

**ALIVE & FREE: Sin's Power Overthrown**  
Romans 6:8-14

*"Let not **sin**, therefore, reign in your mortal body..."*

**Introduction:** The numbers are in, and they are not encouraging, nor surprising. Statistics can certainly lie or can paint a picture that does not match reality, but they can also affirm what is already observed. Late in 2025, results from Arizona Christian University were released from their Cultural Research Center called the "*American Worldview Inventory*", which featured data based on responses collected from 2,000 adults in the U.S in May, 2025. An overwhelming majority agreed (84%) that sin exists and that it is real. However, the numbers dropped off precipitously with a statement declaring "I am a sinner". The numbers were 'better' among 'born-again' believers, but only 60% of other professed Christians would identify themselves as sinners.

**George Barna**, a respected pollster, attributed the lack of unanimous belief in Christian views about sin to the lack of discussion about the topic in American churches:

*"The job of the local church is to educate people about God's ways. Yet, a 2019 Pew Research study that analyzed sermon content across the nation determined that just **3%** of all sermons preached even mentioned sin. That's a devastating bodyblow to the church world.*

*Students will remain ignorant when their teachers fail to inform them of critical information and consequences. For an overwhelming majority of Christian churches to suppress the reality of sin...is a travesty."*

If we step back for a moment to try to diagnose **why** this reality exists, it is not a long walk to take. Our enemy wants nothing more than to convince the world that sin is not real, that judgment is fantasy, and that those who say otherwise are the crazy ones. From a human perspective, there is a polarizing swing away from the old "*hell-fire and brimstone*", *pound the pulpit* types of presentations, where God seemed constantly angry, and instead replaced with a lovey-dovey, gentle, and impotent deity who is hoping desperately that someone would choose Him! In our **consumer driven model of church**, people want to be as *inclusive as possible*, do not want to offend, stir up controversy, or give anyone a reason to leave. What is left is merely giving people tips for life, inspirational quips, and a dose of positivity that lasts about as long as the sugar rush from your donut! Now it is true, NO ONE wants to be needlessly offensive, nor do we want to drive people away, but there is a deeper reality that we must affirm: ***sin is real, the gospel is by definition OFFENSIVE, and we are more concerned about whether people have offended GOD more than we are if God offended them.***

*"Describing all people as 'basically good at heart' is the culturally-comfortable dismissal of in that millions of people use to ignore the possibility that their love affair with disobedience to God is a life-threatening spiritual disease with eternal consequences" <sup>1</sup>*

Sin is a tyrant. Before Christ, sin was a slave-master, holding us hostage until it could deliver us to death (Rom. 6:6, 12-14, 17; John 8:34; 1 Cor. 15:56). Sin separates us from God (Isa. 59:2), hardens our hearts

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.christianpost.com/news/barna-calls-churches-failure-to-preach-about-sin-a-bodyblow.html>

and makes our minds calloused (1 Tim. 4:2; Eph. 4:18), and deals in lies/deception (Heb. 3:13). We sin when we ACT externally but also when we think and desire wrongly (Matt. 15:19), making sin insidious and underhanded. We can sin when we do badly or refuse to do what is right (James 4:17). Because sin falls short of God's glory (Rom. 3:23), the nature of sin is both *unbelief and rebellion*. Sin is the reason a society decays (see the difference between Genesis 3 and 4!), why creation itself groans under that decay (Rom. 8:20-21), and why there is physical suffering, since we are moving closer and closer to death as our bodies are under its curse. Sin brings **brokenness in its wake**, which is why you experience pain, conflict, jealousy, selfishness pride, and hurt, and also why we think that all of that is someone else's fault. Sin makes this world impossible to truly enjoy since pleasure is fleeting and leaves us wanting more. **If we do not think sin is a problem, we have truly buried our head in the sand and chosen ignorance over truth.** But the problem with ignorance is that it CANNOT bring solutions needed.

