

Does Sin Matter? Continued

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[0 : 0 0] Let's turn to Romans chapter 6 and let's read from verse 12, page 1136, Romans 6 and verse 12.

Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal bodies to make you obey their passions. Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness.

For sin will have no dominion over you since you are not under law, but under grace. I think I've probably learned more in the last 12 months than any 12 months since perhaps I was a young boy.

And amongst other things, I've become acquainted with some of the arguments that take place in Christian circles over questions that arise from time to time.

Here's one of them, and here's one which is doing the rounds at the moment. Apparently there is a particular gentleman in the United States, and when he is asked if it's possible for Christians to lead increasingly holy lives by the power of God, his answer is no.

[1 : 3 7] And when he's asked, does the Bible, and thus should we, expect obedience and personal godliness that are intended for the believer, apparently, allegedly, his answer is no.

So what he's saying is this, that it is not possible, if you're a Christian, for you to live an increasingly holy life, and he is saying that the Bible does not command us to obedience, and neither should we.

Now, what I think that this man is saying is that if we think it is possible to live a perfectly holy life, then we're wrong.

And of course, it is not possible to live a perfectly holy life. We will never achieve perfection here in this world. And I can see his point, but I believe it's wrong.

Because, and I hope I'll explain later on, the danger of believing that it's not possible to live an obedient life is that you're denying the power and the effect of the Holy Spirit.

[2 : 5 6] And you're likely to continue to give in to temptation as a Christian, believing that overcoming temptation is not possible. And again, I suppose although the question is being put in a slightly different way, we're going back to what we saw last week.

The question is this, does sin matter? The whole subject is fascinating. We're asking the question, does being a Christian mean that I'm free from temptation and sin?

And if so, why do I still find myself sinning? Does the fact that I, that there is still sin in my life, mean that I was never a Christian in the first place?

Here's another controversy. This time that goes back to the mid-1850s or the 1800s. Some Christians then began to teach that it was possible to live a sin-free Christian life.

Imagine that. A sin-free Christian life. They believed that there was a kind of second conversion that you could have sometime after you were converted the first place.

[4 : 04] And in the second conversion, you were entirely sanctified. There was a crisis, or what they call a second blessing, sometime into your Christian life.

It might occur shortly into your Christian life, or you might have to wait some years for it. But there was a kind of a second blessing in which you were kind of elevated or catapulted into a higher level of Christian living in which you were set free from the power of sin.

If you've ever worshipped in the Church of the Nazarene, for example, that is one of their core beliefs. And I have often worked, and we're not talking about people who are heretics, we're talking about people who have hold to a particular belief within the Christian Church.

Very, very fine people amongst the Nazarenes. The question is, is that right? Is it possible to reach a stage in your Christian life where you kind of, by means of some second blessing, some kind of experience that you have, you're kind of lifted up, and you no longer have to be, you have to struggle in the same way as you used to have to struggle.

And fail in the same way as you used to have to fail. And where the power of sin is broken, and where you're, somebody put it like this to me once. Before this second blessing, your life goes like that on one level.

[5 : 34] Ups and downs, and struggles, and failures. And then, it all of a sudden jumps up, so that afterwards, you're on a different level. And that's why they tell us, we've got to look for this crisis.

Some people call it the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Whether it's second blessing, or whether it's, it amounts to pretty much the same thing. And there are various variations of it.

Is that correct? Well, let's, instead of trying to show how wrong these beliefs are, I want to, as always, we go back to the Bible, and we try and have a systematic look at, what is the teaching?

Because this is a real issue, isn't it? There isn't a Christian here tonight, who's not troubled by sin. At least I hope you are. I hope that it is the number one. Remember what we said? I believe that this question, that Paul asked in chapter 6, and verse 2, is the number one priority, on a daily basis.

The single most important question, that we should be asking, on a daily basis, is this, how can we, who died to sin, still live in it?

[6 : 47] How can we, who died to sin, still live in it? That's the question, that every one of us, if we belong to Jesus, ought to be asking, on a daily basis, on a continuous basis, as we're surrounded, and assailed, by tempting thoughts, and temptations, of various kinds.

The first automatic question, ought to be this, how can we, who died to sin, still live in it? And it's only, by going back to the Bible, that we find the strength, and the impetus, to answer that question, and to war, against it.

