



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Romans 6:1-14

"Shall We Continue in Sin?"

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] Now I hesitate to say all of that because we're coming to Romans chapter 6 and this is a difficult chapter. It is difficult for me, and I know it's difficult for some of you. But let's turn to it now and listen as I read the first fourteen verses of this 6th chapter of Paul's greatest epistle.

The apostle writes,

"What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that have died to sin, live any longer therein? Know ye not, that as many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin. (That word is literally has been justified from sin, and so it is a forensic expression. He that has died has been justified from sin.) Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him: (Incidentally, almost all of these expressions translated dead refer to the definite event. He that has died is freed from sin. Now if we have died with Christ, he's not talking about the fact that there is a deadness to sin in us, but he is talking about the fact that at that point in time we died with

respect to sin.) Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace."

Let's bow together in a moment of prayer.

[Prayer removed from audio.]

[Message] The subject for today in the continuation of our study of Paul's greatest letter, the Epistle to the Romans is taken right from the 1st verse of the 6th chapter of epistle, the chapter that we're looking into now, "Shall We Continue in Sin?" In the opening chapters of this book up to this point the apostle has given us a picture of men as sinners saved from the penalty of sin. But now he looks primarily at men who have been saved, that is as saints saved from the power of sin. Sin as guilt has been dealt with earlier, but sin as a power in the Christian's life is now dealt with. Formerly the topics were wrath, eternal wrath, and justification. But now it is slavery and sanctification that is before us.

Justification, someone has said, is restoration to life. Sanctification is restoration to health. When a person has Jesus Christ he has not only justification but he also has sanctification. He has justification as his position. He is righteous and satisfies the righteous claims of a holy God in Christ. But also he possesses ideally sanctification. But that sanctification is something that is worked out in a process in his daily life. Justification brings us from the tomb, to use another figure.

Sanctification delivers us from the old clothes that characterize the life of the tomb. We think of John chapter 11 and Lazarus' resurrection, and when Lazarus came forth from the tomb at the word of Christ, it reminds us of the fact that we have life and justification through the word of the Lord Jesus Christ. But then Lazarus it was commanded that others by should loose Lazarus from his garments. And so it is necessary for a believer in Jesus Christ to put off the old threads and put on new set forth in the word of God as that characteristic of the new life in Christ.

When we think about the Christian life three possibilities are often set forth before us. It seems that it is possible some, evidentially, think to happily go on in sin. Historically, this was called antinomianism. And historically, it had reference that some believers felt that Christians were no longer under the law. But the word has been broadened out considerably since its historical occurrence in the days of Luther and others, and now has been used to comprehend all of the kinds of teaching that, in effect, say once we have believed in Jesus Christ we may be rather loose in our Christian life. Not simply freedom from the Law of Moses in the biblical sense, but freedom from the moral law of God. The Bible speaks very plainly against that, and I'm sure most of us recognize that that is no real problem for us.

The apostle speaks about it in verse 1 when he says, "Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?" And answers his question, "God forbid." The Apostle John in his first letter says that, "Whosoever is born of God does not practice sin." And so the idea of being born again or being a believer in Christ and living in sin is something that is contrary to the teaching of the Bible. We do not have any right to say to anyone on the authority of the Bible that you say you have believed in Jesus Christ, and therefore, you are a Christian if their lives are lives characterized by sin. If sin is the bent of life of a professing believer there is no hope in the Bible given for that particular individual. We, of course, do not know who is saved and who is not saved, but we can say this, "By their fruits you shall know them." And if their life is truly characterized by sin, it's not the life of salvation.

Now there are many things one must talk about in the light of this, and we'll have to leave that for the moment. It is possible for a person for a temporary period of time to live as a carnal

believer, but he then becomes subject to the discipline of God. And if he persists, his life, his physical life may be taken from the earth. It is impossible for a believer to go on living in sin.