This is why the message of the gospel is "**GOOD NEWS!**" When we come to grips and honest assessment of our sin, we realize there is HOPE for the sinner in the person and work of Jesus Christ. Though we deserved His judgment and wrath, Jesus fulfilled all righteousness and died to take our place on the cross, so that when we believe in Him by faith, God **declares us righteous** because of Christ's imputed righteousness. Sin's **penalty** is paid for, so we no longer have to face judgment. But sin's **power** has also been overthrown, so we no longer have to sin, and we await one day when we will not have to deal with the **presence of sin**. It is this second part of salvation, overcoming the power of sin in our lives, which we will focus on this morning. If **justification means "declared righteous"**, **sanctification means "being made holy"**, or to say it another way:

*Sanctification is a work of God's grace in our life of progressing in holiness, cleansing our minds and hearts of sin, and becoming transformed into the likeness of Jesus.*

We will look at the new realities we have in Jesus through grace in terms of our **interaction with sin, both in how we think AND act.** The goal is to live a righteous, holy, and obedient life to the glory of God BECAUSE we have **died to sin and been made alive in Christ.**

### The Realities of Being IN Christ (Rom. 6:2-10)

*By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? <sup>3</sup> Do you not know that all of us who have been **baptized** into Christ Jesus were **baptized** into his death? <sup>4</sup> 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.*

*<sup>5</sup> For if we have been **united** with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. <sup>6</sup> 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. <sup>7</sup> For one who has died has been set free from sin. <sup>8</sup> Now if we have **died** with Christ, we believe that we will also **live** with him. <sup>9</sup> We know that Christ, being **raised** from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. <sup>10</sup> For the death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God.*

How did the two tyrannical towers fall? How was sin overcome? When Jesus was nailed to the cross, God poured out His wrath on sin onto His Son, and Jesus was treated as a sinner, a curse, instead of us (2 Cor. 5:21). When He rose from the grave, He conquered death, since it could no longer hold Him, and signaled the fact that we too would be raised with Him. Salvation means that we are now **IN CHRIST**, our

life hidden with Him (Col. 3:3), our former life having died with Him. This is the **essence of Paul's argument in these 9 verses**. This is an overlapping argument, with each point shining on a different facet, but explaining the same reality.

#### **We are IDENTIFIED with Christ in BAPTISM (3-4)**

In order to emphatically illustrate the fact that justified believers in Jesus Christ have **died to sin**, thus we should not continue to live in it (v. 2), Paul used the physical analogy of **baptism**. We observed it today in the baptisms of these two lovely women, where they were **identified** with Christ, publically, in a ceremonial way that proclaimed what has changed IN them by an external action. By going down into the water and coming up again, it signified the fact that they are in Christ's death and resurrection. When **Christ justifies us**, He makes us **NEW**, which is a quality of character rather than a timeline, and gives us a new heart, new desires, and He being a new master and Lord. In other words, when we are identified with Christ, we are not changed by mere degrees but in radical transformation: *the old has passed away and new has come*.

#### **We are UNITED with Christ in His RESURRECTION (5)**

The next link in the argument chain is the fact that **if we died with Christ**, we would certainly be UNITED with Him in His resurrection. Since death to sin has come, we not only understand the effects today by being made alive, but we know we will also be ULTIMATELY raised from the dead one day. Sin is for this life only, and there will come a day when sin and death will forever be judged and done away with. Sin does not win, and death fails, and we must know that the power both of these have is temporary, and we can look forward in hope that we will not be bound by their presence forever. We have such a short amount of time to be obedient.

#### **We are FREED FROM SLAVERY in His CRUCIFIXION (6-7)**

So we are made new, given hope, but we are still under the bondage of the slavery of sin --- it owned us, and though we had a semblance of freedom, where we could make decisions each day and believed we could control our own destiny, we COULD not save ourselves NOR break free from its shackles on our own. That is why our **old self** – the unredeemed, un-justified, fleshly sinner – had to be **crucified with Christ on the cross** (v. 6). What came down off the cross was something new, like the stripping away of an old shell of ourselves. This will be explained more in depth in chapter 7 where Paul deals with the old and new man, but for now, the point is the fact that our OLD SELF is gone, though we act like he is still around every time we indulge in sin.

