victory in saying no. And help us, Father, to pursue and time and time and time again to say, Father, I go into this situation. Help me to live knowing that Christ is King, and that he is the king in my life, and that you are the king over all creation. And Father, help us to walk towards that. And we ask these things in the name of Jesus, your Son, and our Savior. Amen.

Amen.