So we reject that happily going on in sin, that's just not what the New Testament teaches. Others have professed a doctrine of perfection. Now that is a technical term and it does not mean sinlessness in the sense in which we might understand it. Because of those who believed in perfection such as the Wesleyans did not believe in sinlessness. They just believed it was possible to have perfection in the biblical sense. And their definition of sin was obviously different from our definition of sin, because they would acknowledge that certain small sins did characterize those who were living the life of perfection. The Bible speaks very strongly against that. Again, the Apostle John in the first chapter of his epistle says, "If we say we do not have sin then we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. And if we say we have not sinned we make him a liar and his word is not in us."

So sinlessness is not an option for a biblical believer either. What the Apostle Paul sets forth, and I think all of the New Testament sets forth as the Christian life, may be put down under this little phrase, non-continuance under the power of sin. What the apostle suggests is not that a believer does not lapse into sin, but that a believer is characterized by non-continuance under the power of sin. That is, a believer does not live under the dominion of sin. There is a definitive breach when we are born again with sin. While we may lapse into sin as believers we cannot live a sinful life. Then we do not have salvation. What kind of salvation is it that does not deliver us from sin?

So non-continuance under the power of sin is, I think, the view of the Apostle Paul, and it's set forth here in Romans chapter 6. Let me ask you to notice just a few texts, and I'll read the key points again. In the 1st verse he says not shall we sin here but "shall we continue in sin?" Later on he will deal with that question in connection with the law. "Shall we continue in sin?" Shall we abide in sin? The Greek word is a word that is an intensive word that means to abide, abide constantly. Shall we abide constantly in sin that grace may abound? God forbid.

Notice the 2nd verse. "God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer in it?" You see, he's talking about living in the realm of sin. Then in verse 4, he says, "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." He's talking about the bent of life, the walk of the believer, and positively, it should be in newness of life. In the 6th verse, "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be annulled, that henceforth we should not serve sin." Serve sin, that is be a bond slave to sin; be under the dominion of sin. Verse 9, "Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him." And that dominion is that which pertains to us who are in him. In verse 12 we read, "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts." Its reigning, the reigning power of sin that is before us. And finally, in verse 14, a verse that really puts the capstone, I think, on what I'm trying to say, "For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace."

So the apostle then is seeking to deal with the question of the dominion of sin in the believer's life. Now let's look at our passage, and the first thing that we want to notice is the precept of deliverance, knowledge. Now it's very interesting, I think, that the apostle sets it all down to the possession of a certain knowledge. He says for example in the 6th verse, which is probably the key verse of the section, "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him." But notice "knowing this," and then later on he will say the same thing. Verse 9, "Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more." The secret of the happy Christian life is the knowledge of the biblical doctrine of that life.

Now Paul is seeking to answer a question that would have arisen. You know, the apostle you can tell is the kind of man who had constant contact with the people of his day. He argued with them. He discussed with them the things of the word of God. He did not hesitate to go out into the marketplace and preach Christ. He didn't hesitate even if it meant that he might be stoned. He was

stoned many times. He didn't hesitate if it might mean that he would wind up in prison. He was in prisons oft he says.

So he was a person who had constant contact with people, and therefore, he knew the common questions that were lodged against his particular doctrine. And he has just said in Romans 5:20, "But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." He's been preaching that we're justified not by works of righteousness which we have done but by grace. He's said, in effect, it's not from joining the church. It's not from observing the ordinance of baptism. It's not from sitting at the Lord's Table. It's not by education. It's not by culture. It's not by doing benevolent works that a man is justified. It is through faith in Jesus Christ. It is not by works at all. "To him that worketh not but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted with a view to righteousness." So the apostle has been preaching that salvation is not by what we do. As a matter of fact, he has said God forgives those things that we do on the basis of free grace.

Now that's a very difficult thing for the natural man to respond to because every one of us is born with a legalistic spirit. We are self-righteous. We're born Pharisees. So being born Pharisees we think we get to heaven on the basis of what we do. And the idea that a man should get to heaven not on the basis of what we do, but on the basis of what Christ has done offends self-righteous men. And the vast majority of people are self-righteous men. In fact, all of us ultimately are. We're born Pharisees. It's the work of the gospel to deliver us from Pharisaism or legalism and bring us to the knowledge of Christ in grace.