#### **We are ALIVE with Christ in His DEATH (8-10)**

In a way to summarize the argument, the death we experience with Christ means that we will **live with Him**. The war is over and Christ won. It was not that Christ won a certain battle but there will be more to come. No, Paul says that *death no longer has dominion*, and that He died to sin *once for all* and now lives to God. The power that sin and death have now in the believer's life are mere shadows, short lived, inflicting damage but not destruction. It's equivalent to a defeated enemy still firing their rockets indiscriminately into the air to inflict pain, but with no real possibility of winning the war. Since the victory is secured, and that we have died WITH CHRIST, the aim now is on the LIVING in Christ.

There is a shift starting in verse 11 that is **important for us to see**. Up to this point in Romans, there is one part of speech and writing that has been missing. Any guesses? What has NOT been part of the letter is any **imperatives**, or commands, for us to DO. We like imperatives, and often look for God or others to tell us what to do (*how do I fix this? What should I do in this circumstance?*). What Paul has done is give us over 6 chapter of **indicatives**, or simply telling us about the reality of the gospel, life, and

sin. Now he pivots and brings in the first **imperatives**. The significance is obvious: we are able to obey, live righteously, and glorify the Lord with our lives BECAUSE of who we are IN CHRIST. This is like being given all the resources to build something, all the instructions, and then being released to actually do it. Or its like receiving such obvious physical attributes, like our young friend Tae Simmons, and then going out and maximizing talents. The reality for believers is that we have been given **all that we need for life and godliness, and then we must obey and live by faith, trusting in the grace that is always provided** (2 Peter 1:3).

### Living Out the New Realities IN Christ (Rom. 6:11-14)

So you also must **consider yourselves** dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

<sup>12</sup> **Let not sin** therefore **reign** in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions. <sup>13</sup> **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. <sup>14</sup> For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law **but under grace**.

#### 1. When growing in SANCTIFICATION, remember and think rightly about your life in Christ (11) –

How a person thinks is imperative in all of life since ignorance is NOT bliss and can lead to terrible decisions and lead to abysmal habits. The word for **consider** refers to *the process of reasoning or calculation, or to the logical result arrived at by such a process*<sup>2</sup>. Since sin is real and is tyrannical, the more we KNOW and UNDERSTAND about it and ourselves in Christ will give us a greater opportunity to combat it. Satan is known as the *Father of lies who deceives out of his own character* (John 8:44). Though he cannot take your salvation away, he can make you THINK he can. You cannot out-sin God's grace, but he will make you think you can. You do not have to BE BETTER after you sinned before you can throw yourself at the feet of Jesus, but Satan will convince you that you are not acceptable to God after you sinned. He wants you to do things in your own strength, think you can never change, and tangle you in a bunch of chains, even though none of them is actually shackling you.

To think differently about our union with Christ means we must think differently about our sin. When we are **tempted to sin**, we must engage our minds and remember that **sin does not reign and God offers grace to resist**. When we **fail** (and we will), **we must NOT condemn ourselves** but rather run in a beeline to Christ and ask for forgiveness (1 John 1:9). When we are lonely or angry or hurt, we do not wallow in self-pity or victimhood, but remember that we are alive in Christ and He never leaves us or forsakes us. When we are locked into ongoing **conflict** with our spouse, we do not merely believe that all the problem lies across the table, but are willing to acknowledge our own sin. When God gives us **prosperity and joy**, we remember that our successes rest on our identity in Him and His grace, not our works or goodness.

*But how does this thought process turn to action steps?*

#### 2. When growing in SANCTIFICATION, stop letting sin rule (12)

The second **imperative** that Paul uses is in the present active, with the idea of *“stop letting sin reign”*. This both a call to *cease* future action and *repent* of present ones. Again, this is NOT simply a “stop it”

<sup>2</sup> Aaron C. Fenlason, *“Belief,”* in *Lexham Theological Wordbook*, ed. Douglas Mangum et al., Lexham Bible Reference Series (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2014).

kind of command that actually gives no help or hope to the struggling. This is a much bigger command than merely pointing out one sin. It is saying stop the practice of letting sin act like it has control over you. The snake of sin and death has been decapitated, but a headless snake is often the most dangerous since it still contains all the venom in its fangs. **Notice** that Paul deals with sin **in our mortal bodies but also our passions**. This is an important addition, since we must turn NOT only from external, action sins like stealing or addictive behaviors, but also those things that originate in our **hearts and minds**. In fact, this is the true battleground over sin.

