

Rebuilding the Foundations - Romans

Part 11

“How to be Holy”

Romans 6:1-14

Pastor Charles Price

Well, good morning. Romans 6:1-14. Paul writes,

"What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection. For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin— because anyone who has died has been freed from sin. Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him. The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus. Therefore, do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. Do not offer any part of yourself to sin as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness. For sin shall not be your master, because you are not under law, but under grace."

That's as far as we are going to read. And if there's one thing every one of us shares in common here this morning, it is our struggle with sin. It doesn't matter how long you have been a Christian it doesn't matter how mature you might be in your walk with God. Sin is a problem. Temptation is a problem, and every one of us faces that. And one of the big questions, probably we face all the time, is 'what are we supposed to do about sin?'

We know we're supposed to be against it, but how are we supposed to be against it practically? How are we supposed to deal with this? I heard about four pastors who met together one day for a time of fellowship, and as they're meeting, one of them said, "You know, people come in our churches, come and talk to us and they share their needs, and some of them share their struggles and their sins. I think this would be a good thing if we shared some of our struggles and failures together." And so, they say, "Well,

that would be a great idea.” So, they began to talk. And the first person said, “To be honest, about my besetting sin. My problem is that although I look good on Sundays, I actually lose my temper through the week and I’m a hard man to live with at home.” Second man said, “Well, I need to confess that I am guilty of drinking too much occasionally.” The third pastor said, “Well, you know, I like golf so much that I often fake being sick on Sundays so I can go and play golf instead.” And the fourth one was quiet. And they said, “Oh, come on, we’ve told you our sins, tell us yours.” And he said, “Well, I really don’t want to.” And they said, “Well, come on, we’ve told you at.” He said, “OK, my big weakness is gossiping, and I can’t wait to get out of here.”

Well, we’ve all got our problems, we’ve all got our sins, there are ones that you struggle with and never trouble me, but they’re ones that I have trouble with and they may never trouble you. That’s true. But how are we going to deal with sin? That is the issue.

Now there are two extreme attitudes to dealing with sin taken by Christians and both of them are addressed in Romans 6. On the one hand, there is what we call legalism, on the other hand, there is license.

Legalism and License

Let me explain these two. Legalism is very, very easy to adopt. It is basically reducing Christian living to a set of rules that we live by. And they make us feel secure because we live in the boundary of those rules. And I’ve known people who have come to Christ and they have had a new liberty and freshness, and little by little you see them begin to become strangled by legalism, usually introduced to them by other Christians, unfortunately. And legalism will say things like this, ‘you shall only listen to approved kinds of music.’ ‘You shall not drink alcohol at any time.’ ‘You shall not approach within 50 centimetres of somebody of the opposite sex you do not intend to marry.’ ‘You shall not wash your car on Sundays.’ ‘You shall always wear a jacket and tie to church, and you will frown on those who don’t.’ And you should be against anything which is called liberal, or it sounds modern.

Now, some of these things may be perfectly legitimate, of course, and it’s perfectly okay to live by these things, but the give away a symptom of legalism is you begin to insist everybody does the same thing and you begin to judge them accordingly. And the Church of Jesus Christ, let’s be utterly honest, is riddled with legalism. That’s one extreme, Paul talks about this in a few moments in this chapter.

The other extreme is license. License, on the other hand, says because God is so overwhelmingly kind, because God is so merciful and gracious and because I have been justified — that's what the early part of Romans has taught us already — before him, and because I'm eternally secure, it doesn't really matter how I live anymore. I can sin and I can come back to God. I can confess it; he will cleanse me and in any case, I am not going to lose my salvation, I'm going to heaven anyway. And so, I begin to live as I please. It's what Dietrich Bonhoeffer — a Lutheran pastor who was put to death in the last few days of the Second World War — called Cheap Grace.

It's very tempting, actually Paul begins this chapter talking about that, because back in the previous chapter, Romans 5:20, almost the end of the chapter, he says, "where sin increased, grace increased all the more." He says, the more sin, the more grace. So, Romans 6:1, Paul, says, "What shall we say? Then shall we go on sinning? So, the grace may increase." It sounds quite logical, doesn't it? He answers it, "By no means. Not at all." But that's a tempting attitude.