Let's also see, the building blocks, that we saw last time, that we are, when a person comes, to faith in Jesus Christ, that person becomes, united to Jesus, which means three things, or at least, at least three things, which means, first of all, that God has erased, he's blotted out, he's cleansed, every sin from us, he's cancelled, our sin, he's purged, our sin, but what I didn't have time, to talk about, last time, was, that there's something else, in this as well, Christian, Christian, is not someone, who just, enjoys God's forgiveness, but, a Christian, enjoys more than that, it's not like, God has just, forgiven our sin, but he has announced, he's made, a judicial announcement, he's come to, a verdict, about us, and the verdict, is this, that we, are righteous, righteous, righteous, righteous, that's what we call, justification, it's the most, marvelous truth,

I can think of tonight, that not only, every, every, stain of guilt, in my life, has been eradicated, by Jesus, it has been washed, away, and erased, out of God's, book, book, but God, has taken, Jesus righteousness, his perfect righteousness, and he has made it mine, so, the gospel, is about Jesus, taking my guilt, on himself, and dying, for my sin, and it's about, God placing, Jesus righteousness, his perfection, his obedience, and making it mine, there isn't a greater, illustration of this, than the prodigal son, we all know, about the prodigal son, don't we, Luke chapter 15, where the son went off, and who knows, how many years, he spent, in riotous living, until all his money, was his father's money, was spent, and he ended up, in poverty, with nothing, until in desperation, he decided, that he would go back, to his father, then off he went, he arose, and went back, to his father, and the father, saw him, afar off, and he went, and ran, and he threw his arms, around his neck, and he kissed him, and he brought him, back into his home, and he said, quick bring, the fatted calf, and bring a robe, and the robe, was placed, on his son, and the Bible, tells us, that, the robe, signifies, righteousness, what we ought to be, and what we lost, when Adam, and Eve sinned, and God, has restored it, once again, to us, and he has, announced, about me, and you, if you're a follower, of Jesus, this man, this woman, is righteous, in my sight, it means that, that it's as if, we have never sinned, but it's more than that, it's as if, we have obeyed God, our whole lives, the righteousness, of Jesus Christ, becomes ours, and if that isn't, marvelous news to you,

I don't know, what is, but the second thing, was, that we, the life we live, is a new, and a resurrected life, the person, I now am, after God, comes into my life, is not the person, I once was, the old person, is gone, he's finished, and everything, that that person, lived for, and in my life, are a new set, of priorities, I don't live, for the old things, anymore, the things I, held on to, and the things, that held on to me, but I live, for God now, because God, has produced, within me, a new character, and a new beginning, and a new hope, and a new promise, of everlasting life, but it means, thirdly, that, that, the authority, of sin, remember the story, that I told you, illustration, I used, about the slave, the slave, being bought, by a new master, a new master, that loved him, and that he loved, he loved to work for him, every day, was a new day, in which he, he, in which he enjoyed, the master's friendship, and company, and the freedom, that he gave him, and my concern tonight, and I believe, the concern, of the apostle Paul, in these verses, is to stress, that in the new life, it is both possible, and expected, of us, to obey God, and live lives, of obedience, how else, can you understand, the words, that we've just read, let not sin, therefore, reign, in your mortal bodies, to make you, obey their passions, if it wasn't possible, to obey this, why does God, ask us to do it, let not sin, therefore, reign in your mortal bodies, to make you, obey their passions, do not present, your members, to sin, as instruments, for righteousness, unrighteousness, but present yourselves, to God, as those who have been, brought from death, to life, and your members, to God, as instruments, for righteousness, for sin, will have no dominion, over you, since you are not, under law, but under grace, well then, where do we begin, where do we begin, to deal, with these questions, that I opened up with, does God expect us, to live lives, that are being changed, and in which we are able, to obey him, answer absolutely yes, what is the point, in talking about, the new birth, the new creation, the resurrected life, if it doesn't mean, a changed life, if we're going to be, exactly the same, as we were before, and if we're not, going to be learning, new things, and if we're not, going to be putting,

