

# Dead Means Dead: What Happened to You When You Were Saved

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[ 0 : 00 ] Please turn with me in your Bibles to Romans chapter 6. Romans chapter 6. If you're new or visiting, special welcome to you. Just as Chris said, if you have any questions, there's a welcome desk with people who would love to ask any of your questions.

Or if you have other questions you want to talk to me, I'm usually available right after the service. My name is BK. I have the pleasure of serving here as one of our pastors.

Last week I made a statement. I claimed that last week's sermon would either be one of the best sermons you had ever heard or be forgettable.

Now when I made that statement, I wasn't saying because I was going to preach it in perfection or like some great preacher. But I believe the content of that sermon is what makes it great.

And I was encouraged that some people did come and confess that it indeed was. You see, Romans 6 teaches a truth that has confounded Christians for centuries.

[ 1 : 13 ] Now before I say any more, I want to just read the text with you. Romans 6 starting in verse 1. What shall we say then?

Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? By no means. How can we who died to sin still live in it? You do not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?

We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death. In order that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.

For if we have been united with him in death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. Now, we know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing.

So that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. For one who has died has been set free from sin. Let me pray.

[ 2 : 29 ] Dear Holy Heavenly Father, we just ask for your blessing on this reading. And I pray for power in these words that are able to describe what exactly Paul is saying here. Father, I pray that this not only brings clarification, but this passage would bring freedom.

For anybody who has been a Christian for any amount of time, this section deals with one of the areas that we get confused over, we get discouraged over.

Leads us to lose hope, lose trust. So Father, this morning, I pray that clarity would be found for everyone here. Not just with their minds, but in their hearts as well.

I ask you these things in your most holy and precious name. Amen. Now, let me just say something right off the bat. If you're thinking, hey, this is the same passage, the same text that I preached last week, or the week before when I first started Romans 6, I'm going to tell you something.

You're absolutely right. So, don't think you're crazy. Don't think the whole world forgot about this. But this is indeed a thick passage.

[ 3 : 44 ] There are terms in here that I really believe we need to understand. If we are to move forward in this text. In fact, Martin Lloyd-Jones, the great Welsh preacher, on this subject, he preached over 14 sermons on Romans 6 alone.

In fact, he did two introductions. So, I'd like to think I'm in good company if I go more than one sermon per verse. As always, my role as a preacher is to bring clarity to what God has said.

To help us understand through grammar, culture, and historical understandings of what Paul is writing to these Roman citizens. So that we may not only understand it for today, but that we can live in this teaching.

If I can say anything about this morning's sermon, it's about removing barriers. It's about removing barriers.

Now, if you've been with us in Romans for some time, you know why this matters. If Paul has been clear on one thing in this entire beautiful, wonderful book of Romans, it's that we are saved by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone.

[ 5 : 03 ] Amen. Amen. Right? We're not saved by works. We're not saved by the law. Not performance. Not our resume. But we are saved by grace alone.

Through faith alone, in Christ alone. And as soon, and if you were here when I first preached this, I said, as soon as you understand this truth, a question pops into your mind.

If grace covers everything, then why not live however I want? Right?

The more I sin, the more God's grace is shown. Isn't that a good thing? Let's be honest.

What's interesting is that question didn't come from a fool. That question didn't come from someone who was rebellious or a skeptic. It was someone who almost understood the gospel and is working through the impact, the implications of what Paul's been talking about.

[ 6 : 10 ] And as we read in this verse, Paul's response to that question is very short, quick, and it leaves no room for misunderstanding. He says, by no means. It's an emphatic statement.

It's the most emphatic statement that you can make in the Greek language. Absolutely not. May it never be. Why? Because that question reveals a completely wrong understanding of what salvation actually does.

And this, my friends, is the key to moving forward in the Christian life. Last sermon, I focused on the fact that the reason change is so hard or problematic for us is because we often think it's about behavior, not identity.

