

# Mortification of sin

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[ 0 : 00 ] Well, I'd like us to turn back to Romans chapter 8. And in particular, I want us to focus on the words of verses 12, 13, and 14.

So then, brothers, we are debtors, not to the flesh to live according to the flesh. For if you live according to the flesh, you will die. But if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.

For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. As I said when we were reading, the great theme of Romans is the Gospel.

And this letter is a wonderful explanation about how the good news of Jesus Christ works. And if you go back to chapter 1, you'll see that Paul begins his presentation halfway through chapter 1 by talking about the problem of sin.

And he makes it very, very clear from halfway through chapter 1 to halfway through chapter 3 that sin is a massive, massive problem. It's broken our relationship with God and it's provoked God's wrath because instead of worshipping our Creator, we have rejected Him, turned away from Him, and we've started worshipping and serving the creation instead.

[ 1 : 20 ] So sin is a massive, massive problem for every single member of the human race. But Paul then goes on to tell us how the good news of Jesus Christ is good because Jesus has come to deal with our sin.

And because of Christ's atoning work on the cross, the effect that sin has had on us is completely changed. And the problem of sin is dealt with so perfectly.

And Paul is highlighting the fact that if you are a Christian or if you become a Christian, an astonishing transformation takes place. Our relationship with sin has completely changed.

So instead of provoking the wrath of God as we find in chapter 1, we come to chapter 8 where verse 1 says, there is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

And that's the difference that Jesus makes. You go from having this massive, massive problem of sin to the transforming situation where there's no condemnation and sin has been totally dealt with.

[ 2 : 38 ] That means that if we are in Christ, then we have been delivered from the power of sin. So sin has no dominion over you anymore if you are trusting in Jesus.

Sin is no longer your master. You've been delivered from the power of sin. And alongside that, Paul also teaches us in Romans that we've been delivered from the penalty of sin as well.

Because Christ has taken that penalty for us on the cross. We have been justified by faith and we now have life. So the punishment that should have been applied to us has been applied to Christ.

He died as our substitute. Therefore, instead of facing condemnation, we now have been justified. So, in Christ, if you're trusting in Jesus or if you put your trust in him, you have been delivered from the power of sin.

And you've been delivered from the penalty of sin. However, you've not yet been delivered from the presence of sin.

[ 3 : 48 ] And we can see that if we look at the world around us. Because you look at the world and you see that sin is causing havoc in the lives of so many people.

We look at our own lives and we see that we are still constantly confronted by the effects of sin. So even though we've been delivered from its power and from its penalty, we still see its presence in our lives and in the lives of people we know.

And even in our own hearts, we find that we are constantly facing a battle against our indwelling sin. So yes, it's true and it's wonderfully true that there is now no condemnation for us.

We've been delivered from the power, delivered from the penalty of sin. But we still face the reality of sin's presence in life.

And that's a really, really important thing to remember. Because this is what real life as a Christian is like. The final goal of the Christian faith is something that still lies in the future.

[ 4 : 52 ] And if you carry on reading through Romans chapter 8, that's where Paul starts focusing. He looks to the consummation of our salvation in the final day when Jesus returns.

But until that day, you and I face the daily reality of the presence of sin in our lives. So that's why we wake up every day and we turn on the news or we look at a website, a news website, and we see cruelty and suffering and wickedness in the world around us.

That's why we see people around us who we love dearly and their lives are ravaged by sin. And that's why in our own hearts, sin still crouches at the door. And it springs upon us so that none of us go through a day without even, without thinking or saying or doing things that are displeasing to God.

So yes, the power of sin was broken by the cross. The penalty of sin was paid in full by the death of Jesus. But the presence of sin still remains.

And that raises a really, really important question. What does God want us to do about it? How is it that we deal with our indwelling sin?

[ 6 : 11 ] And that's the question I want us to think about today. For all of us, we face a battle against sin every day. Last week we would have faced it. This week we're going to face it.

The question we need to think about is how do we deal with it? What should we do? Well, the first thing I want to say is that there's two mistakes that we have to avoid. The first is that we must never think that we just don't need to do anything about it.