So we're born Pharisees, we're born again as Arminians. And it's the work of the Holy Spirit to bring us to the doctrines of the sovereignty of God. In other words, it is legalism that troubles us before we were saved. It's conditionalism that is the great destroyer of spiritual health after we have been saved. The "if" kind of gospel preaching that is characteristic of many evangelicals even.

Well, you can see what people would have said. They would have said look here, Paul. You say that a man is justified by grace, not by what he does. You say that if men sin the grace of God covers their sin. And you say that the law was given to men to make men sin. That is, to reveal sin

to them and to stir them up so that by being stirred up to sin further they would really see what was in them. And now you sin where sin abounded grace does much more abound. The law was given to make men sin, to make them see their sin, and to make them sin further so that they would see it that much more easily. And you say that when men sin grace covered their sin. And you say God is glorified in this kind of activity. Well, Paul, your doctrine seems to say this that the more we sin the more grace God pours out to cover that sin and the more he is glorified. So why not just go on sinning in order that grace may go on covering sin and God may go on getting more and more glory? I imagine the first time someone said that to Paul he stopped a little puzzled as most people do when they are faced with the first time some question that some natural man has thought up in opposition to the gospel of God.

But now Paul, having heard that many times is well prepared for it. He says, he brings it up himself. So it is clear from this, incidentally, he's been preaching a gospel that causes men to say just this. And if you're preaching the gospel and you don't have that kind of response, then you are not preaching Paul's gospel. If you preached Paul's gospel you will get the same objections to the truth that Paul got. "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?"

Many years ago when I was in theological seminary, I had a good friend who felt led of God to go out to India as a missionary. Well, he went out there, and he stayed about one term and then the Lord took his life. He was a very good man and a very good preacher of the gospel. He sent me a copy of his progress as he was attempting to learn the language, and finally, I remember he wrote a letter to all of us who were his correspondents and he told us of his first preaching of the gospel in the land of India. He went down to a marketplace in the center of town and they stood up and he started preaching in the language that he had learned for the first time.

He wrote back and said the first objection that he got was "Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?" And I just made a mental note well Ervin Grubbs is preaching the gospel that Paul preached. I used to tell students that in the study of Romans and a few years ago one of them wrote me back after he graduated from seminary and said this, that he was engaged in planting a new

church near O'Hare Airport in Chicago. He said that he thought I would be encouraged to know that your students are following in the Pauline tradition. At our second service I preached on salvation by grace, Ephesians 2:8 and 9. Later I was talking to a Jewish woman who had been there. She almost echoed Paul's rhetorical question in Romans 6:1. I don't like this idea of free forgiveness you were talking about. This would mean I could go out and sin all I want to because God has forgiven all my sin.

Now the next expression, "God forbid," is the Greek expression, *μὴ γένοιτο* [*mē genoito*], and he wrote in his letter, *μὴ γένοιτο* [*mē genoito*]. And I thought, now well Jim Hinds is preaching the gospel that Paul preached because he's getting the same kind of objections that the Apostle Paul did. "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?"

Now the apostle is a very direct man. This is probably one of the reasons why he spent a few nights in prison too. Because first of all, he says good heavens, no! That's the way someone has rendered *μὴ γένοιτο* [*mē genoito*]. Good heavens, no! Philips renders it, what a ghastly thought or better what a ghastly thought since he is an Englishman. That's why probably what he said. Why you can see that this is quite a problem. Here is heaven for nothing. Can mankind bear such breathtaking generosity? No. Mankind cannot naturally. They react and rebel against the idea of a free salvation.