And I believe this is a real place where Christians get stuck. We think Christianity is mainly about behavior modifications. I'm going to try harder. I'm going to sin less.

I am going to do better. I am going to be more disciplined. Anybody ever said those things? All right.

Thank you for not leaving me hanging. But Paul doesn't start with behavior.

[ 7 : 30 ] Paul starts with identity. Starts with identity. He doesn't say, stop sinning so you can be free. And says, he says, you died.

He doesn't say, you should die. He doesn't say, you're dying. Or you're working on dying.

He simply says, you're dead. He says, how can we who died to sin still live in it? Paul's logic is shocking because it's final.

His point is, dead means dead. Now you will notice last time I said, do you not know that all who have been baptized into Christ were baptized into his death?

And it's important for us to understand that Paul is not pointing to a ceremony of baptism, the type of thing that we do here on some Sunday mornings. He's not talking about the sun.

[ 8 : 36 ] He's talking about a transfer of existence. It's like when you bring someone into a club, you might have a little, I don't know, golf game or some ritual that you do.

And then you can say, they're baptized into our club. Right? It's just a simple term. And that's what it means. And baptism didn't cause this, but it declares this.

He essentially says that person no longer lives here. I want you to think about what it means to be a citizen.

Often, many countries, you need to deny one's citizenship if you are going to become a citizen in another country. Right? The old passport is invalid.

The old laws, especially tax laws, no longer apply to you. And the old allegiance are broken. But what Paul is communicating here is that you still might remember the old place.

[ 9 : 44 ] You still might sound like you still live there. But you are no longer under its authority. Paul has taught us that salvation is a change of realm, a new kingdom.

And you didn't clean yourself up. You didn't switch habits. You were transferred into Christ. You were baptized into Christ. That is what brings you over.

So where is this sermon going? So here's what we're doing today. I'm slowing down. Now, simply because Romans 6 has been misunderstood, Romans 6 has been abused and weaponized for centuries.

And I hope to take the first steps by answering three questions, three terms. So when we see the outline, you're going to see there's terms.

The three terms that we're going to talk about is what does it mean to be dead to sin? It's kind of a recap on last time. The second is what exactly does Paul mean with the old self?

[10:55] And what happens to the old self? And the third term that I want to teach on is what does it mean, the body of sin?

The body of sin. So we're going to look at dead to sin, old self, body of sin. Because if we get this wrong, two things happen. Christianity either becomes a stifling religion of legalism, or it becomes casual lawlessness.

But if we get them right, if we properly understand them, something far better happens.

I believe it ushers in a new goodness and understanding of who God is. And we finally start learning how to live like what God has already made us to be.

All right, you with me on that? All right, so the first term that I want to talk about and what this means is we died to sin. Romans 6.2. How can we who died to sin still live in it?

[12:07] Now this is the hinge. This is what helps us understand the rest of the passage. If you misunderstand this, Romans 6 becomes this idealism.

Because you're going to think, I guess I'm not saved because I sin. Or it's going to become moral license. Sin doesn't matter anymore.

But we're going to see that Paul doesn't allow for either of these options. So we have to ask the question Paul assumes you'll ask. What does it mean to be dead to sin?

Well, first let me tell you what it doesn't mean. It doesn't mean you no longer commit sins. It's basic, but there's segments of Christianity.

The holiness movement, for instance, that actually believe that you can become sinless here on earth. You see, if dead to sin meant sinless perfection, we wouldn't have Romans 7.

[13:10] We wouldn't have Galatians 5. In fact, we wouldn't have half the letters that Paul has written or the other apostles in our New Testament. In fact, the assumption that the New Testament has is it assumes that there is an ongoing struggle in the Christian life, not instant perfection.

You with me on that? There is a growth that occurs. So if you're sitting there thinking, then I must be dead to sin because I still fight lust, or I might not be dead to sin because I still fight lust, anger, pride, fear.

Paul is simply saying, that's not what I'm talking about. That's not what I'm talking about. The second thing, it does not mean, it does not mean that sin is inactive or absent from the Christian life.