It's very easy to think like that. You think, oh, well, you know, we don't really need to do anything. Sin's not that serious. It's not that much of a problem. And Christ has dealt with it anyway. I don't really need to worry about it.

We must not think like that. The New Testament is absolutely explicit that that kind of attitude is unacceptable in a Christian. 1 John 2.4 says, Whoever says, I know him, but does not keep his commandments, is a liar.

And the truth is not in him. So the person who says, oh yeah, I'm a Christian, but they just sin as freely and as openly as they want. The New Testament says that person is a liar.

[ 7 : 21 ] It couldn't be more blunt in its language. And so God forbid that any of us are ever casual about sin.

We must never, ever, ever be casual about sin. We must not think we don't need to do anything about it. But the second mistake is to think that we can't do anything about it.

And that's probably more likely to be the mistake that we make. We tend to think, well, what can I do? I'm too weak. And I can't overcome the indwelling sin in my life.

I struggle with it. I can't manage it. I can't do it. And we think that we're helpless in the face of sin's dominion, don't we? You think of all the sins that you've struggled with over the past week and you just think, I can't do it.

I cannot overcome sin's dominion. And yet Paul, if you go back two chapters, has said in chapter 6, verse 14, sin will have no dominion over you.

[ 8 : 23 ] As a Christian, sin is not your master. So we must never, ever, ever be casual about sin because that's just like playing with poison. But neither can we simply capitulate in the face of sin because that would be to allow sin to have a rule over us that it does not have.

So the question is, what should we do about our indwelling sin? And the answer is, we need to mortify it.

And that's what we're going to think about together today. We're going to think about the subject of mortification of sin. Because that's what Paul is talking about in Romans 8, verses 12 to 14.

And we're going to ask four very simple questions about mortification of sin. Number one, what is it? Number two, who does it? Number three, how is it done?

And number four, why is it important? These four questions together for a wee while. So, question one, mortification of sin, what is it?

[ 9 : 32 ] Well, that phrase, mortification of sin, can seem very old-fashioned. And it might be something that we've maybe heard of. We've perhaps heard people mention the idea of mortification for sin. But it's probably something that we don't really talk about that often.

And it's certainly not something that I've heard spoken about very often. And yet, it's an incredibly important aspect of the Christian life. But what does it mean? When we say mortify your sin, what

does that mean?

Well, basically, the word mortification means to put to death. And so, we're not talking about being embarrassed when we're talking about mortification. We sometimes use that phrase. We'll say, oh, I was mortified because I did something silly.

That's not what we mean. We mean putting something to death. And that's what Paul says here. He says in verse 13, he says, If by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body.

If any of you have got the authorized version in front of you, you'll see that it says, mortify the deeds of your body. That's what it means. Put it to death. You see the same thing in Colossians chapter 3. [10:36] The ESV says, put to death, therefore, what is earthly in you. The authorized version says, mortify, therefore, your members which are upon the earth. It means exactly the same thing.

The Greek word used in Romans 8.13 simply means that. To put to death. To deprive something of life. To cause something to cease. And that is exactly what we need to do with our sin as Christians. Now, that does not mean that we never sin. In fact, it's telling us the very opposite. Sometimes people can give that impression. Sometimes people are giving that impression over history that, oh, if you're a Christian, you never sin.

And if you do sin, you're not a Christian. That's not what the New Testament is teaching us. It's teaching us the very opposite. The whole command to mortify your sin arises from the fact that sin is something that we still struggle with.

It's something that we still do. But what we are being told is that sin needs to be tackled with the utmost seriousness. And therefore, mortification is a radical.

[11:46] Now, by that we mean a deep-rooted. Think in terms of going to the deep roots of something. It's a radical response to sin. It's a deliberate, conscious effort to make sure that sin is not allowed to infect our hearts and our lives.

And when sin does appear, which it does, and in the week ahead, sin will appear in your heart like that. And you and I have got to be ready to mortify it, to get rid of it straight away.

