

Alive Through Christ's Death

Scripture: Romans 6:1-11

Code: 80-137

As we come to the study of God's word this morning, I have found myself unable to read the text of 2 Corinthians, Chapter 5 Verse 17. The last time I preached we looked at that verse, we studied it in its context in this marvelous epistle and in this chapter. We looked at the details of that verse and the ones prior to it. And really I preached all that I had prepared to preach. But in the days since I have thought so much about the tremendous statement if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature. That I just am not yet ready to leave it.

I don't want to talk about that statement in this particular context. I want to talk about it in the context of our Christian life. If I may I'd like to lift it out of the text of this epistle and have us look at it for its own sake. If any man is in Christ, he is a new creature. We have talked in recent months a lot about the doctrine of justification. And we have endeavored to make clear to you that justification is a declaration by God. Justification talks about what God says about the one who puts his faith in Christ. God says they are just, they are righteous, the enmity between he and them is over and they are welcomed into his heaven and into his family.

God says that because he imputes to the believer, the very righteousness of Christ. Justification then is an act of God by which he declares a sinner righteous based on the granting of the righteousness of Christ to that sinner. We talked about that. In fact we emphasized it. But there is a danger in emphasizing the doctrine of justification and that is that you might think that salvation is purely a declaration and not a transformation. And so it is important to talk not only about justification, but about regeneration or conversion or transformation.

And that is what Verse 17 is saying. "If any man is in Christ, he is not just declared righteous he is a new creature. Old things passed away behold new things have come." It's important for us to understand that salvation involves transformation. And when you want to look at your life to discern your spiritual condition, and you might wonder whether or not you are a Christian, you don't look back to some past moment in which you prayed a certain prayer. And someone told you God would forensically, judicially declare you righteous, if you want to know whether you're a Christian, you have to look at your life to discern that the evidences of transformation are manifest.

It's not enough to go back to some moment in time when you prayed a prayer because James puts it this way, faith, apart from works is dead. A Christian does have a confession of faith that is accurate theologically sound that is to say he confesses to believe in Christ and put his faith in Christ and

accept Christ atoning work on his behalf. And come before God repentance to receive the mercy God gives for those who believe in Christ. That content has to be there, but not only does that content have to be there, the evidence of transformation has to be there and that's how you discern the reality of your spiritual condition.

Sometimes when we talk about justification, we might assume that if at some point in time we prayed a prayer and God declared us just, that's all we need to remember. And the fact of the matter is salvation was not just a declaration, it was also a transformation. So that you are a new creation. You are not what you used to be. It is that issue that I want to address with you this morning. Because I want you to understand that this is absolutely at the heart of the Christian faith. Everything we do as Christians, everything that we look at at the core of our Christian living manifests that transformation and where that transformation is not present, there is no justification.

And so it is the evidence of the transformed life that speaks to the reality of justification. Justification is not something you experience. It is a declaration by God. Transformation is something you experience. And that's the way that you get in touch with your spiritual condition by looking at your life to see the evidence of transformation. Now Paul is talking about that transformation in the section that we have studied here in 2 Corinthians, Chapter 5. He started talking about it in Verse 14. And he talked about it in Verse 15. He talked about dying and rising, that speaks of transformation like a caterpillar that goes into a cocoon and dies and the life that comes forth from that is totally different.

In Verse 16 he says since this transformation he can never look at people the same again. He doesn't judge anybody according to the flesh and he certainly doesn't judge Christ according to the flesh like he did once in his life. His whole perspective on life has totally changed. And that's how it is for anyone who is in Christ. Everything changes from the inside out. Old things have passed away and behold new things have come. New longings, new desires, new loves, new affections, new ideals, new perspectives, everything is new.

Now this is at the heart of New Testament Theology that a Christian is not just a person declared righteous, a Christian is a person made righteous. A transformed life and that is what Paul is addressing here. But he addresses it more systematically and more carefully in another section of Scripture that I want to bring before you this morning to elucidate the text before us. Turn to Romans, Chapter 6, now we're all very much aware the fact that Paul is logical. He's very logical and very sequential in his thinking. And here in Roman 6 he lays out with impeccable logic the essence of this transformed life. That is characteristic of Christians. So you have to put on your thinking cap and think logically with Paul as we move through the first part of Romans, Chapter 6.