We all know that sin is present. We all know that sin still tempts. We all know sin still deceives.

But here's the thing. Presence isn't the same as power. The presence of sin doesn't mean there's power in sin. Paul doesn't say sin stop existing.

[14:26] He says the power source was cut off. It's almost thinking like a dictator who ruled the country for decades. His face was everywhere.

His voice was the law. His word was final. Then one day he's overthrown. The people overthrow him and throw him out. And the fact is, the posters may still be on the wall.

His loyalists may still be in the background shouting for his return. And his influence may linger from prison. But he doesn't reign. He has no authority.

He is not the law. So what Paul says here, that sin has not been eradicated. It's been dethroned.

You with me on that one? It has no power to condemn us to hell. Now what does dead to sin actually mean? It means to be dead to sin's authority.

[15:26] Dead to sin means to be dead to sin's authority. And what he's doing, he's talking relationally here. You have died to sin's rule. You have died to sin's mastery.

And you have died to sin's legal claim. What it means is sin no longer has the right to command you. That's why Paul doesn't say sin is dead.

He says you died to sin. You get those two distinctions? The relationship that we have with sin, when you have been baptized into Christ, is over.

It's done. It exists no more. Imagine for a moment that you've got this job you've worked at for, I don't know, 25, 30 years. You turn in your badge for security.

You clean out your desk. Your paperwork has been processed by human resources. And you're home. You're finally at home. And then your boss calls you the next Monday. Hey, where are you?

[16:32] We need you in today. Same hour, same authority. And you simply get to say, you don't tell me what to do anymore. You've got no authority over me.

I'm done. Why? Not because the boss stopped talking. Because that relationship no longer exists. Paul says salvation is not a job transfer into the same company.

It's death to the old employer. Dead to sin. Dead to sin. Dead to sin. Dead to sin. Also means a completed, decisive act.

Notice Paul's grammar. How can we who died, past tense, a completed action. It's non-repeatable. You see, this isn't something you achieve over time. This is something that happened to you when you were united to Christ. You didn't grow into it. You didn't earn it.

[17:37] You didn't cooperate into it. You were placed. You were transferred into Christ. And what happened to him happened to you. Paul explains this change using the word baptism.

It's like I said, a lot of people get confused when they read this, the word baptism. In fact, James Montgomery Boyce spends six pages in his excellent commentary just trying to separate the confusion that people have in their understanding of baptism.

He still thinks they're thinking about immersion. That's not what he's talking about. It's that they've been initiated into this new identity. He's talking about identification.

About being united to Christ. Christ in such a way that what is true of Christ becomes true of us. So we use this terminology.

Like I said, we're entered, we're initiated into a club, a group, an association. So that's why we are already dead to sin.

[18:47] Now why does this matter? This is why Paul finds the question in verse one outrageous. He simply says, shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?

He's simply saying, that's a crazy question. That question doesn't even make sense anymore. Why would someone live under a master who no longer owns them?

Why would someone return to a grave they were raised from? You see, being dead to sin does not mean sin is gone.

It means sin is no longer in charge. So here's the question that is, this is the question that it begs. And you might say, okay, I'm with you, BK.

I'm with you on this 100%. I get it. It's no longer me. I'm dead to that. So if I'm dead to sin, what exactly died?

[19:52] What exactly died? And this is what verse six takes us next. Our old self. So this is the second term I want to define for us.

It is Romans 6.6. We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin.

Now notice, Paul does not say the old self is weak. He does not say that the old self is dying. He is not saying that the old self is being reformed.

He says the old self was crucified, executed. It's a deliberate language. But we get confused about the old self.

We still think we're supposed to kill our old self. But that's not what it means. And I want to define this carefully because misunderstanding this has crushed more consciences than most anything else in Romans.

[21:02] So let me just say what the old self is not. It's not your personality. It's not your temperament. It's not your memories. It's not your struggled patterns.