And a good illustration of all of this is a garden. You imagine a beautiful garden that's been restored and now looks beautiful and there's lots of tender plants growing.

If you were the gardener, you would be watching incredibly closely to make sure that weeds were not allowed to grow in that garden and to ruin it. And the moment you see a weed appear, you would uproot it and take it out of your garden.

And that's exactly what we are to do with the sin that we struggle with in our hearts. And all of this is a reminder that the New Testament commands us to take sin immensely seriously.

[12:58] And we really, really, really need to make sure that we think about that because we live in a world that is casual about sin.

And so you're going to go to work tomorrow and you're going to be with people who are casual about sin. And it's so, so easy for us as Christians to become casual about sin as well.

But the New Testament makes it absolutely clear. We must never, ever, ever be casual about sin. In fact, when it comes to sin, we need to be ruthless.

And that's why Jesus says, if your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. And Jesus is emphasizing the fact that you've got to be serious in dealing with sin in your life.

And Paul is simply echoing what Jesus himself said. When we see sin within us, we must mortify it. Now, it's also really, really important that we are biblically minded in terms of what we are putting to death.

[14:08] Because the danger that we face is that we live in a culture today where certain sins are offensive to people, but other sins are perfectly acceptable.

And so, in our culture, theft is rightly unacceptable. But other things like gossip or lying or greed are tolerated or even encouraged in the society that we live in.

Many, many sins are culturally acceptable. And that can even be true in a church culture. You can have a culture in your church where certain sins are acceptable or are glossed over.

It is absolutely crucial that our view of sin is biblical and not cultural.

We must not have a cultural view of sin. Because biblically speaking, it does not make a difference whether it is sexual immorality or covetousness.

[15:15] Whether it is drunkenness or gossip. None of these are acceptable. And they are all sins that must be put to death. And I have to ask myself constantly, is my perception of sin cultural or biblical?

I've got to make sure it's biblical. Because we cannot, we cannot pick and choose which sins we think are serious. We can't do that.

Culture does that. We can't. We must have a biblical view of sin. So, what is mortification of sin? It is a ruthless, radical, putting to death of sin within us.

So, that's question one. Question two is, who does it? Who does it? Well, in many ways there's kind of two sub-questions here.

We've got to ask, who does the mortifying? And then we've got to ask, whose sin gets mortified? And for the first question there, who does the mortifying?

[ 16 : 21 ] The answer is found in verse 13. And I want you just to look at verse 13 if it's in front of you. See what it says there. If you live according to the flesh, you will die.

But if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. Now, look at that verse. Who is it who does the mortifying? You.

The answer is that it's you. When it comes to mortifying sin, it is not something that God does. It's something that you do.

Something that I have to do. That doesn't mean that God's not involved. It doesn't mean that God doesn't help us. As Paul says, there's a clear link to the Holy Spirit. But it's clear that when it comes to mortifying sin, we are not spectators.

We are executioners. We are the ones who have to do it. And that's reinforced in Colossians 3.5, where the word to mortify there is an imperative.

[ 17 : 26 ] It's a command that we must obey. It's a key part of Christian living. So, as Christians, if you're a Christian or if you become a Christian, there's lots of things that you do.

So, we come together on the first day of the week to worship. We pray to God our Father every day. We read the Bible as often as we can.

We tithe of our income. We help the poor. We celebrate the Lord's Supper. And we mortify indwelling sin. It's a key, basic part of Christian living.

What about the second question? Whose sin that gets mortified? Well, the answer to that is primarily our own. That's the great emphasis that Jesus made. He says, when your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away.

That's a crucial point. Mortification of sin is something that we do to ourselves. We look at our own hearts. We look at the sin that dwells within us. The deeds of our bodies.

[ 18 : 30 ] And we strive to eradicate the sin that is going to take root in our hearts. So, if we go back to the illustration of the gardener. The garden. We are the gardener because we're doing the weeding.

But we are also the garden. Because it's our own hearts and our bodies where our attention needs to be focused. And this, again, is a really, really important point.