Paul has been talking about grace. He's been talking about God's grace and at the end of Chapter 5 he made an amazing statement in Verse 20. He said that "where sin increased, grace abounded all the more." In other words, the more sin, the more grace. Well somebody might conclude then that we

ought to sin a whole lot so God can give a whole lot of grace. Because when God shows his grace, he gains glory and so if we want to really glorify God, we sin a lot, he gives a lot of grace, he gets a lot of glory.

In talking about grace, it would be possible for someone to conclude that if God is glorified in showing grace, if it pleases God to be gracious, then let's let him be as gracious as possible by sinning as much as we can. That's the kind of thinking that betrays a wrong comprehension of salvation. Listen now, if salvation was only forensic, that thinking would be reasonable. I mean if salvation was only a declared statement by God in which he says I declare you righteous, I count you righteous, I impute the righteousness of Christ to your account even though it isn't yours; I treat you as if it were. If that's all salvation was, then we would just go on sinning and sinning and sinning and he would just have to go on being gracious and gracious and gracious. That would be fine.

But that's not how it is. We don't go on sinning and sinning and sinning and sinning and God being gracious and gracious and gracious, the way we always sinned and the way God graciously covered the sins of our life at salvation, because there's been a dramatic change, go to Chapter 6, Verse 1. What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace might increase? No, no, no, no. May it never be. May again Oita how shall he who died through sins still live in it? Now there's his answer. You can't go on living the same way you did before you were justified because you died.

Now we're not talking about a forensic thing, we're talking about reality. We're not talking about something God said, we're talking about something he did to you. You died. Some translations say who are dead to sin and that gives the idea of a state that is not the translation, died to sin it's talking about a past event. You can't go on living in sin, you're not just declared righteous, you have been made righteous. You're not only justified you have been sanctified. Transformed. Paul is outrageously indignant in Verse 2. When he says, no, no, no, no. We have died to sin and beloved that is a foundational reality in Christian living. The old person died. And we are a new creation. We learned that back in 2 Corinthians, Chapter 5, Verse 14. That Christ died for all therefore all who died in him died to sin. And we have risen with him and we now live not unto ourselves, but unto the one who died and rose again for us.

So at the very heart of the Christian faith at the very heart of Christian theology, New Testament teaching is not only justification, but transformation. We have died to sin. That is a foundational reality. We cannot go on living in sin, the same way we did before because we have died we are not the same person. We are a new creation, old things have passed away and new things have come. We have been transferred out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God's dear son. We have been granted the indwelling Holy Spirit, we have been given a new nature, we are new creations. And all of that is linked to dying. This dying concept is at the heart of understanding the experiential transformation of salvation.

Now that's what Paul says in Verse 2. You can't go on the same way you did before you were saved because you have died. And the question then is what do you mean? And Paul answers it starting in Verse 3 with a very logical sequential argument. He develops a set of logical truths that lead you through a process. First one, his first simple truth is we are immersed into Christ. Look at it in Verse 3. Do you not know that all of us, who have been immersed or baptized into Christ Jesus, stop at that point. This is a verse with no water in it folks. This is a dry verse. It's not talking about water baptism, it's using the word baptism metaphorically. It uses it in the way that we often use it. We might say when we went through a very difficult trying experience that we had a baptism of fire. We don't literally mean we were burned, we simply mean we were immersed in a fiery trial of difficulty.

We talk about a person who comes into a academic environment or comes into a very difficult task and they're trying to work through generating the intense initial information, getting up to speed on everything. And we say they're going through their baptism. Literally we mean they're inundated. They're immersed. We're not talking about an actual experience in water. And neither is Paul here, Roman 6 doesn't have any water in it. He is saying all of us believers have literally been immersed into Christ Jesus.