[13 : 15] God's word, and to practice, on a day by day basis, I did not say, that we were going, to be perfect, nobody, can ever be perfect, in this life, and neither, can anyone, achieve that moment, of what the Nazarenes, call entire, sanctification, with all due respect, to my brothers, and sisters, I think they're wrong, because as I read, my new testament, I read about, the work of the Holy Spirit, that begins, that begins at the beginning, and works gradually, in a person's life, persuading that person, on a day by day, continuous basis, to what the catechism calls, die to sin, and to live to righteousness, that's our objective, tonight, we are to die to sin, and live to righteousness, that's, our aim, and our goal, for the coming week, as it should be, for the every week, that we live, die to sin, and live to righteousness, so where do we begin, well we begin, where we began before, with our union, to Jesus, which means, that Jesus, has attached himself, to us, now, we are attached, we are bound, to the Lord Jesus Christ, and we saw last week, how that meant, that his death, becomes ours, his resurrection, becomes ours, but it's on a constant, day by day basis, he has bound himself, to us, the apostle Paul, describes a Christian, as someone, who's in Christ, that relationship, is so, bound up, one with the other, that we are never, to think of ourselves, as being on our own,

God has not left us, on our own, and will not let, remember what he, remember the image, that he chose to use, in John chapter 15, I am the true vine, you are the branches, you and me, and I in you, we're both attached, to one another, that living connection, to Jesus Christ, how can, you talk about, how can we read that chapter, without thinking, at the same time, of a changed lifestyle, a changed mindset, a changed set, of priorities, a changed set, of goals, and objectives, and values, values, but this union, according to the apostle Paul, secondly means, that we are to serve Jesus, we are not our own, God doesn't set us free, and then tells us, oh well go off, and make the best of it, he doesn't leave us, to our own resources, we become servants, of Jesus Christ, that's what he's saying, he's saying, do not present yourself, he says, are we to, in verse 16, do you not know, that if you present yourselves, to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves, to the one you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or, that we, or of Jesus, which leads to righteousness, but thirdly, our union with Jesus Christ, our relationship, with Jesus Christ, means that, the Holy Spirit, has come, to dwell, within, each one of us,

John chapter 14, where, in verse, if I can read, John chapter 14, and verse 15, if you love me, Jesus said, you will keep my commandments, and I will ask the Father, and he will give you, another helper, to be with you forever, even the spirit of truth, through the world, cannot receive, because it neither, sees him, nor knows him, you know him, for he dwells with you, and, listen, and, he will be, in you, remember a few weeks ago, I was talking about, eureka moments, on a Sunday morning, one of my eureka moments, as a Christian, was, the day I discovered, I don't know why, all of a sudden, sometimes these things, just come to you, you should know them, but he's just come to you, with a, just a power, that you've never, and I remember the day, when I discovered, or rediscovered, that, every Christian, and me, I was indwelt, by the Holy Spirit, indwelt, by God, God is in me, he dwells, in me, don't tell me, that, that can be true, without a change, in your life, you can't possibly, live the same kind of life, as you once lived, and,

God is living, in you, God, the very fact, that God has taken up, residence, in you, means, that you will live, a different life, a life, which is consecrated, and dedicated, to him, in which he takes, the central place, now, I want to stop here, and ask, does that sound, horrific to you, maybe you're not, a Christian tonight, and let me guess, when I talk about, me being united, to Jesus, being bound, to Jesus, and that makes you, feel uncomfortable, doesn't it, and when it jokes, and when I talk about, the Holy Spirit, dwelling, dwelling, in you, maybe you're saying, to yourself, that's the last thing, I want, because that's, kind of scary, it kind of means, that God is coming, too close to me, I'm quite happy, to believe in God, as long as he's, far away, and as long as he's, at a safe distance, and as long as he doesn't, poke his nose, into my business, I'm quite happy, to pray to him, when I'm sick, or when someone else, is sick,

I'm quite happy, to hope that, at the end of the day, that things will be, all right with me, when I die, and surely, I'm not as bad, as other people, and I live a kind, of decent life, and but hey, wait a minute, hold on a minute, I'm not into this, the Holy Spirit God, coming to dwell, within me, that is too close, that invades, my space, I want my own life, and I don't want, God interfering, in my life, and I mean, what would my life be, what would, I like to do, my own things, and I know, that some of these things, are wrong, but I like to think, that there's a kind of, healthy mixture, of mischief, the odd, erring here, and there, and the odd, good work, here and there, surely, in the grand scheme, of things, that God is going to, accept me, at the end of the day, no he's not, he's not, maybe bad news, for you, but he's not, I want you to ask, this question, why, do you, exist, why, did God, make you, you are not, here, by some kind, of random chance, you are here, because God, has, placed you, in this world, there's a reason, for you being, in this world, and the reason, lies with God, because he's the one, who has created you, in this world, and the answer, to that question, is,