Because all too often, all too often, Christians can be far more concerned about the sins of other people than they are with their own.

So, I ask myself a question. In the past year, how many times have I spoken to people about the sins in someone else's life?

How many times have I spoken about the sins in other people's lives? The answer is quite a lot. But then if I ask myself the question, how often have I spoken to other people about the sin in my life?

[ 19 : 40 ] The answer is not very much. And I need to repent and acknowledge that that is wrong. How often do we find ourselves looking at other people and judging them for their faults?

And yet again and again and again, the New Testament says, watch yourself. And that makes perfect sense. Because if we look at the sins in other people's lives and yet fail to mortify the sin in our lives, then we are hypocrites.

All too often, we can be ruthless in regard to other people's sin, but gracious in regard to our own. Isn't that true?

So, we are ruthless and merciless about the mistakes that somebody else has made in their lives. And yet when it comes to our own sin, we tend to just gloss over it a wee bit.

We are ruthless in regard to other people's sin, but gracious in regard to our own. And yet the New Testament is telling us that's the wrong way round. Because we must ruthlessly mortify our own sin.

[ 20 : 49 ] And yet at the same time, graciously bear with the failings and mistakes of others. That's the pattern that the New Testament sets before us.

So who does it? We do it. And we do it to ourselves. That brings us to question three, which says, well, okay, if we're doing it, how do we do it? How is mortification done? Well, in terms of this question, in terms of how we do it, we need to first of all highlight two mistakes that we need to ensure that we avoid. The first mistake is to think that we can just ignore sin. And it'll go away. So sometimes we recognize a problem in our lives, but we think to ourselves, well, oh, it'll be fine. It'll sort itself out. And if I ignore it, it'll go away. And that can seem like a good idea because you don't want to have to kind of acknowledge that a sin has taken root in your heart. You want to try and block it out. And I've been guilty of that so many times myself. It can seem like a good idea, but it's a very, very dangerous thing to do because sin can catch us out so easily. [ 21 : 55 ] And if we just ignore it, then all too often it's going to spring up upon us. And that's confirmed by our experience because how many times, if I look at myself and say, how many times have I fallen into the same sin?

And so you do something. And so you speak with impatience towards your family. And you hurt them.

And in the moment of that, you think, I'll never, ever do this again because I hate the fact that I've hurt people I love. And you think, I'll never, ever, ever do this again.

And yet, you forget, don't you? And before long, you fall into the same sin again. And we can often just ignore sin and think it'll go away.

We have to make sure we take active steps to eradicate sin from our hearts. And that makes perfect sense because if you ignore weeds in your garden, what's going to happen?

[ 22 : 57 ] They're going to grow, aren't they? And they're going to take over. And they're going to wreck your garden. We must not ignore sin. But the second mistake we have to avoid is in many ways like an opposite to this.

And in so many aspects of Christian living, you can go to one extreme and end up in difficulty. But you can go to the opposite extreme and also end up in difficulty. Because sometimes people have taken the approach to indwelling sin by establishing a massive list of man-made laws that we think are going to deal with our sin.

And that's been a common approach throughout history. So in the early church, there were many, many people who advocated asceticism, which was the practice of denying yourself all sorts of things.

Even basic things like food or shelter or possessions or marriage. All in the view that this was going to do you some kind of spiritual good. And today, we can actually do the same.

We can think, well, the best way for us to deal with our indwelling sin is to set a lot of additional rules on top of what scripture tells us that are going to keep us from sin.

[ 24 : 10 ] So we might say to ourselves, well, we must not go into our garden on a Sunday. Or we mustn't listen to any music of any sort. Or we mustn't go and participate in a sport. Now, in some ways, that's well-intentioned.

And in some ways, these things can be good because self-denial is a biblical principle and it's a good thing. But we must not let it become extreme. And the New Testament warns against this. In Colossians chapter 2, it says, If with Christ you died to the elemental spirits of the world, why, as if you were still alive in the world, do you submit to regulations?