We have been placed into Christ Jesus. That's the idea. Placed into him. United with him, joined to him. And this is an unspeakable glory. This is an incredible reality that a sinner should be joined to Christ to the degree that he that is joined to the Lord is one spirit, 1 Corinthians 6:17. And if you join yourself to a harlot, Paul says you've joined Christ to that harlot because no longer are you separated from Christ, you are inextricably joined to Christ, you are placed into Christ. It is a spiritual mystery.

We could talk a lot about the concept itself. It has so much richness to it. For example, we could talk about the fact that we can even be identified with Christ in some ways in his circumcision. On the eighth day after his birth he was taken to be circumcised. That symbolized the fact that he was placing himself under the law to redeem those who were under the law. The law required circumcision; he certainly didn't need any circumcision of heart. He didn't need any cleansing of sin, but he accepted the physical circumcision in order to place himself under the requirement of the law. He didn't need a heart circumcision but he endured the symbol in order to identify with the law of God.

In Colossians, Chapter 2 in Verse 11 it says, "In him you were also circumcised with a circumcision made without hands." We have had a spiritual circumcision because Christ came under the law fulfilling the whole law; he was a fitting savior for us and brought to us a spiritual circumcision. We could even see a connection in our own lives in some sense with him in his baptism. He was baptized you remember by John the Baptist and at his baptism the Holy Spirit descended on him with power. When we are baptized with the spirit of God he comes to dwell in us to empower us.

We can talk about being joined with Christ in his suffering. We are fellow partakers of his sufferings, we engage in the communion of his sufferings as Paul makes clear. We could talk about being united with him in his life. For we live, yet we live not alone it is I yet not I but Christ who lives in me. And if I say I abide in Christ I ought to walk as he walked. We could talk about being united with him in his eternal glory for the day will come when we'll be made like him for we'll see him as he is.

This whole idea of the Christian faith is a union with Christ. It has many facets and rich, rich concepts. So it all starts there. The first point in his logic is we have all been immersed into Christ. That's why repeatedly you'll hear Paul say in Christ, in Christ, in Christ, in Christ. That's what it means to be a Christian. Second step in his logic if we are all immersed into Christ, we are immersed into his death and resurrection. That's the next in the sequence. If we are immersed into Christ, we are immersed into his death and resurrection. Look at it there in Verse 3.

We have been immersed into his death. Therefore, we have been buried with him through baptism or through that immersion that union into death in order that as Christ was raised from the dead to the glory of the father, so we too might walk in newness of life. Or if we have become united with him in the likeness of his death, certainly we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection. There's the point. We are identified with Christ, point one and the logical sequence to that is if we are in union with Christ, we have to be then in union with his death and resurrection.

That is exactly right. That's how we are joined to Christ in transformation. We are joined in his death and his resurrection. We died in Christ, and we rose in Christ. The old is gone, the new has come. We share in his death and we may share in his life. He becomes sin for us that we might be made righteous in him. This is the transformation. The old has died. I am crucified with Christ. That's death; crucifixion is a symbol of death. Nevertheless I live. An old I dies, a new I lives. And yet it's not just me now, it's Christ living in me. A Christian is a transformed person. It is not just someone who says once somewhere in the past I believed.

And therefore God declared me just and now it doesn't matter how I live, grace bounds toward my abounding sin. That's not what Scripture teaches. There is justification and there is sanctification which includes an initial transformation. Now, that leads to a third step in Paul's logic. Through this death the body of sin has been destroyed. Through this death, the body of sin has been destroyed. Verse 6. Knowing this. That little phrase is in appeal to common knowledge among the believers including the Romans. This is basic to all of our understanding of salvation. You can't understand salvation if you don't understand this. This is lesson number one folks. And he gives three facts in describing this third step in his thinking, that the body of sin has been destroyed. Three facts. Fact number one that our old self was crucified with him. What we used to be is dead. What does that mean? It means what we used to be isn't alive. It's not around. Sometimes you hear people say, well before you're saved, you're just this corrupt old person, this old man up in eternity. But when you become a Christian, you get a new man and your whole Christian life the new man fights the old man.