Now the apostle then, incidentally, that's what we call a red herring. There's lots of red herrings. One of them is do you believe in the sovereignty of God then you cannot preach the gospel. That's a red herring. Do you know what a red herring was? Well back in the old days where they hunted foxes, maybe they hunt foxes today I don't know, but not on a fox hunt very often, but anyway fox hunters use to hunt foxes and some men didn't like them hunting on their property. So when they would see a fox enter into their particular piece of property and here are some horses, men on horses coming, they would just pull out a red herring, a dead fish, and they would take it and they would string it along the scent of the fox so that the direction of the fox would be in a different

direction. The dogs would arrive there and the scent of the red herring was so strong they lost the scent of the fox. That's what's called a red herring. That's a red herring. Well one of them is like this. You are a conservative politically are you not? Then you don't care for people at all, that kind of thing. That's just a red herring as I say. Or you're a Calvinist, well you cannot believe in preaching the gospel. How foolish! That's another red herring that an Arminian likes to draw across the scent of the fox as it enters the field.

Well this is a red herring that is brought before us here. "Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?" The apostle says good heavens, no! What a ghastly thought! Paul is not speaking, incidentally, in falling into sin. Everyone falls into sin including the Apostle Paul. Although he did say in 1 Corinthians 4 that he knew nothing against himself. He went on to say, however, even in that I'm not justified because I'm to stand before the judgment seat of Christ, and then the hidden things of darkness shall be brought to light. He's not speaking of falling into sin. He's speaking of contentedly continuing in sin. And the first thing he does is just directly dismiss the thought as a blasphemous idea. "Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? God forbid!"

Now he launches into an explanation. It's a doctrinal explanation, and you'll have to follow along rather closely to get what Paul is driving at. So let me read a few verses and just make a few comments. We can spend a long time on this, but I'm not sure that we would necessarily be more enlightened as a result of it. The essence of his thought is very simple. The Lord Jesus has died for sin and with respect to sin. We died in him because he's our legal representative. He's our covenantal representative. And as a result of the identification that we have with him there has occurred a once for all definitive breach with sin. Justification is incompatible with non-sanctification. If a man is justified, he must be in process of being sanctified the apostle says and he explains.

So by our union with the last Adam, the Lord Jesus Christ, in his work, his death, his burial, his resurrection we have been severed from the dominion of sin. Now what that means essentially is

that, well let me read verse 3 before I say what it means essentially. "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?"

Now the apostle does not have in mind water baptism here except only remotely. He's talking about something that really identifies us with Christ in his death, burial, and resurrection. Only our Lord, only the work of the Holy Spirit who takes a believer and unites him with Jesus Christ are these things really accomplished; only in them are they really accomplished. He's talking about a real baptism into death, a real baptism into his burial, a real baptism into his resurrection, a real identification. It's judicial but it is also real. In other words, what Paul says then is that when Jesus Christ died on Golgotha we died on Golgotha. When Jesus Christ was placed in Joseph of Arimathea's tomb, we were placed in Joseph of Arimathea's tomb. When on the first day of the week the Lord Jesus rose again from the dead from that tomb in bodily resurrection, we also arose with him. He is our representative, and what he did is reckoned to us. Not only what he did for sin in paying the penalty of sin, but what he has done with respect to sin in living now in a new sphere of existence. Listen to what he says,

"Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been united together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection."

He's drawing on the relationship of identification between every believer, every one a member of the people of God and the head of the redeemed, the Lord Jesus Christ. He's done this for us, and we have done this in him, Paul says. The 6th verse, I think, is probably the key verse of this opening section. We'll spend just a moment more with it. "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him." What is our old man? We think immediately of our fathers, the old man. Some of you think of the boss, the old man. Or you may think of the preacher at your church, the old

man, or something like that. But Paul doesn't have that in mind. When he says the old man he's talking about a doctrinal fact.