Do not handle. Do not taste. Do not touch. Referring to things that all perish as they are used. According to human precepts and teachings. These have an appearance of wisdom in promoting self-made religion and asceticism and severity to the body.

But they are of no value in stopping the indulgence of the flesh. That's quite remarkable. You imagine somebody came up to Paul and said, I do all sorts of things.

[ 25 : 16 ] So I only eat two days a week. And I sleep outside so that I'm not enjoying too much comfort. And I never have any contact with any women. I never even speak to them, let alone look at them.

I never do any of these things. And Paul will say to him, what you're doing is of no value. Because it's all man-made laws.

And of course it makes perfect sense. Because what happens, what happens in our hearts when we have a list of man-made laws that we keep? So you get a list of man-made laws. You can make them up for yourself.

You can have your own laws. And you can think of all of these things that you're not going to do this week. So you think this week, I'm not going to do this, I'm not going to do that, I'm going to do this, I'm going to do that, I'm going to do the next thing. And you do them all. And you come back here next week.

And you look back and you think, I had this list of things that I said I was going to do. And I did them. What has just gone into your heart? Pride.

[ 26 : 16 ] And so instead of mortifying sin, you're cultivating sin. By going beyond what scripture says. And so we've got to be very careful not to go to either extreme.

You can't just ignore sin and think, oh well it's not a problem, it'll go away. But at the same time you can't go to the other extreme of adding anything to what the Bible says. We have to make sure that we stay biblically minded in it all.

So how do we mortify sin? Well, the New Testament highlights several principles that we have to keep in mind. And they're just simple, they're not complicated. The first one is simply this.

Mortification of sin is a command. And if the Bible commands us to do anything, then we do it. As best as we can.

We deliberately strive to obey. So rather than just ignoring sin, we consciously actively work to remove sin from our lives. We want to follow that biblical imperative.

[ 27 : 22 ] Secondly, we need to recognize that the New Testament highlights the fact that mortification in many ways begins not with what we do, but with how we think.

And that's a really, really important biblical principle. It's highlighted in this chapter. Look again at verse 5 of Romans 8. It says, For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh.

But those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. That's a verse that's all about thinking, isn't it? It's all about thinking.

And so we need to think about how we can deal with our indwelling sin. We need to purposefully resist and reject the temptation to sin whenever it manifests itself in our lives.

So we need to change the way we think and be careful about it. Then thirdly, we need to recognize that mortification of sin has to be applied to many different areas of our lives.

[ 28 : 25 ] Paul tells us to put to death the deeds of the body. Now that's a very interesting statement because it's vague, isn't it?

So you look at deeds of the body. It's like, well, what's he talking about? He's talking about loads of stuff. And it's deliberately vague and deliberately general because sin can take root in a whole host of different activities.

Just as different weeds will grow in different soils and in different conditions, so too different sins will take root in the lives of different people. So some of us will struggle with anger.

Some of us will struggle with lust. Some of us will struggle with pride. Some of us will struggle with gossip. Whatever it is that we struggle with, we need to make sure that we set our minds towards the deliberate mortification of the sin that tries to grow in our hearts.

We make sure we focus on a wide range of areas. So how exactly are we going to do this? What are the practical steps that we need to take in order to be able to mortify sin?

[ 29 : 31 ] Well, I think that it's helpful to go back to an illustration of the garden. So again, I want you to think as a gardener for the next couple of minutes.

As I said, I'm not an expert in gardening, but I do think that if you've got weeds in your garden, there are three things that you can do to get rid of them. Now, there may be more, and I'm sure that there probably are, but there are three things that you can do to get rid of weeds in your garden.

One, you can starve them. So plants, as we said, they need nutrients to grow. They need soil, water, light. If you starve them, they will die.

So sometimes you'll see gardeners will put bark over the weeds in their flowerbeds, basically to starve them to death so that they'll die, depriving them of the nutrients that they need.

So you can starve them. Number two, you can uproot them. So you go to a weed, you make sure you get it right out. Whenever I was weeding, I used to often just go along and just sort of snap it off so that you can't see it anymore, which of course is no use because the root is still there and the thing grows back very, very quickly.