**Proverbs 4:23** *“Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life”*

Jesus said that it was what *comes out of a person* that defiles him, not what goes in (Matt. 15:11; Mark 7:15). The sins we **act on** are serious, but what goes on beneath the surface is much more caustic and concerning. Things like **envy, anger, bitterness, anxiety, impurity/lust, and idolatry** rumble in our heart long before we act on them. That is why these all have to be actively *“put to death”* (Col. 3:5), along with all of the external sins like sexual immorality, obscene talk, and lying. **REMEMBER, we sin now by choice, not because we HAVE TO**. But we can build up habits of sin just like anything else. We must break these habits by turning from them to something and someone better.

### 3. When growing in SANCTIFICATION, present your whole self fully to God (13)

Finally, Paul gives the same command in both the negative and positive sides of the ledger. “Stop presenting your members (body/self) as instruments of unrighteousness, but as instruments of righteousness.” The word for “instrument” here is often used for weapons of warfare, which is appropriate based on the subject matter. If it’s true that we have died and our life is hidden in Christ, we need to **stop using our bodies, lives, talents, resources, thoughts and emotions** as playgrounds of unrighteousness but rather to glorify God. There are two important reminders here:

- **This means there is NO PLACE OR REALITY OF NEUTRALITY** – We are either using our lives to please the Lord or to please ourselves, either walking by the flesh or the Spirit (Gal. 5:16-24), or in obedience or disobedience. We often think there is this middle ground in our life in Christ that we can somehow not let Christ be Lord over *EVERYTHING, but some things, and that can somehow be pleasing to Him and joyful for us*. And then we wonder why He seems distant or life seems blasé, or we find ourselves smack dab in the middle of apathy.
- **Beware of the sin of OMISSION** – We often focus on what we DO, and rightly so, but the Bible is clear we are accountable to what we **fail to do as well**:

**Romans 14:23b** *“For whatever does not proceed from faith is sin.”*

**James 4:17** *“So whoever knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin.”*

This is a call to **active, full, whole-hearted, joy-filled, and ongoing pursuit of Christ by grace** in honoring Him through obedience, righteousness, and being satisfied in Him. In a war, if one side is given better weaponry than the other, but let those weapons stay in the locker or bunker, we’d call that side foolish. But that is often how we live our Christian life. No plan. No prayer. No urgency. No recognition that the enemy is at the gate and we must take up arms now. We have plans for losing weight, or our kids athletics, or becoming a better salesman, but do we have the same desire to use our life for the sake of

righteousness, or has that somehow become optional for us. For Paul and all of Scripture, it is NOT OPTIONAL, but expected.

Paul ends with a reminder that sin has no power, and that we are under grace, not the Law. The Law could not save, justify, or sanctify, but only grace through our trust in Christ can do that. In some ways, this is a bumner type of sermon, the kind that risks driving people away rather than making them feel comfortable. But being comfortable is not our goal...bringing true comfort is! The fact that we can NOT ONLY be forgiven from our sin but actually be out from its power is amazing! The fact that God has given us EVERYTHING we need to live a life to His glory is amazing! The fact that His grace always is greater than our sin is amazing! That is why we sing! We belt out truth like this:

*What is our hope in life and death?  
Christ alone, Christ alone  
What is our only confidence?  
That our souls to him belong*

*Who holds our days within his hand?  
What comes, apart from his command?  
And what will keep us to the end?  
The love of Christ, in which we stand*

*O sing hallelujah!  
Our hope springs eternal  
O sing hallelujah!  
Now and ever we confess  
Christ our hope in life and death*