And in Romans 6, Paul rejects both legalism and license as the means to holy living, dealing with sin. He rejects legalism in Romans 6:14, he says "You're not under law, but under grace." He rejects license in Romans 6:15. "What then shall we sin? Because we're not in the law, but under grace? By no means", he says again.

So, what is the answer to this dilemma, is it some kind of middle line where it's law but with a bit more liberty than you otherwise might have allowed? Or it's a license with a little bit of restraint to stop yourself going too far. Or is it something altogether different? And I want to suggest to you this morning that I'm going to show you that Paul says from this chapter it is actually something altogether different.

Now, there are two things in the first part of Romans 6, I want to talk about. There are some things that we need to 'know'. That's the first thing Paul says "Don't, you know, don't you know," so there are certain things we need to know.

That's the first thing we talk about. And then there are certain things we need to 'do', because also and then later in the second part of Romans 6, which you look at next week, he continues that, but that certain things we're supposed to do. Now, please don't take a nap during the knowing bits and wake up for the doing bits, because that is a sure recipe for becoming legalistic again.

Because there's a tendency around to say, "Don't bore me with theology. Don't give me doctrine. Just tell me what to do." Well, actually, if you understand the doctrine, you'll work out what to do.

And it is vital that we do understand what we need to know, because doing what we're supposed to do is based on knowing what we're supposed to know. And it's my conviction that spiritual experience actually begins in the mind.

With knowing, with thinking, with believing. And I won't go into that now, but that is important.

To be Holy... What we need to Know

First of all, then there are certain things we need to know, he says in Romans 6:3. "Don't you know?" Now he tells them what they ought to know. He says in Romans 6:16. "Don't you know?" And he tells them something else they ought to know. So, what ought they to know? Now well, let me look at, in the first part here in Romans 6:2. He says, "we died to sin; How can we live in it any longer?" We died to sin. You need to know that. Of course. 'What does it mean?' is the question. We will answer that in a moment. Romans 6:3, "Don't you know, all of us were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death. Do you know that?" He says.

What it means we're talking about in a moment. Romans 6:5, "if we're being united with him and his death will also be united with him in his resurrection." You've been united to him in his death, whatever that means, Romans 6:6, "we know our old self was crucified with him, that the body of sin might be done away with." Romans 6:8, "if we died with Christ, we believe we will also live with him." Romans 6:11, "in the same way, count yourselves dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus."

Now, six times in those opening verses, he describes us as having either 'died with Christ', or having 'died to sin'. Now the big question is, what in the world does he mean by that?

What Does It Mean?: Died With Christ

Let me first talk about what does it mean to have 'died with Christ.' Well, very simply, it means this. That what happened to Christ is legally regarded as having happened to us. Let me explain this in Romans 6:5, he talks about being 'united with Christ', being united with Him and his death will be reunited with Him in his resurrection. To be united is to be made one with Him. To be made one with Him means that what is

true of Christ is declared to be true of us. And therefore, in the reckoning of God it was not just Jesus Christ who was crucified outside the city of Jerusalem, but as my representative, as my substitute in the legal councils of heaven, I Charles Price was crucified in Christ, outside the city walls of Jerusalem.

Seven years ago, I spoke at a Good Friday service in the city of Ottawa, where many churches come together for this event every year. They asked me to send my title for them to advertise and I sent my title 'celebrating your own funeral.' And when we got there on Good Friday morning and we're in the room at the back talking with some of the leaders of the churches that are involved in this, one of them said to me "What in the world are you going to talk about?" I said "I am going to talk about the cross." It's Good Friday, after all. He said, but your title says celebrating your own funeral. I said, "exactly, that's what I'm going to talk about." That on the cross something more than just Jesus dying took place - I died in Christ. I was united with him. That is as far as God is concerned, if the wages of sin is death, I have paid those wages in full in the person of another. I'm regarded as having paid.

So now the Bible speaks about the Christian being crucified, it's always in the past tense. Here, for instance, in Romans 6:5, "we're being united with him and his death." Romans 6:6, "our old self was crucified." Romans 6:8, "we died with Christ." Many of you know, Galatians 2:20, "I have been crucified with Christ."