Do you hear that? I heard that for years growing up. In fact I heard preachers say you have a black dog and a white dog and the dogs are fighting your whole life. And the one that wins is the one that you say sic 'em too. What that does it makes salvation purely addition instead of transformation. If I am still what I used to be, and you added something to me, where's the transformation? What I read in the Bible here very clearly is that the old self was killed.

And that is exactly what 2 Corinthians 5:17 said. I am a new creation. I am not what I was. The old self is not the flesh because we still have the flesh our unredeemed humanist. The old self is our old unregenerate nature. It is dead. It's gone. The old man has been crucified. Now, there're two words for old in the Greek. Archios which means old from point of time, archaic. We use the term archaeology to describe the study of old things. And the other word is poliosk. Which means not old in point of time, but old in point of use. And that's the term used here.

The old self. The useless self. Old in the sense that it is worn out. It describes something worn out, useless, not functioning, fit for the dumps, scrap heap. Something literally to be discarded. And that's the old man. The old man is simply the person you were before you were a Christian. Depraved, unregenerate, and useless to God and unable to do anything to please him and even your best acts were filthy rags. The old man is the unregenerate nature. What you are in Adam, what I was in Adam. So it is very, very serious to think of a Christian as an old man and a new man together. That is not what the Bible teaches. It teaches that the old self was crucified. And crucifixion is a metaphor for death.

Dead I am not what I was. I'm a new creation. All in Galatians 2:20 he says it and I repeat it again, "I am crucified with Christ, ego, I the old I is dead, nevertheless I live a new I lives yet it's not just I, but it's now the power of Christ in me. I have a new nature." To put it another way if you don't want that terminology, a new disposition. And Paul describes that new disposition in 2 Corinthians 5 when he says I no longer see Christ the same way I used to see him. I made an evaluation of Christ, it was totally erroneous because of my perspective was all wrong. But once I came to know him, my entire perspective changed. I used to be able to look at people and evaluate them according to the flesh after the salvation; I no longer evaluate any man according to the flesh. I see with spiritual eyes. Everything has changed; I have a whole new disposition.

If you want to know what that disposition is like you can go back even to the Old Testament to Psalm 119 and you'll hear that disposition speak when David says, "Oh how I love thy law." It is my delight or when you hear Paul say, "With the inner man I delight in the law of God." It's those holy longings and those righteous aspirations it's that hatred of sin and that love of what is pure and virtuous and that longing to obey and to please God and to worship and glorify and honor him, all of that is coming out of that new man.

Paul insists then that there is a breach, a cleavage with really complete proportions, complete significance. And it's not a process; it is an already completed reality. The old man has died. John Murray in his book *Principles of Conduct* writes "To suppose that the old man has been crucified and still lives or has been raised again from this death is to contradict the obvious force of the import of crucifixion. Paul says our old man has been crucified. He doesn't say our old man is in the process of being crucified. The believer that is a new man, a new creation. But he is a new man, not yet made perfect. Sin still dwells in him and he still commits sin." This is true.

We still have the unredeemed flesh. The old man is gone; a new man lives in this incarceration of unredeemed flesh. That's where the battle is. But we are a new creation. And the reason I say that to you is this. You cannot rightly assess a person's spiritual condition if you think they are both an old man and a new man because then you can justify a person behaving like an old man and still say they're a Christian. You understand that? But if you understand that the new creation has holy longings, that just are not fulfilled, that are debilitated by the flesh, that's a different dynamic all together.

The old man says John Murray is the unregenerate man. The new man is the regenerate man created in Christ Jesus unto good works. It is no more feasible to call the believer a new man and an old man he writes, then it is to call him a regenerate man and an unregenerate man. And neither is it warranted to speak of the believer as having in him the old man and the new man. That kind of terminology is without warrant and is but another method of doing prejudice to the doctrine which Paul was so jealous to establish when he said our old man has been crucified.

The old man doesn't exist folks. You're a whole new creation. You're never exhorted to put off the old man. You have done that. Colossians, Chapter 3, Verses 9 and 10 "do not lie to one another since you laid aside the old self with its evil practices and have put on the new self." In other words behave consistently with who you are. You are a new creation. The old man is dead. The new man lives.