[ 30 : 43 ] But if you get the weed right out, roots and all, then it'll die. And then thirdly, you can treat weeds, can't you? So you can put weed killer on them and then they will die.

And I think that the New Testament instructs us to employ all three of these strategies in regard to our sin. So first of all, we can starve sin and we must starve sin.

And that's a really, really important thing to remember because the way to get rid of a temptation is not to feed it. It's to starve it.

Because feeding something only makes it stronger, doesn't it? If you've got a packet of Pringles and you feel like eating one and you go and eat one, the desire to eat those Pringles just gets bigger and bigger and bigger.

And it's the same with lots of things. The way to make something weaker is to starve it. And yet all too often we think, well, if I just do this one wee sin, it's going to go away.

[ 31 : 53 ] And so the person who struggles with pornography might think, well, if I just have one more look, then the desire will go away. The person who struggles with covetousness might think, well, one more purchase will be enough.

The person who struggles with gossip might think, well, if I just pass on this one bit of news and then I'll stop. But every time we do that, we are not mortifying sin. We are fortifying sin.

We're making it stronger. We must not do that. When it comes to sin, we must starve it. So that's why James says, resist the devil and he will flee from you.

So we must refuse to allow our eyes to wander. We must refuse to allow our minds to stew on things. We must refuse to allow our hearts to fall for the deceptive attraction of sin.

As Paul says later on in Romans 13, make no provision for the flesh to gratify its desires. We must starve it. Secondly, we need to uproot sin.

[ 32 : 53 ] So if we see sin taking root in our lives, we need to make sure we get rid of it. So whatever seed is germinating in your heart, whether it's bitterness or jealousy or pride or greed or anger or selfishness, whenever we see anything like that, we must root it out.

And the way we do that is to confess our sins to God and to confess our sins to one another. The moment sin takes root in our hearts, we need to pray to God that he would keep us.

And we need to make sure that we do that. Sin can spring at you like that. And I can just give you an example.

Yesterday, from myself, I was talking to a friend on the ferry last night. And he was talking about a minister who had been on camp.

And he said, a minister, James Ross, he's a minister in Edinburgh, a really nice guy. And he said, oh, James the leader of the camp. He says, oh, he says, I really like James. I download James' sermons all the time. And do you know the thought that came into my heart straight away?

[ 34 : 04 ] It was like, why don't you download mine? And that's jealousy and pride. And it jumped up in my heart like that.

And in a way I laugh, but I'm ashamed of myself as well. Really ashamed of myself that that thought comes and you can't handle somebody else, you know, achieving and being recognized.

And it's just pride. And I could let that stew and grow and grow and grow and grow. And yet I have to pray to God that he would take these ridiculous thoughts out of my heart and help me not to think like that.

Sin can spring up upon us in a moment. And we've got to make sure we weed it out. It's a daily battle. But we've got to be really careful.

And we've got to take it seriously. Paul says in chapter 6, Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body to make you obey its passions. We've got to be really careful.

[ 35 : 08 ] We've got to uproot sin. So we need to starve it. We need to uproot it. Thirdly, we need to treat sin. So in exactly the same way as you can apply weed killer to treat weeds, so too we can apply a treatment to get rid of sin.

Now you're probably thinking, Thomas, what are you talking about? What is the treatment that we can apply to sin in our lives? Well, the answer is found in 1 Peter 4, verse 8, where it says, Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins.

Now that's the key phrase. Love covers a multitude of sins. Now, that is not simply a general positive statement that sounds nice.

It's actually a very specific instruction that says that love is the treatment that will help you and me eradicate sin from our lives. So, for example, if you are envious of somebody else's success, then you can mortify that sin by loving that person.

And so thinking, well, I'm actually delighted that this person is doing well. I'm actually delighted that James' sermons are being downloaded because he's a good guy and a great preacher. And instead of resenting that person, you are thankful for what God is doing in that person's life and for what they've achieved and that they've done something special.