Now in learning the meaning of terms in the Bible you must look, of course, at the context. There isn't anything in chapter 6 that I know of that would definitely identify this, but if you want to go back to chapter 5 light I'm sure will break forth. Because you see, he's just been talking about Adam. He said, "Therefore, as by one man sin entered into the world and death by sin, so death passed upon all men. For all sinned in this one man." The old man, Adam, so that the old man is Paul's expression for all that we were in Adam. "Knowing this, that our old man has been crucified with him," we don't have to crucify the old man. We don't have to try to put to death the old man. Paul says the old man has been crucified. Later on in the 8th chapter he will say by the Spirit you must put to death the deeds of the body, but he's not saying that here. He's saying the whole history of man in relationship to Adam came to an end for believers in Jesus Christ.

"Knowing this, that our old man has been crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed." Only one point need be mentioned. When Paul says, "the body of sin," he does not suggest that the body is inherently sinful. Adam had a body, but his body was not sinful. The sin principle for a time did not even dwell in him. The Lord Jesus had a body. The sin principle did not dwell in him. When Paul says "the body of sin" he uses that expression "of sin" as descriptive. And he is saying simply that it is the body of the instrumentality of sin; the body as the means by which sin operates.

So our old man, all that we were in Adam, has been crucified together with him that the body as the instrument of sin might be annulled; that is that the work of sin might be annulled that it might be rendered inoperative in the life of the believer. And Paul further explains in the last clause that "henceforth we should not serve sin." We should not go on serving sin. So the believer then by virtue of what Christ has done and what we have done in him is not only delivered from the penalty of sin but he's delivered from the reigning power of sin.

Now this is worked out in time through the experience of sanctification. Isn't it interesting some of us were saved when we were five years of age, some ten, some fifteen, some twenty, some twenty-five, such as I and the Lord keeps us here all these years after all the years that it takes to sanctify. When we're saved in a moment of time but sanctification is a long process for most of us and it is never finished as long as we are here on the earth. So don't be surprised then that we don't immediately experience complete deliverance from the sin principle in our members. This is something God, evidentially, thinks it necessary to take a lengthy period of time. We have to be taught a lot of things. We have to be taught discipline. We have to be taught patience. We have to be taught what it means to actually fall from the communion we enjoy with the Lord God and experience often the judgments of a loving Father in chastisement.

So he says that we should not "henceforth serve sin." Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield who was one of the greatest of the theologians of the 20th Century has said with reference to Romans 6 in one of his writings, "He cures our sinning precisely by curing our sinful nature. He makes the tree good that the fruit may be good. He eradicates our sinfulness."

Now he's not talking about eradication in the sense of some that is that when we believe in Christ the old nature is eradicated and we live in sinlessness. No, he is talking about a gradual eradication of sinfulness that takes place in a believer as long as he is here on the earth. Finally, completed only at the coming of Christ or at our death. "He eradicates our sinfulness by operating directly on us by his renewing action through the Holy Spirit." It is one of the greatest truths in the Bible to me that once a person has come into the experience of salvation in Jesus Christ and knows that the penalty of his sin is removed he has the assurance of God in heaven that the Holy Spirit has come to take up his residence in him to begin and complete the work of sanctification.

And just as one is a work of grace so is the other a work of grace. Just as one takes place through the instrumentality of faith so does the other take place through the instrumentality of faith. Sanctification is just as much a work of grace through faith as salvation is a work of grace through faith. Often we think we are saved by grace through faith but we've got to work out our salvation for

ourselves. Oh, you say that's exactly what Paul says. "Work out your own salvation." Yes he does. But he adds, "But it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." And furthermore in that same epistle, he said, "Being confident of this very thing that he who hath begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ."

So if you're a saved individual the work of sanctification is going on in spite of your striving, in spite of your rebellion, in spite of your scheming, in spite of all of the things that you do that you think possibly frustrate the work of God, he is so working that in the end you're going to be sanctified.