Now he takes us to a second fact in this third step in his logic. Back to Verse 6. First that our old self was crucified with him, second that our body of sin might be done away with. There's the second fact. "The body of sin is done away with." What does it mean? Some Bibles say destroyed. What are we talking about here? What is this body of sin? This entity of sin. I don't think he's talking about the physical body here. He's talking about the entity of sin. What is he saying here? That it is destroyed. Certainly he doesn't mean it as eliminated because we still battle with sin. What does he mean then that it is destroyed?

Well let's take a look at that word destroyed because that's the key. It is the word *catargeto* some have taught that it means eradicated, so that you can reach a point where you're sin is eradicated; you just never sinned. But I want you to understand how this term is used. And it's not really that

difficult. The term occurs 27 times in the New Testament. And if you track its uses you begin to get a feel for what the word *catargeto* means. It can have the sense of devastation and destruction. But it has a lot of other usages as well. For example, let's see how it's used in Romans. When Paul in Chapter 3 was speaking about the apostasy of Israel, Paul said Chapter 3 Verse 3 shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect. That's interesting because without effect is the term *catargeto*. *Catargeto* obviously couldn't be translated destroyed because nothing can destroy the faith of God.

So the translators understood that the meaning of the word was to make something of no effect. You're not destroying it, you're not wiping it out, you're just rendering it powerless. Secondly also in the third chapter of Romans, Verse 31, Paul said, "Do we then same verb make void the law through faith. God forbid, yeah we established the law." This couldn't be rendered; do we destroy the law because the law is eternal? It simply means when we accept faith and grace are we rendering the law of no account. In Chapter 4, we have the same thing. Explaining the promise of God to Abraham, he explains that it was through faith and not law. Paul said Verse 14 "if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void and the promise made of no effect."

Of course the promise can't be destroyed, God's word can't be destroyed. The faith of God can't be destroyed that is the Christian faith, the truth, the Gospel the law can't be destroyed, none of these things can be destroyed but they can be rendered in effective by how men respond. In Chapter 7, two more times *catargeto* appears and it is used in very similar ways in Verse 2 and Verse 6. Now in conclusion looking at those things, we can sum it up by saying the term *catargeto* means to render idol unemployed, inactive, inoperative, to deprive of its strength, to make bare and these are all kinds of meanings coming out of Lexicons.

To cause a person or a thing to have no further efficiency or effect, to deprive a force, influence or power, to bring to nothing, to make of no effect. That's what it means. Now follow that back to Roman 6. "Once our old self was killed with him, the entity of sin the dominating entity of sin was deprived of its controlling power. That's the idea. The best translation deprived of its controlling power. K.B. Philips even translated this in a way that captures it "let us never forget that our old selves died with him on the cross that the teriney of sin over us might be broken." That is exactly what it is saying.

That leads to a third fact also in Verse 6 that we should no longer be slaves to sin. That is a fact not a request. You understand that? One fact leads to another fact. First fact we died, that means that the old dominating, controlling power of sin is rendered inoperable. So that we no longer are slaves to sin. Slavery has been broke, doesn't mean sin isn't there. It means we're not slaves to it anymore. We're not enslaved. It isn't mandatory like it used to be that we sin. We're no longer slaves to sin. Verse 17, Verse 16 rather. "Do you not know that when you present yourself to someone as slaves for obedience, you are slaves to the one of them you obey their sin resulting in death or obedience resulting in righteousness, but thanks be to God." Verse 17, "though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed and having

been freed from sin you became slaves of righteousness."

The whole thing can be summed up in saying the old self was a slave to sin; the new self is a slave to righteousness, that's the change. The old self was in perfect agreement with the fallen flesh, the new self is in perfect disagreement with the fallen flesh. No more bondage, no more bondage. Verse 7 sums it up. "For he who has died, is free from sin." When you died in Christ, you're freed from sin's tyranny. The controlling dominating sovereignty of sin has been broken. That's Verse 14 says "Sins shall not be master over you for you're not any longer under the law, you're under grace."