It's not your trauma. It's not your habits. It's not your emotions. And a lot of people think it is. See, if you define the old self that way, you will either pretend something you're not or you will conclude that you're not saved at all.

You see, Paul is not talking about behavior. He's talking about identity. So what is the old self?

Remember, in chapter 5, it's you in Adam.

You as defined by sin's rule. You under condemnation. You as a slave, not a struggler. You see, the old self is not something you manage.

It's something that God crucified. You with me on that? This is crucial. This is important. Because having this understanding helps us understand how to walk in the newness of life of Jesus Christ.

[22:17] You see, a lot of Christians keep attending, as one author says, the funeral of someone who's already been buried. They listen to thoughts like, that's not just who I am.

I'll always be this way. This is my real self. Paul says, no, no, no. That's a corpse talking. The old self doesn't need coaching.

It doesn't need accountability. It doesn't need discipline. It's dead. Dead. There is no old man to fight.

Now, why does Paul say this? He's not saying this to inflate your confidence. He's saying this to end our despair. We've thought like this.

If I can only put to death my personality or some other aspect of me, I will be free. So many believers waste so much time trying to kill something that God says is already dead.

[ 23 : 29 ] And when we do that, it produces exhaustion, shame. If you struggle with shame, you're still thinking in this way and it brings about cycles of self-condemnation.

Paul says, stop fighting as if sin is who you are.

You fight sin because it is no longer you. Now, why does that matter? Notice the clause at the second part of this verse.

It says, so that. He's telling us why. It says, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin.

Not sinless. Not enslaved. Slaves obey because they must. Sons obey because they can.

[ 24 : 30 ] Amen? Imagine a real life slave who had been legally freed. The chains are off.

The papers have been signed. But every morning, that slave in his freedoms still waits for orders for a master who no longer owns him.

That's us. Paul says, that's not humility. That's confusion. Grace doesn't say try harder to obey.

Grace says, stop living like someone who no longer exists. you're not that person. You see, you're not a sinner trying to become righteous.

You are righteous in Christ learning how to live. And this is important for you new believers who've just started what you think everything's going to be redone, renewed. There's time.

[ 25 : 31 ] And we're going to get into that. The term is sanctification. Christian. But we're going to get into it. But it's always important to understand our identity.

But here's a question. And I know it's a truth that you know. But you should still have a question sticking in your mind. And that question is, if this old self is gone, this old self is dead, this old self is crucified, why does sin feel so powerful?

Why does sin feel so powerful? Anybody ever ask that question? You should be asking that, right?

If I'm dead to sin, why is it still so powerful? Why does it still feel so real?

And this is why the next term matters, the body of sin. This brings us to the third point. And this tells us why the fight still feels so real.

In order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. One of the authors says this phrase has confused people for centuries.

[ 26 : 49 ] See, what they hear in body of sin, they start to think the flesh is evil. You ever been there? You think, my eyes, my heart, it's evil.

My lips, evil. My tongue, evil. Then we begin to think that any type of physical desire is sinful.

It's evil. And there's a thought that has come out that Christianity is anti-physical. And as an example, this is what a lot of the Eastern religions talk about, right?

It's mind over matter. It's what you think. If you can associate from your body, if I can get rid of these needs, right?

These cravings that my body has, I'm going to be good. So I'm going to be one with the universe.

I'm going to be one with something. If I can only, and some people, let's flagellate our bodies.

[ 27 : 48 ] Chop it off. If we can just do it, either deny it, whip it, punishment, if I can get my body in order, I've got nirvana. Paul isn't teaching that.

You see, if we get this phrase right, Romans 6 becomes realistic, not discouraging. What the body of sin is not. It does not mean the physical body is sinful.

Paul elsewhere commands believers to present their bodies as living sacrifices to God. We are taught to glorify God in our bodies.