Now he may have to pass you through a lot of very disheartening experiences, some tragedies perhaps, very unpleasant things just like a father does a child. Father calls in the son and says, "Son, did you do that?" He doesn't have to have an answer. Guilt is written all over his face. Finally, he says, "Yes." Okay, he must be punished. Where's the razor strap or where's the brush or whatever it is that you use. Or if it's some other method of discipline you use the other method of discipline. That's the way your children learn. They learn by discipline. They learn by other things too, but they also learn by discipline. Apply the board of education to the seat of learning and a lot takes place. Let me assure you.

So don't neglect that. But nevertheless that's the father seeking to bring that child to maturity. So when he reaches the age of twenty-one he can say, "There's my son and I'm proud of him." He's not perfect, but he's learned a great deal. He's matured now and he knows how to live in this world. That's what God is doing with his saints. He's a Father. He's a good Father. And because he's a Father he does discipline, and he will not allow his children to be under the dominion of sin. Now if you persist he'll exercise discipline that might even lead to physical death. In the Corinthian's case some were weak, some were sickly, some had fallen asleep in physical death.

So Paul says, "Our old man has been crucified with him that the body of sin might be annulled, that henceforth we should not go on serving sin." He says that for he who has been justified is "freed from sin." That's an interesting expression. In Scotland they use to speak of an

individual who had paid the penalty because of his particular crime as being justified. You will find under Scottish law that he was spoken of as being justified. When they executed a man in Edinburgh they put up a notice, so and so was justified at the market cross upon High Street there in the city of Edinburgh. So and so was justified at the market cross this morning at eight o'clock. What does that mean? It means he paid the penalty for his crime. He is now living in another sphere. He's not too happy about that necessarily, but nevertheless, he's in another sphere of life and the law has no more relationship to him. He's finally a free man not under bondage any longer.

Well, Paul is using that as an illustration. He's saying he that has died in Christ has been justified from his sin. The penalty has been paid for sins and sin. And now he lives as a new creature in Christ. But he's still dragging around the old body in which the sin principle is dwelling. Verse 10, "For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God," and we in him. Incidentally, that cannot mean that Jesus Christ became unresponsive to sin. He never was responsive to it. It means he paid the penalty for sin, thus new life has begun.

Now the apostle in light of that sentence says in the 11th verse, "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." To reckon that we are dead and that we are alive is simply to recognize that we paid the penalty for our sin in our substitute and to reckon, therefore, that we have new life because our penalty has been paid. It's just as simple as that. There is no need to make something so very complicated over it. Reckon yourselves to have died in Christ. Reckon yourselves to be alive in him. Justification and sanctification come by faith. That's a faith word. Furthermore, it's one that is put in the present tense so it's something that is done constantly. As the temptations of life come, as the difficulties of life come it is the responsibility of believers to reckon that they have died to sin, reckoned that they're alive unto God in Christ, and rely upon him to bring deliverance and he will always do it.

There's an interesting incident in the 10th chapter of the Book of Joshua. One the city of Gibeon made a league with the Israelites and then were attacked by five kings, they appealed to Joshua. And Joshua called out his men and they fought a battle with the five kings and defeated them and

they were fleeing. Well they wanted to kill as many of the people as they could after they captured the kings, so they took the kings and put them in a cave and put a big stone up against it and set a guard there and then they went out and did the mopping up operation. And when they came back they still had those five kings. And so Joshua called the leaders of the children of Israel together, he brought out the kings, he laid them down on the ground, and he said now I want you to princes or you chiefs to come and put your foot on the neck of these kings, and then he said, "And so shall the Lord do for you toward all your enemies." And with that he just pulled out his sword and cut off their heads. In other words, the kings did nothing other than the heads of the tribes and the leaders of Israel did nothing more than put their foot on the neck of the king. It was Joshua, the great leader, who slew the kings. That's all we're asked to do here. To reckon yourselves to be dead unto sin and alive unto God. It is God the Holy Spirit who brings deliverance in the Christian life. He wants us simply to get out of the way and allow him to work. The principle of deliverance is yielding. It's a moral matter just as say life leads to works over the crucifixion of the old man leads to the yielded life.