Somebody asked me one day, "How do I crucify myself?" You see, he had the idea that was something I'm supposed to do. I'm trying to crucify myself. I'm trying to die myself. Well, I understand his dilemma because I once thought that that is what I was supposed to do and I tried to die to myself. I tried to die, I tried to be crucified. But when you think about it, it talks about crucifixion. How in the world physically could somebody crucify themselves? I mean, as an example of something to do, how can we possibly crucify ourselves? Think of it physically, If I'm going to crucify myself I'm going to knock down that hand. What about this hand? And I've got to pull this one out, knock it in that hand. What do I do next? Pull it out, knock it in that hand. You know, if you have to deal with yourself, you have to kill yourself, there's 1000 ways you can do it. You can put a bullet between your eyes, you can drink a glass of poison, you can lie on a railway track, you can jump off a building, you put up a rope around your neck and jump off a platform, you can lie on a railway track, you can drive your car into a wall. There's 1000 ways to kill yourself, except one. Nobody ever commits suicide by crucifixion. It's impossible to crucify yourself.

And when he talks about being crucified in scripture, the Christian being crucified, it is in the past tense. That's what he says, "Don't you know that all of us who are baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into

his death?" Don't you know the baptism brings you into Christ, into being a participant, his death, burial and resurrection?

Now, there's only one baptism in the New Testament, we're told that: one Lord, one faith, one baptism, it says in Ephesians 4 and yet when you read the New Testament, there are two baptisms. There is baptism in the spirit and there's baptism in water. But clearly, if there's one baptism, one is a picture of the other, and Paul doesn't mention water in Romans 6. So, he's talking about what he means to be baptized by the Spirit into Christ. Because 1 Corinthians 12:13 says, "we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body, that one body is the body of Christ." Now, he says, when you're baptized into Christ, you became a participant in His death, in His burial, in His resurrection. Water baptism is a picture of that.

In two weeks' time, we're going to have a baptismal service here on Sunday evening and when somebody is baptized, what they're saying is this, "I want you to know that when Jesus Christ died, I died in him, all the guilt and all the consequence of my sin were met. And so, the picture of baptism is going down into water — that's death — I'm buried with Christ. Not three days, three seconds is enough, and I'm risen again. Coming out of the water to walk in newness of life. Water baptism is a picture of that, it doesn't make it happen. It's like a wedding ring. This does not make me married, I can take it off and oh, it used to come off, I can take it off, but I don't cease to be married. It's just a sign, it is a symbol. My wife gave it to me on my wedding day, and said, "with this ring, I thee wed."

Which makes the sounds of this is what it's all about. But it's not, it's just a symbol. And baptism is a symbol, it's an important symbol, a necessary symbol. If you're Christian this morning and you've never been baptized in water, it is a question of obedience that you do so. Symbolizing that the old me has died, been buried, has been raised again, you can expect now that I live in newness of life.

And Paul says, you need to know this. You need to know that all the guilt of sin, all the consequences of sin can be lifted from you because you've been crucified, buried and raised again to live a new life. So that's what it means to be crucified with Christ, to be in union with Him, what is true of Christ becomes true of me. But what does it mean to have died to sin, which Paul also talks about here.

What does it mean? Died to Sin

Romans 6:2, "we die to sin." Romans 6:6, "our old self was crucified with him, so that the body of sin might be done away with." Romans 6:11, "count yourselves dead to sin." What does it mean to be dead to sin?

Well, first of all, let me address a very attractive idea, which comes and goes within the Christian church, and I've heard this preached and I tried to make this work in my own life, at one stage. And the teaching is that we may arrive at a point where we die in the sense that we cease to be responsive to sin. Let me read you an extract from the book about this. This is what it says, it says, "When we die, our five senses cease to operate, we will no longer be able to touch or taste or smell or see or hear." "We'll lose all ability to feel or to respond to external stimuli in the same way. To die to sin means to become insensitive to it. For example, if we see a dog or cat lying in the gutter, we cannot tell from a distance whether it is alive or dead. But kick it with your foot and you know, at once, if it's alive, there'll be an immediate reaction. It'll jump up and run away. If it's dead, however, there will be no response at all.