So what justified person is not only declared righteous, but set free from the dominating power of sin. A sanctified person set free to the dominating power of righteousness. That's why at first John says we don't continue in sin as the continual unbroken pattern evidencing tyranny. We begin to live a pattern of righteousness interrupted by sin. But not a continual pattern of unbroken sin. Now, follow Paul's logic, we are immersed into Christ. Point one. Secondly, we are then immersed into his death and resurrection. Point two. The result of that that entity of sin which dominated and controlled us has been rendered inoperative, it is no longer in control. Righteousness now is in control, still engaged in battling the unredeemed flesh.

And he's not yet finished with his thought. He wants to take it one more step Verses 8 to 10. "For if we had died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him. Knowing that Christ having been raised from the dead is never to die again. Death no longer is master over him for the death that he died, he died to sin once for all but the life that he lives, he lives to God." And this is the fourth step in his logic. From now on, we live to God. Everything is directed that way. We want to praise him; we want to love him. We want to adore him; we want to worship. We want to give to him. We want to serve him. We want to obey his law. Proclaim his word. You say but I don't do that as I ought to, but you know that's the cry of your heart. And when you sin, you feel the guilt and the anguish because it goes against the grain of who you are.

Now our longings are right. Now our desires are right. Come rising out of that new man and they collide with evil desire in our flesh. There in lies the battle. But if you're not a Christian, there is no battle. If you are, there's a real war being waged. He sums it all up in Verse 11, "so consider yourselves to be dead to sin. Literally to have died to sin. But alive to God in Christ Jesus." You're not just someone declared righteous; you're someone who's been totally transformed. Totally transformed. And you now live a new life. Christ has broken the power of sin; he has come into your life and made you the righteousness of God in him.

You have been risen to live the life of a justified sinner. A life that is all together new. The old life is finished, gone, you died to it. And you emerged from that death justified, transformed, the law can't touch you. The penalty of sin has been paid. And you now have a holy principle operative within you. The divine nature and the indwelling spirit. And the one who was made sin for you has made you

righteous. Now you say well I haven't arrived, no you haven't arrived, none of us have. We're still battling the flesh that's why in Romans 8 we cry out for the redemption of the flesh so we can get the whole package. The fullness of salvation yet awaits us.

But this is the point I want you to understand a Christian is not simply a person who gets forgiveness, a Christian is not simply a person who gets to go to heaven, not simply a person who receives the Holy Spirit. He is a person who has become someone he was not. He is a Saint, a child of God, a divine masterpiece, a child of light. A born son, a citizen of heaven. Not only positionally, not only judicially, but actually. Becoming a Christian is becoming a new creation. That's what we are. And that's what we see as we look at our lives. I don't see my own life as perfect by any stretch of the imagination. I see sin in my life, but I hate it. That's the evidence of my new nature. John Newton who was a dissolutant, dissipated debotched sinner of the worst ilk was converted by amazing grace. And wrote so many hymns like that. One thing that he wrote that is not in his hymnology sums up what Paul is saying here.

This is what John Newton said. "I am not what I ought to be. I am not what I wish to be. I am not what I hope to be. But by the cross of Jesus Christ, I am not what I was." That's it. That's a new creation. What a gift. Let's bow in prayer. Our Lord we have just touched the surface of this so much could be said and I pray that your Holy Spirit would make these things clear through all our hearts. We thank you that you've shaped us and made us into new creations. And we're not what we ought to be and we're not what we want to be and we're not what we're going to be, and neither are we what we used to be.

Father, how glorious a gift is this to have all things passed away and be made new. To be granted love, joy, peace, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, self control the fruit of the spirit. To be given the knowledge of the truth, the power of the spirit, oh Father, how rich we are. We thank you for the miracle of transformation. That accompanies justification. We pray that this sanctification, this transformation which was begun at that moment of our faith will progress and continue along the path towards Christ's likeness. Ever increasing until Jesus we see. We pray in his great name, Amen. We pray in his great name, Amen.

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