[20 : 24] God has made you, for himself, and you will never, find that contentment, and that fulfillment, as a human being, until you find, the Lord, you will always, be scrambling, around, trying to make, the most, out of this life, trying to find, happiness, here, and there, and everywhere, and you'll, never find it, you think, that your happiness, lies in doing, what you want, and achieving, your dreams, and your ambitions, for yourself, you won't, find it, because you were, made for God, and it's, only in coming, to know God, and coming, to be reconciled, to God, that you will, find, that sense, of deep, and ultimate, fulfillment, that it means, to be, a human being, maybe, maybe some of you, have already tried, and you're, at that stage, in life, where you're, ready to listen, to the Bible again, maybe you've, gone out, into the world, and you've, tried, so many things, in an attempt, to find, what you're, looking for, and you haven't, found it, it's only made you, more empty, and miserable, and devoid, of meaning, the world, has not, satisfied you, now perhaps, you're here tonight, because you're, looking, for maybe, what you once, knew, as a young person, as a young child, you're coming back, well I hope,

I really so hope, that you don't, stop until, you find the Lord, in the gospel, you might think, well the Holy Spirit, well I don't, that doesn't sound, very like, liberty and freedom, to me, let me tell you, that is where, liberty is, real freedom, real freedom, lies, with knowing God, and in being, the person, that God, originally, wanted us to be, bearing his image, and being in the world, enjoying, you think, that Christians, don't enjoy, the world, I reckon, I enjoy the world, more than anyone else, in the world, do you know why, because I know, that God, has given me, all things to enjoy, I'm not, I'm not talking, about the things, that I should not enjoy, but you've tried, these things, you've tried, the sinful stuff, the stuff that you know, is wrong, and that actually, hasn't given you, the enjoyment, that you wanted, has it?

It hasn't, when I talk about, enjoying, I'm talking about, enjoying, what God has given me, the people, that God has given me, the life, that God has given me, in this world, because I see it, through his perspective, and I hope, that my life, glorifies God, that's the greatest thing, to me, in all the world, a life that glorifies, the Lord, so I'm asking you tonight, to think again, I'm asking you, to come to God, and, to, give yourself, to him, and ask him, to show you, how, you can be right, with him, through Jesus, I'm asking you, to turn away, of all the, from all the emptiness, that you've been, that you, you've, in which you've, tried to please yourself, for all these years, and you haven't found, anything, I'm asking you, to come away, from all of that, and, to confess, just like the prodigal son, to confess, that we've made a mess of it, that we need him, we need to come back, to the father, and you, will discover the same, as the prodigal son did, a father, who's waiting for you, to come home, is it not time, to come home tonight, now here's where, this comes together,

I'm going to, go back to the life, of the Christian, a person, who is, who believes, we've been talking about, how the Holy Spirit, has come into that person's life, and that Holy, the Holy Spirit, has begun, Philippians tells us, that he, he comes in with a purpose, to begin a work, of renewal, and transformation, in that person's life, and Paul tells us, that he, who began a good work, will not stop, until he finishes it, God doesn't give up, on us, by the way, if you're tempted, to think that, that you're so weak, and so full of failures, that God must have, walked out on you, a long time ago, that's not the case, he who began, a good work, Philippians chapter one, he who began, a good work, will, complete it, at the end, and he will continue, and he will, but here's what Paul says, he says this, that we, are to work out, our salvation, with fear, and trembling,

Philippians chapter two, and verse twelve, work out, your own salvation, with fear, and trembling, that's another way, of saying exactly, what he's saying, in Romans chapter six, to work out, our own salvation, with fear, and trembling, and then he goes on, to say, because it is God, who works in you, to will, and to work, of his good pleasure, now here's where, the two things come together, our obedience, and his indwelling, come together, right now, tonight, if you're a Christian, two things are true, the one thing is, that the Holy Spirit, God the Holy Spirit, has come in, to dwell in your life, and he is working, to transform you, but the other factor, is that, you are to work as well, you are to listen, to God's word, and you are to, put that word, into practice, and to use, it's like the talents, in the parable, of the talent, where God has given you, ten talents, or five talents, or one talent, what matters, is what you do with it, now let me say again, that although God, expects, and commands, obedience, from his people, in this life, it is not possible, we will sin, there will be stains, and pollution, in everything, that we do, at the same time, we are to be, absolutely sure, that we have, the power to obey, my concern, tonight, and I am deeply, conscious of my own, sinfulness, make no mistake,