See, the body's not the problem. Sin is the problem. Now, when we understand sin is the problem, we fall into another mistake. We start to believe that sin lives in sin.

inside our body like it's some sort of parasite, right? This teaching is called dualism. It's like, I got the old man and the new man in here. And if I can feed the new man, if I come to church enough, I go to every Bible study that I can go to.

[ 29 : 04 ] If I just listen to praise music, this new man will win over the old man. Anybody ever been there? Right? This is the Greek thinking of dualism.

that's what it was, that the two are kind of fighting inside and whoever we feed the most will win. That's not what the body of sin means. Let me define what it means. It means the whole person as they once existed under sin's rule. And it's using the body as its instrument. A better way to describe it and forgive me, when I went to university, people didn't have portable computers.

We just didn't have laptops unless you were uber wealthy. And still, they were quite clunky, right? You know, the guy would have an uneven shoulder back from carrying his laptop everywhere. But some of the guys had PCs and I had some friends who were in the engineering department. And they had what looked like a PC and this is MS-DOS. There was no such thing as Windows, if you guys don't know.

[ 30 : 13 ] There was this whole way, you had to type in every command. But a lot of engineers and guys would switch out the operating system into a system called Linux. Because Linux was free.

All the type of programs you can get because once you're locked in to Microsoft Word, you've got to pay for all these things. So I remember being at my friend's place and I'm like, okay, how do you get the money to pay for the computer, but how did you get the money to pay for all these programs that are on there?

And he says, I'm not running on DOS. And I'm like, what? There's this whole other system. It looked the same and that's what he's talking about. God doesn't replace the hardware, but he replaces the software.

You with me on that one? the operating system has changed. Everything now runs under a new authority.

The fact is, some old files are still there. Some shortcuts still exist. There's still glitches in the matrix. But the system has fundamentally changed.

[ 31 : 21 ] Paul never says that destroying the hardware, he never says that salvation doesn't destroy the hardware, it installs a new operating system.

That term brought to nothing, what does that mean? Paul says the body of sin was brought to nothing. It doesn't mean annihilated. The phrase means it's been rendered powerless. It's stripped of control. It's disabled from ruling. You've put it in the corner. It has no power. It's no longer the CEO. In fact, when it shows up, it's a trespasser.

But this leaves us with another question. And it is, why does the fight still feel so intense? Why does it feel sometimes that we will never have victory? Because here's the pastoral reality. You still feel temptation.

[ 32 : 32 ] You still feel pulls. You still feel conflict. Why? Because your mind is being renewed. It's being overwritten. Your habits are being retrained.

Your flesh does remember the old rule. And as I made that very important point last time was, the struggle is not evidence that you're a slave to sin.

The struggle is evidence that you're free from sin. Amen? It's because you actually care. You don't want this in you. see, struggle is evidence of a new life.

Dead people don't fight. I've got a friend who lost her leg in a car accident. And I asked her what was one of the funniest things about her, what was the hardest challenges.

And if you've ever heard of that phantom leg syndrome, sometimes her body is still sending signals to the leg that's no longer there. And sometimes she said, I feel pain in my right leg and I don't even have a leg there anymore.

[ 33 : 47 ] And that's kind of what Paul's saying here. You get that? It's gone, it's powerless, but we still sometimes get a sense of it. Paul says sin has been amputated as a ruler, but he still yells at you.

And over time, and I can attest to this, those screams, those signals lose their power.

That once was a strong pull in you, becomes lessened. Now, why does Paul say this? Paul is trying to protect the believer from two lies.

the first lie is, if I still struggle, I must not be saved. Right? When we question the assurance of our salvation, we start to think that I must not be saved.

Paul's saying false. Number two, since I struggle, sin still owns me.

[ 35 : 06 ] Guess what? Also false. Paul says, you are no longer enslaved. That doesn't mean the fight is easy, but it does mean the fight is winnable.

And there's a difference between those two. As I said, you're not fighting to become free, you are fighting because you are already free.