"Just so," says this book - "Just so if we have died to sin, we are to be as unresponsive to temptation as a corpse is to physical stimulus." Keep listening. "Christ not only bore our guilt, but our fallen nature, it has been now to the cross and killed. Our task now is to do what Romans 6:11 tells us to count yourselves dead to sin."

Now, isn't that great? I heard this teaching when I was young, and it was extremely attractive to me. But I was troubled as to why it was, I seemed to be so troubled by temptation. And I went to somebody who said, "What you need to do is reckon yourself dead." That was the King James version of Romans 6:11. "Count Yourself Dead" is the NIV version. "Count yourself dead." So, I thought, "Well, that's obvious I just count myself dead. So, I began to say, "I'm dead, I'm dead, I'm dead, I'm dead. Temptation, I'm dead, I'm dead, I'm dead." And I knew fine well I wasn't. And counting myself dead became pretending I was dead. Now this is quite a widespread view, actually, there are several denominations I could give you the name of them, who have this as one of their foundational doctrines and taken to its extreme, you get the doctrine of 'sinless perfection'.

Which means that as a Christian, you need never sin again. Whenever I meet somebody who believes in sinless perfection, I'm always tempted to stamp on their foot and see if it's still working. I heard about a church once that taught sinless perfection was the result of believing and being baptized, and there was a man who came to this church and he had all kinds of sin he was struggling with and he heard this teaching and he thought this is exactly what I need. And he asked the elders if he could be baptized as soon as

possible. Well, it was mid-winter and they baptized in the local river and the river was almost freezing. But he persuaded them, and they went down to the river and they baptized this man and this near freezing water. And as he came out of the water, he said, “Hallelujah, I feel so good, I’m not even cold.” And one of the elders said to the other, “he’s lying, we’ll have to do it again.”

Well, we need to be realistic about this. This flies in the face of our experience of life, but more importantly, it contradicts the rest of this chapter because in Romans 6:12, Paul says, “therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires.” Now he says, don’t let sin reign because you have evil desires. These are the people who he just said, “Don’t you know, don’t you know, you’re dead, you died to sin.” But he says, you make sure you don’t let sin reign because you’ve got evil desires.

Well, that’s a contradiction if dying is becoming insensitive to sin. So, what does it mean? Well, in Romans 6:10, we have an important clue. It speaks there of ‘Christ dying and the death he died, he died to sin once for all.’ Now in Romans 6:2, “we die to sin”, says Paul in Romans 6:10, he says “Christ died to sin.” Therefore, to understand how we are to die to sin, we must understand how Jesus died to sin. You know, that death in Scripture is associated almost always with sin, as the consequence of sin. Right from the Garden of Eden, the day you eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you will die - sin and death connected.

You go right to the end of the Bible in Revelation 21:8. It talks about the ‘cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderous, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters, the liars. Their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulphur. This is the second death.’ So again, sin leads to death.

Throughout the book of Romans, you may recall in our earlier studies in Romans 1, he talks about “those who know God’s righteous decreed that those who do such things” — having listed the catalogue of sins — “deserve death.” We saw last week in Romans 5; “death entered the world through sin, also through one man”. In Romans 6:23, “the wages of sin is death.”

What is sin’s power? Sin’s power is death. What can sin do to you? It can destroy you, kill you- its result is death. But when Christ died, Romans 6:10 says, “he died to sin.” What that means is that the death of Jesus Christ satisfied the demands of sin. He received in full the wages of sin and having died, having received the wages of sin, sin no longer owes Him anything. He has died to sin and its consequences. And as he was our representative as substitute, we too in Christ have met all the demands that sin makes on us.

Its demands are death and it no longer will have any power over you, because the power of sin is death. And when he says we 'died to sin', he doesn't mean we're unresponsive to it, but it no longer will have the power to destroy us that it once had. So, in Romans 6:6-7, "we know our old self has been crucified with him, said the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin because anyone who has died has been freed from sin."