[27 : 27] I come to you, as one, who is like yourselves, we are all, in this together, but my concern, sometimes, is that we, accept, some kind of, inevitability, of sinning, and we develop, a life pattern, which we too easily, fall into temptation, believing that, there's no alternative, it is possible, to overcome, temptation, first Corinthians, chapter 10, and verse 13, tells us, no temptation, has overtaken you, that's not common, to man, God is faithful, and he will not, let you be tempted, beyond your ability, but with the temptation, he will also provide, the way of escape, so that you may be, able to endure it, so what I'm saying, is this, don't imagine, that the default position, is failure, the Christian life, has to be, a continuous, daily determination, not to fall, every day, is a gauntlet, where there's, an endless stream, of voices, and impulses, and ideas, and images, all trying, to get into, our minds, and our actions, and behind all of these, is the devil, who stands, trying to deceive us, and to destroy us, so I hope that,

I've been able, to show, that whilst in this life, we'll never reach perfection, we're not just to accept, that every time, we're tempted, that we fall, but that we're to fight it, we're to struggle, and to wrestle, and to flee, we're to put on, the whole, armor of God, so that having, done all, to stand, we're to flee, the evil desires, of youth, Paul tells Timothy, and if you continue, to give in to them, then you'll be, life will, your life will be, no different, to the life, of the unbelievers, around you, I want to close tonight, by asking, how do you, avoid temptation, how do we, and Romans chapter 6, how do we, do not present, your members to sin, as instruments, for unrighteousness, but present yourselves, to God, as those who have been, brought from death, to life, and your members to God, as instruments, for right, how do we make sure, that sin will have, no dominion over you, since you are not, under law, but under grace, well number one,

I believe, that we need, to prepare ourselves, and you can only, do that, by the Bible, by making, the Bible yours, and by, cultivating, a daily relationship, with the Bible, in which the Bible, becomes your daily, nourishment, and food, none of us, could ever, face a day, without food, would be foolish, and stupid, to do so, why is it, that we so easily, face the future, and all the conflicts, and the wrestlings, without reading, the Bible, and when I mean, reading the Bible, I mean sitting down, and I mean, making it our own, that's what we do, when we eat, we take a piece of food, and we make it our own, we absorb it, and digest it, into our bodies, so that it becomes, part of our system, why do we not have time, for the Bible, the same way, as we have time, for our food, I know how busy we are, but I also know, how vital, God's word is, if you leave out the Bible, you're leaving yourself, open, to temptation, you remember, how every time,

Jesus, was tempted, his answer began with, it is written, God's word, was in his mind, it was there, it was on his lips, ready, and so it should be, on ours, as well, we're also, to find out, the kind of person, we are, being a Christian, is when we discover, what we really are, in the eyes of God, and that means, discovering our own, weaknesses, as the Holy Spirit, works and lives, in us, he shows us, where the cracks are, where the failures are, and as we discover, our failures, we ought to know, what they are, so that we'll be ready, the next time, so that we'll not be, left, vulnerable, there are all kinds, of temptation, for many people, temptation equals, always sexual temptation, there is sexual temptation, but there's a whole host, of other kinds, of temptation, there's temptation, to be greedy, temptation, to steal, money can be a temptation, for many people, their own conduct, their own temper, the way they talk, is a temptation, anger, jealousy, and what is tempting, at one stage, in your life, may be very different, from what is tempting, at another stage, in your life, having lived, the Christian life,