In the 13th verse the apostle says, "Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God." That's put in a tense that makes this a very definite decisive act. Yield yourselves unto God, as an individual freed alive from the dead and free from the dominion of sin. It's the kind of decision that is once for all but carries many responsibilities thereafter. Like a man sworn into the armed services. One act but oh how much of his life thereafter is affected by that one decision.

Yesterday in this auditorium I was standing down just here and a beautiful young bride came down the aisle; anxious mother sitting right there, and handsome young man. And as they all arrived here and were ready I said a few words about marriage, read the Scripture, had a brief word of prayer, and turned to the young man and said, "Scott, will thy have this woman to be thy lawfully wedded wife? Will thou love her," and so forth. And he answered, "I will." And she answered a similar question, "I will." A very simple little answer, but oh how many consequences that simple little

answer has. The poor man did not realize what he was doing. [Laughter] But he was happy about it and so was she. So happy she just broke down and cried during the ceremony, and I don't blame her. He was a handsome young man. But anyway, that's the kind of decision that is called upon here when the apostle says, "Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God." Recognize your married relationship to him.

And finally, the apostle concludes with a promise, and I must conclude too. "For sin shall not have dominion over you." Isn't that a magnificent promise? This is for a believer. "Sin shall not have dominion over you." Not that a believer shall not commit a sin, lapse into sin, but sin shall not have dominion over us. We cannot live the old life in slavery to sin. "For you are not under the law but under grace." The law brings servitude, but grace brings the yielded life and with it the desire to please the Lord God and the power to do it. Someone has said, "Grace is nothing more than God doing something for us." That's the way we live in the Christian life. God doing something for us.

Well, the provision of God is complete in our union with Jesus Christ. We are justified and the sanctification process begins. In the positional sense we are already sanctified. But essentially, the sanctification process begins and will continue as long as we're in the flesh. The proper response is to reckon on it. Faith does not look at the difficulties, the trials, the things that might stand in the way. It looks to the Promiser, and "he that hath begun a good work in us will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ." And the power of God waits to accomplish that in the life of every single believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. I think this is most remarkable that in the 4th verse he says, "That like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." Paul says something similar over in Ephesians 1 when he says he wants them to know the "exceeding greatness of his power to us who would believe according to his mighty power when he raised him up from the dead and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places." The measure of the divine power that works in the body of the believer is the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

In the Old Testament God told Israel I will work for you like I did when I brought you through the Red Sea. But now he says I am at work in the life of believers with the power that I manifested in raising up the Son of God from the dead. What a magnificent power. The Lord Jesus Christ was thrice dead in that grave. Dead by the crucifixion; he was dead by the pierced hands and feet. He was dead by the Spirit thrust. He was dead by the temporary enswathement which wrapped even his head and excluded breath. Was there ever a more magnificent expression of divine power than the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ? Those miracles he performed when he gave sight to blind eyes, when he enabled the deaf to hear, when he enabled the dumb to speak, when he enabled to pulsic limbs to receive healing, all of those things transpired in the one miracle of the resurrection. It is the mighty power of God that works in believers. Therefore, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin and alive unto God in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Why even a Peter can walk on water when he looks unto Jesus "the author and finisher of our faith." And you are sufficient for the trials and experiences of life as you too follow the apostles directions and reckon yourselves to be what you are having believed in Christ; forgiven and now indwelt by the mighty Holy Spirit who is able to give you a complete deliverance from the dominion of sin. May God help us to experience it.

Let's stand for the benediction.

[Prayer] Heavenly Father, we praise Thee and thank Thee for this wonderful promise, "sin shall not have dominion over us." For those Lord who might be here without Christ, O, give them no rest until they rest in him. And for those of us Lord who have known Thee for a long time but perhaps have not measured up to our own aspirations we thank Thee for the encouragement of Thy word. Enable us truly Lord in the presence of sin to reckon ourselves to be alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Enable us to lean upon Thee and the mighty power of our triune God in all of the experiences of our lives. For Jesus' sake. Amen.