Life

That's one way to be free from sin, die. That's how you are free from sin, but we have died. And therefore, although its power is still there, we still battle with it, its consequences - it is not going to destroy you, because we now have a new identity, and we are to reckon on it being true. Count on it and believe it.

Let me illustrate this. I am currently a British citizen. If one day I became a Canadian citizen, you could say that I would be baptized into Canada, meaning this, all that's true about being Canadian will become true of me. Where a Canadian passport is welcome, I'll be welcome. If anyone declares war on Canada, they declare war on me. As I travel around the world, the first thing the immigration authorities want to know is not my name, they couldn't care less about my name. Their first question is "What is your nationality?" and I say "Canadian" and everything the Canada stands for, I stand for, before then.

Wherever else in the world, I might get thrown out of their country. Canada can't and won't ever throw me out because that is now who I am. I've taken citizenship. Now, all my life, I've actually been a British citizen. But by becoming a Canadian citizen, I die to all the demands of the British government. So, if Britain should go to war and call me up to join the services, I simply wave my Canadian passport and say, "No, no, no, no, no, you can't touch me, I'm Canadian." It has no power anymore. Now, of course, I will carry the legacy of being British as you carry the legacy of your old life. I still talk with a British accent. And if I hear the tune, God save our gracious Queen, I'll be tempted to stand tall and then I remember, I'm not British anymore, so I can slump. And I'm free from all that is British to enjoy all that is Canadian in this wonderful country. I'm dead to Britain, I'm alive to Canada.

That's probably not a good illustration. It's the best I can think of. And what Paul is talking about in Romans 6. That I am dying with Christ. All the demands of the old life, all the demands that sin makes on me as my master: the wages is death, Its power is death. I am liberated, because don't you know you're baptized into his death. Don't you know, you died with Christ? Don't you know, although you battle with sin every day, you can breathe a sigh of relief and say, 'phew, it's never going to get me.' In any ultimate

sense, because I'm no longer in my old self, I'm in Christ now. The new identity. And of course, it's not just the negative dying, it's the positive living as well, Romans 6:4 says, "we were buried with him to a baptism into death in order that just as Christ was raised from the dead, to the glory of the father, we too may live a new life." As Christ was our substitute in death, he died for us, he's also a substitute in the life he lives in us, and the marvellous thing is the life he lives in us now as a life which cannot die, which sin cannot touch.

For this reason, Romans 6:9 says, "we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again. Death no longer has mastery over him." Why? Because he's already died and has been raised again from the dead. That's why, although Adam could die spiritually through sin, you and I don't die spiritually. Why? Because the life we have received has already died, been buried, but has been raised again and we're living in a risen life who is paid in full the wages for sin and conquered it.

Isn't that fantastic? Maybe you don't think so, but it is. And we need to know that we understand that, but that's something we need to do.

Very briefly and we 'll pick more of this up next week, something we need to do because in Romans 6:12, in the light of this — Romans 6:12 — he says, "therefore, do not let sin reign in your mortal body, such that you obey its evil desires do not offer the parts of your body to sin as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness."

Notice there he presents two alternatives. You can be, he says, 'an instrument of wickedness', or 'an instrument of righteousness.' This word 'instrument' is a very interesting word. 'Instrument of righteousness' or an 'instrument of wickedness.' You see, an orchestra plays instruments. We don't have an orchestra here this morning because of the set. But an orchestra plays instruments. A surgeon uses instruments. And an instrument is of no use by itself, it's only useful in the hands of someone else who is skilled. You have heard Jared play the violin from time to time. A beautiful instrument, he makes it a beautiful instrument. He takes his violin and moves his bow across the strings, he produces beautiful music. Let me tell you this, if I were to take the same violin and move the same bow across the same strings, every dog in the neighbourhood would start wailing. Because the most important thing about the instrument is who is playing it.

A surgeon can take his instruments and perform delicate microsurgery on his patient. He can take his knife and he can open the chest of his patient. He can take arteries from his legs and he can attach them around the heart and do what we call bypass surgery. It's a wonderful skill, but if I were to take the same instruments to the same patient, he would be dead on the table. Because the all-important thing about the instrument is whose hands it is in.