I can say that, from my own experience, when I think of, what I was like, as a young Christian, and the things, I used to wrestle with, as a young Christian, not always successfully, they're very difficult, they're very different, from what I, might wrestle with, today, but that doesn't mean, that I've lived, that I'm now perfect, I'm not, God has shown me, as I've lived, the Christian life, that there were things, that I didn't even, think were there, when I was a young man, and they were, and they are, what about, the basic sin, of idolatry, Paul tells us, that covetousness, when you want, something for yourself, that belongs, to someone else, with such an obsessive desire, that's idolatry, idolatry is, anything that, that goes between you, and God, anything that, you give yourself to, rather than God, the second thing, is this, is that we must remember, who we are, in Jesus Christ, we must remember, that we are, children of God, we have been changed, from darkness, to light, we are children, of God, there is no way, that you can just, blaz, cavalierly, walk into sin, without feeling it, and without feeling, that, that sense of, that you're doing something, that's not only wrong, but that's an affront, to the Lord, you are, grieving the Holy Spirit, that's what Paul tells, in Ephesians chapter 4, do not grieve, the Holy Spirit, how can you, says Paul, how can we, who died to sin, live, still live, in it, he could have equally said, how can we, who are indwelt, by the Holy Spirit, still live, in sin, the very fact, that he is, the Holy Spirit, it indicates, the kind of work, that he is doing, in us, he is conforming us, and fashioning us, and changing us, and transforming us, to the image, of Jesus Christ, here's some more, here's some practical tips, can I say, this temptation, always begins, in your mind, you never do anything, unless you think it first, and the way, to be prepared, and to live, a life, which is prepared, is to, is to control, our minds, the key, to the Christian life, is self-control, is to live, a disciplined,

[35 : 08] Christian life, and let me tell you, one more time, I am not, speaking to you, as someone, who has reached, the heights, I'm speaking, to you, as someone, in whom, the Holy Spirit, is still working, all I'm doing, is sharing with you, what I know, to be true, from the old, from the Bible, and from Christian experience, it always begins, in your mind, where was it, that the devil, began in Genesis chapter 3, when he wanted, to get Eve, to disobey God, he reasoned with Eve, he started talking to her, if the devil, had come up to her, straight away, and said, Eve, I want you to take that through, she would have said no, but what he did, was, he took a couple, of steps back, and he said, eh, what God said to you, about eating the, the tree, whatever it was, did he really say that, are you telling me, did he actually, really say that, and instantly, there was a seed, of doubt, sown in Eve's mind, and she began, to take him on, and began, to correspond, with him, until her mind, was, was drawn, away, from where it, should have been, always begins, in our minds, that's why Paul says, gird up the loins, of your mind, and then another, practical, piece of, counsel,

I would give, is this, that, we have to avoid, places, and times, and occasions, where we might, be tempted, Jesus said, if your right hand, causes you to sin, cut it off, if your right, eye, causes you to sin, plug it out, for it is better, to enter into life, maimed, disabled, if you like, than it is, to go into, eternal, darkness, we have to, be like Joseph, you remember, the story of Joseph, when Potiphar's wife, tried to seduce him, obviously, there must have been, some chance of success, but what Joseph, made up his mind, that he couldn't do this, it would have been wrong, it would have been sinful, and so he avoided, being with her, that was the way he took, that was, these were the measures, that he took, in order to make sure, that the temptation, didn't be, didn't, transform, into, something sinful,

I believe, were to watch, what we watch, because the eye, remember again, Genesis chapter 3, after the devil, had reasoned with Eve, and had persuaded her, to look at the, she looked, at the fruit, that God had told her, not to eat, and she saw, she saw the fruit, and through seeing, the temptation, began to grow, and to become, stronger, and stronger, we are to watch, what, we watch, on TV, on the internet, and you know, we live in a world, where the internet, has transformed, our lives, but it also, has meant, an avenue, where, a whole generation, of people, have become, addicted, and you know, what I'm talking about,

I don't have to be specific, there are younger people here, you know, what I'm talking about, and it's corrupted, the minds, of a whole generation, of younger people, so that even, non-Christians, are deeply concerned, about how it has affected, the expectations, of young people, as to what, a real relationship, is, and don't tell me, it hasn't come into the church, because it has, everything, out there, can come into the church, can affect, the minds, of Christians, and that's all, I'm going to say, you know, what I'm talking about, I heard, Derek Thomas, about a month ago, giving, a very, very solemn lecture, to ministers, about this, he's talking about, who one of his students, came to him with, and he said, that he was, addicted, and, he said to him, come with me, for a walk, and take your computer, with me, so off they went, for a walk, down to the river, and he said, to the student, throw your computer, into the river, the student said, well I can't, he said, well that's your choice, if you're right,