[ 36 : 36 ] By loving the person, your envy can disappear. If you're angry with somebody, you can mortify that sin by loving that person, by accepting that they've made a mistake.

So if somebody gets on your nerves tomorrow at work, which they might, if you're dealing with the public and a customer comes in and they're aggressive and angry and frustrated, you can respond with anger or you can mortify that sin by loving that person and thinking this person's reaction is probably arising from their own struggles, from their own insecurities, from their own weaknesses, and the chances are they're going to feel very bad about whatever it is that they've done.

If you're angry, you can mortify that sin by loving that person. Same is true with gossip. So you can hear news about somebody and you think, oh, I really, really, really want to tell everybody about this. And yet you can mortify that sin by loving the person and by refusing to spread what you know that person would not want you to be talking about.

In so many ways, love is the treatment that will help us mortify our sins. And the key point that we want to remember is that we want our hearts to be the place where sin is put to death.

We want our hearts to be a place where sin never has the opportunity to grow. Because if you think about it, what is the opposite of mortification? The opposite of mortification is nurturing.

[ 38 : 05 ] Providing an environment for something will flourish and grow. And God forbid that our hearts are ever places where sin will find nourishment.

We want to make sure that we always mortify sin. And above all, if God wants us to do this, which he does, he will help us.

And that's why Paul says it is by the spirit that we put to death the deeds of the body. Through our union with Christ, the Holy Spirit himself indwells within us.

And we are being transformed from people who are able to turn away from sin and who can live in God's way. So, what, who, how, last of all, in two minutes, why?

Why is mortification of sin important? Well, if you look at verses 12 to 14, you'll see three reasons. First of all, because we are not debtors to the flesh.

[ 39 : 04 ] You see that in verse 12. We are not debtors to the flesh. In other words, we don't owe sin anything. So often you can hear a voice in your head that says, just indulge a wee bit.

You owe it to yourself. You deserve it. That's not true. We do not owe ourselves a moment in sin.

And sin does not deserve to be part of your life. God has a far, far, far better way for you to live.

We are not debtors to the flesh. Reason number two, if you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. As it says at the end of verse 13. Now, that's not saying that our eternal life depends on our works of mortification.

That would contradict what Paul has been saying all along. What it is emphasizing is the fact that the key to an authentic, meaningful, joyful, and purposeful life is to avoid sin.

The key to joy and peace and purpose in life is to put sin to death, to live in God's way, because that way you are being everything that you were created to be in the first place.

[ 40 : 06 ] And that makes perfect sense, because have you ever looked back on a year of your life and thought to yourself, I wish I had sinned more? Have you ever thought, I wish I had hurt more people?

I wish I had been more greedy? I wish I had been more angry? Nobody thinks like that. Certainly nobody in their right mind. We will not find a happy life for ourselves by indulging in sin.

We will find a happy life by mortifying sin. If you put to death the deeds of your body, you will live.

And then reason number three is in verse 14, because you are sons of God.

Why do we want to mortify sin? Well, above all else, it's because we love our Father in heaven. He has saved us and given us this extraordinary privilege of becoming children of God.

And that gives us every reason we ever need to get rid of anything in our hearts and in our lives that is offensive to God and that would grieve Him. Because He is our Father and we love Him and we want to live in His way.

[ 41 : 16 ] We mortify sin because we are sons of God. So mortification of sin is a really, really important thing. It's something that we want to think about every single day this week.

Every day this week, we want to think about mortifying our sin. It's very, very important. But it's also a wonderful thing. And I want to highlight that as we close. Mortification of sin is a wonderful thing. It's a great reminder that God's way is so much better. Living for Jesus is far, far better than living for ourselves. Just imagine what Britain would be like today if everyone mortified their sin. And that's why God tells us to do it. Because He wants what's best for us. And mortification of sin will make our hearts and our world a far better place. And that's one of the many, many, many, many reasons why following Jesus is brilliant. It is the best way for us to live our lives.  
[ 42 : 23 ] Amen. Let's pray.