You see, Paul says here, “present yourselves as an instrument of righteousness,” the answer to sin, says Paul, is not to counter it by legalism or to counter it by simply license, living any way you want, letting it all hang out. These are very easy options, but both are very human options. A New Testament way is something totally different. It's not by legalism nor license but by life, the life of God lived in us, by the Holy Spirit. That He plays His instruments and produces His righteousness.

By definition, an instrument is not self-sufficient, by definition, an instrument is dependent. And Paul says let's not get wrapped up in legalism. It'll make you feel good, make you feel secure, but it'll wrap you into bondage. Let's not get caught up with license, because now we're been set free from sin. How can we go on living in it? He says. Instead, present yourself, offer the parts of your body as instruments. You can be instruments of wickedness, you can let the devil play his tune. You can be instruments of righteousness, you can have Jesus Christ by the Holy Spirit play His tune. It's why Romans 12:1 says, “therefore, I urge you brothers and give God's mercy after your body's living sacrifice.”

Not do this, do that, do the other, but just present yourself as a living sacrifice. Here I am, available to you. Can you imagine yourself this morning? Just imagine yourself like a musical instrument, a vehicle for a skilled musician to express himself. Every instrument or many instruments in the orchestra are different. We're different. All of us have different personalities. We have different gifts. We have different strengths, different weaknesses. But in every one of us, like an orchestra, when we allow the Holy Spirit to make us instruments of righteousness, He'll play his tune and you won't live the way I live. You live differently the way I live. You take on things that I don't take on because if I take those on, they're going to lead me into trouble.

There's freedom. We're not wrapped up by all these laws and rules and regulations. We live freely to allow Jesus Christ to produce his righteousness. So, what is seen in us is something of the character of God, that was once seen in Christ.

And where does this come from? From trying? Now, the risk of sounding cliché, it is not from trying, it's from trusting. You see you've been crucified with Christ buried with him and raised to walk in newness of life, that newness of life is the resurrection life of Christ, which he imparts to us. And as every day we say, 'Lord, I want to thank you that sin has no power over me in the sense that its power is death. And I've died, I've died, but I didn't stay dead in you. I was raised again, and I cannot die again because the life I now experience — the life of Jesus in me — has already died, but it's been raised and never to die again. And so, I present myself to you that you in me can begin to produce your character, your righteousness.'

You remember the whole thrust of Romans. Salvation is from unrighteousness to righteousness. In the gospel the righteousness of God is declared. Now, he says, "present your body, members of your body as instruments of righteousness and his character will be displayed in you."

And you know something, nobody would be more surprised nor grateful, then you will be. You will say I don't deserve this. I know what I am like, I know what my heart's like. I know what temptations have a way of a time in my mind. I know what I'd love to do if I could, if it didn't matter, if nobody was watching and if God didn't mind, I know what I do, I know what it's like. It's corrupt. I know that. But the marvellous thing is, you begin to display your own character and your righteousness. The only person to be more surprised than you, would probably be your wife or your husband or your kids. Because I have now somebody who is not keeping the rules, he's not living in the old how, but every day, presenting their body an instrument of righteousness. It's not legalism, it's not license. It's life, the life of God in the heart and soul of you and me. Does that make sense?

As I say every week, if you're not a Christian, is this part of why you need to be one? And if you're not a Christian, you can come to Jesus Christ this morning and say 'Lord I didn't understand before that the cross was not just something way back in history, I was involved, and today I can be the beneficiary of that. I acknowledge my sin; it was crucified with you. Thank you, it's dealt with. Forgive me, I confess it to you and you're alive again to live in me a new life, with new power.

Let's pray together,

Closing Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ, we thank you this morning that we are not removed from the events of the cross. In your reckoning, we were participants in the events of the cross because it was our sin that took a holy

sinless man to the cross. He was our substitute, he was our representative, and outside the city walls of Jerusalem 2000 years ago, in your reckoning, I was crucified. Sin's wrath was paid in full, I was buried, but raised again, to live a life that cannot die.

And I pray, Lord Jesus, that every one of us here in this room will know this and experience it. As we present ourselves to you every day, the members of our bodies as instruments, and which you can display your righteousness.

Make this real for us, help us to live in the good of it. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.