I've got a final mini point. It's kind of like whatever, maybe .3 and a half. It's found in verse seven. For one who has died has been set free from sin. What Paul's communicating is Paul does, dead people don't owe anything to their former master.

You don't owe him. He says this principle so obvious it almost sounds it's insulting, but it's intentional. Paul is saying death ends our obligation.

[ 36 : 08 ] When someone dies, the contracts expire, the authorities dissolve, the claims are voided. You see, sin's authority was never based on your effort, it was based on your life.

And that life has ended. Now why does Paul say this so bluntly? It's because Christians still live like they owe sin something.

Right? We hear these voices in the background. You always do this. Right? You'll never change. Anybody ever had that whispered in their head? Come on, that's a two-handed answer, right?

Then the other one insulting one is this is who you really are. Paul says that voice has no legal standing. That authority expired at the cross.

And this principle that he brings, this is the one that closes the case. You don't say no to sin because you're strong, you say no to sin because sin no longer owns you.

[ 37 : 20 ] sin no longer means. That's what verse seven means. Let me wrap it up. I want you to notice something very important here.

Note, we've just covered seven verses and there's not a single command in there. You know that it should be striking. There is no try harder, better, there is no do better, there is no fix yourself.

It's only facts, declarations that he makes. And here's what we know. You died to sin, your old self was crucified, the body of sin was disarmed, and you are no longer enslaved.

He's not trying to motivate us. He's trying to declare truth to us. Because if you're going to go into the battle, and we're going to talk about this, right, when we get to Romans 8, it's going to get really thick again, you need to understand this principle.

the fact is some of you feel exhausted.

[ 38 : 41 ] You struggle and you struggle and you wonder, can I ever make it? And not because you don't love Christ, but because you've been fighting sin as it still defines you.

Because you believe it still defines you. And there's some people I know, you talk to them, they're always going to bring up all the sins. Oh man, I'm just really struggling. And it's almost coached in some sort of humility.

I'm being open. I've got this burden with my attitude towards my kids. It's okay to confess to a brother and to pray together, seek confession and restoration of that relationship.

But there's some people out there, and if you haven't met them, trust me, there are. And it's this fake humility. It means that they misunderstand grace.

Grace never says pretend you don't sin. Grace says stop identifying with what God has already killed. So, this is the tension that Paul leaves us with.

[ 39 : 53 ] If you have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. This is where we're going. Next week, Paul moves from death to life.

We move from identity to action, from reality to responsibility. responsibility. But I want you to notice the order. You don't live to become alive.

You live because you already are alive. Amen? Let me pray. Dear holy, heavenly father, we thank you for the God that you are. We thank you for this thick passage.

Father, I just give you thanks for these great preachers, expositors who have come before and have written these things out just so to help me understand not just what is understood, but sometimes what is wrongly taught.

Father, I truly believe that this is a great truth to some of us. That we desperately need to see and understand that we are indeed alive with you, that we are saints and not sinners.

[ 41 : 12 ] We're saints who sin, but scripture never identifies us as sinners. Father, I pray that you would uplift every person here who struggles with these things, that the old patterns are still there, the old habits, the personality, and let's be honest, sometimes our personality, because we filled ourselves with so many things reflective of that personality, change just seems impossible.

And then we begin to wonder, God, are you powerless? And oftentimes it means we've just been given attention to sin that no longer rules over us.

So, Father, I also give thanks for this table in which we celebrate celebrate the cross, the place where you killed our sin.  
You made us death. You killed us, the old man, the old ways. And you remind us in the passages that we are to continue doing this until you come again.  
because when you're back, we're no longer going to need that. So we thank you for these eternal reminders that you give us until you finally return.  
[ 42 : 42 ] So, Father, if anything, let us strengthen us to be honest, honest with ourselves, but honest with our identity in Christ. And I pray, I pray that we would be reading Romans 8 to 14 in a new way and begin to understand the incredible work that God has done in us.  
I ask these things in your most holy and precious name. Amen. Amen. Amen.