I offend you, if it causes you to sin, plug it out, we are to, we are to, we are to, we are to, put to death, that's, the life, of the Christian, and we're to, fill our life, with good things, we are to, replace, what we might, do, we're not to, leave ourselves, idle, the devil finds, work for, idle hands to do, there's a host, of ways, in which we, as Christians, could fill our lives, with things that glorify God, one of my greatest, I have many regrets, in my life, one of my regrets, is that I did, I didn't read more, and I didn't get to know more, if ever there was a day, when you can become, educated, you can read, you can fill your mind, with all kinds of, information, that will, that will enrich, your life, and that will give you, the kind of knowledge, with which, to become, a more mature person, and yet, we waste, so much time, don't we, the devil, always finds work, for idle hands to do, doesn't he, one of my regrets, is not learning, to play a musical instrument, properly, one of my regrets, is not learning, another language, there are so many, opportunities, that take away, idleness, and emptiness, in which you can, get involved, what about the church, what about the gospel, are you telling me, that there's nothing, for you to do, there's nothing, for you to get involved, and of course, there is, there's loads, for you to, occupy your life, and your time, and your resources,

[42 : 03] God wants us, to be busy people, he has given us, our lives, to put to use, for his kingdom, as you read your bible, you come across, questions, issues, and they're, they're intriguing, to you, go and, become experts, on them, you have the resources, the books, it's all available, there's so much, we can do, for the Lord, and remind yourself, also, that just because, you have overcome, temptation once, you're going to be, tempted again, and again, and again, see the time, is not as it is, on the clock, so I apologize, for that, now perhaps, there are, some of you, who are thinking, how can this be, a preparation, for communion service, you're supposed to be, encouraging these people, not reminding them, of how they should be living, well I'm the same, I'm exactly the same, there's no separation, between you and me, if I'm going to be, well I'm not going to be, with you next week, but if I was,

I'd still be, talking about, what I'm talking, because, I'll tell you why, because, as well as being, a reminder, of what Jesus did, to cleanse us, and wash us, from our sin, communion, is a determination, it's an occasion, when we sit, and we remind ourselves, of the determination, that ought to exist, I believe that, when we see, the cross of Jesus Christ, we see sin, in all its horror, and that's why, when somebody, comes to me, and saying, I've been struggling, with sin, I've been struggling, so intensely, and I'm such a failure, in the Christian life, I don't think, I should sit, at the Lord's table, I say to that person, the Lord's table, is exactly, where you should be, because, it's at the Lord's table, that we are, reminded of the horror, of sin, and the greatness, of Jesus Christ, the completeness, of his death, on the cross, as the payment, for our sin, so you come, to the Lord's table, conscious, as you are, of all that you have, failed to do, of what we've been, reading here tonight, to put to death, to not yield ourselves, our members, as instruments, of unrighteousness,

John puts it perfectly, these things, I write to you, he says, so that you, will not sin, that's the aim, that's what we've been, talking about this evening, the aim, and the objective, is so that, we will not sin, so you go out, into, even tonight, the rest of the evening, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, if God spares us, these are the objectives, so that you, will not sin, but, if anyone, does sin, we have, an advocate, with the father, Jesus, Christ, the righteous, he, is a propitiation, tending sacrifice, for our sin, and that's, the gospel, that's what we have, to lay hold on, tonight, we are confessing, all the ugliness, of our own hearts, but surely, in that forgiveness, that God offers, and assures us, surely, in that forgiveness, there is also, that determination, to live, the new life, and to overcome, by the power, of the Holy Spirit, now,

I'm not going to, join in prayer, I'm going to go, straight into the singing, and, we're going to sing, in, on page 157, Psalm, 119, sing psalms, it's verse 9, Psalm 119, how can the young, keep their life, pure, by doing, what your word, demands, I seek you, with my heart, and soul, let me not, stray, from your commands, your word, I've hidden, in my heart, to keep me, from offending you, praise me to you, oh Lord, my God, teach me, your statutes, firm, and true, Psalm 119, and that whole section, four stanzas, page 157, and we're going to, stand to sing, how can the young, keep their life, pure, by doing, what your word, demands,

I see, you, with my heart, and soul, and soul, let me, not stray, from you, come on, your word, I've hidden, in my heart, to keep me, from offending you, praise, praise, praise, praise, praise, praise, to you, O Lord, my God, teach me, you're such, you're firm, and true, each law, proceeding, from your mouth, I gladly, with my lips, at home,

[47 : 34] I love to follow you, commands, and others love to count their toll, I meditate upon your grace, and on your precepts I repent, I take delight in your degrees, your word, I never will neglect.

Now may the grace of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the communion and fellowship of the Holy Spirit, rest on and abide with each one of us, both now and always.

Amen.