

Garland, Texas - Complete Commitment

by J. Edwin Orr

J. Edwin Orr's sermon emphasizes the necessity of total commitment to God for effective Christian living and spiritual growth.

Duration: 1:26:37

Scripture: Romans 6:14, Romans 7:15, Romans 8:11, Romans 12:1

Topics: "Holy Spirit", "Sanctification"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of total commitment to God, highlighting the struggle with sin and the need to surrender completely to experience the power of the Holy Spirit. It discusses the distinction between justification by faith and sanctification, urging believers to decisively dedicate their lives to God and allow the Holy Spirit to empower them to live a life pleasing to Him.

Transcript

For those who are here for the first time, I mention again that this has been a series of meetings, one message following on another. Not like an evangelistic campaign where you can bring someone along and hear a gospel message, a way of salvation made clear. I love to preach the gospel.

By the way, if you have unconverted friends and neighbors, I intend to present the gospel news of salvation to them on Sunday morning. Bring them along. But the ministry the Lord has given me has been one of a message to believers in the churches.

That's what I propose to do tonight, to speak to believers. You may remember I spoke on repentance, which means a change of attitude. I spoke on conscience and conviction and confession.

Last night I spoke on hindrances, and now I want to speak on commitment. There was a Hopi Red Indian giving testimony in Arizona. He said, Before I get converted, I go to town on Saturday night and get drunk.

My big black dog bite everybody. Then, said he, Jesus Christ come into my life. He give me great big white dog.

White dog love everybody. But he said, Now I have two dogs, and they fight. A chief on the front seat said, Which dog winning? The brave hesitated for a moment, then he said, Whichever one I say, sick him.

When I heard that story, I thought how true it is. When I was a teenage Christian, sometimes I got so pious. Not only did I go to church twice a Sunday without being told to go, I went to Bible class, to Sunday school, I went to the midweek service, I went to missionary meeting, gave out hymn books.

I even did my social service. I went to a bakery and bought pastries slightly damaged at half price and distributed them to the poor in the slums. I was feeding the big white dog.

But sometimes I backslid somewhat, ran around with a gang of boys on Saturday night, kept bad company. I didn't curse and swear and get drunk, that sort of thing, but I certainly compromised my testimony. I was feeding the black dog.

Now, isn't that really the problem with the Christian life? Our Nazarene friends teach that you can shoot the old black dog dead. But they admit that you can start with another black pup, so we'll not worry about the age of the dog. What is your greatest enemy in living the Christian life? The Communist Party? Not at all.

It's yourself. That's what I want to talk about. I remember coming to Texas in 1950.

Billy Graham asked me to come with his first campaign, and the editor of the Baptist Standard had made a strong attack on Billy, calling him a Unionist, a Hueytonian, and several other names. Billy said, I wish you'd go to Texas and explain to the good folks there that when God blesses his people, he blesses them all. So I drove all the way to Lubbock.

I was so broke I slept in the car the first night. But the next day I went to the BSU, and there I met a BSU worker, her name was Ardell Hallock, daughter of Preacher Hallock of Norman, Oklahoma. She said, there's a young evangelist in town from New Orleans Baptist Seminary, his name is Buckner Fanning, so I went along to see him.

He wanted to talk about what is the doctrine of commitment. He said, you know, some say that what's wrong with us Baptists is we dip them and drop them. I said, that's not fair.

You don't dip them and drop them. You dip them and then get them into the program. That's the answer.

Get them into the program, the program of the church. And what a variety of programs we have. Now supposing a converted man has a rotten, bad temper, what does the program do for his bad temper? What does his bad temper do for the program about Rexit? I find the average Baptist can explain the steps of salvation, telling people to repent of their sins and put your trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, and so on and so on.

But if you say, now, what about the problem of the Christian life? Well, come to the church and get in the program. They don't have a clear theology at this point. So I want to speak about the doctrine of commitment, and I'd like to point out that practically everyone that I know that's been greatly used of God has had a crisis of commitment.

I have one of my old books here, and in the little summary at the end I mention the wonderful touch of revival that we had at the Forest Home Conference grounds in San Bernardino Mountains in California in 1949. One of the other speakers, a young friend of mine, wanted to talk about revival, and he wanted to talk about commitment. One night we saw such a moving of God's Spirit that we had seventeen after-meetings going on simultaneously.

He came to me after midnight at my cabin and said, I've never been closer to God in my life. But then he said, Why did you say that I wasn't totally surrounded to the Lord? I said, I didn't say a word about you. Well, he said, It must have been the Lord speaking to me.

I've said here, I think the climax was reached after midnight one Wednesday night when he opened his heart and told me of his desire for a renewal of his consecration, an anointing of the Holy Spirit. We talked about that for an hour. Then he went out into the woods to pray.

I think you'll find an account of this in the first issue of Christianity Today in 1956. At two in the morning he came back to my cabin to tell me that he had not only received an infilling of the Holy Spirit, but an assurance that he was going to see revival in Los Angeles. When I put those talks that I gave together in a book, he wrote the preface.

He said, The messages were of tremendous blessing in my own life. The logical development of the whole subject of commitment and the outpouring of the Spirit stirred the whole conference. You can guess who that was.

Billy Graham. But the man was already an evangelist, working for the youth of Christ. But that night, without reservation, he committed his mind and will and emotions anew to God.

He came into an experience of what Andrew Murray calls absolute surrender. Now, a lot of good Baptists are in favor of commitment like that, but they don't know the theology of it. So I want to talk to you tonight about total commitment.

But I'm going to have to explain two terms, first of all. First of all, justification, and second, sanctification. I was speaking in a Baptist church in San Diego.

My wife was in the audience. When I announced I was going to speak on sanctification, one Baptist lady turned to another and said, That's a Methodist doctrine. No, it's a New Testament doctrine.

The word sanctification is all through the New Testament. But you see, so many people are a little shy of the subject. They think it's a denominational distinctive of the Methodists.

They forget that sanctification is something very important in the life of the believer. Now, what do we mean by justification? Would anyone like to suggest what does it mean to be justified? Would you raise your hand and make a suggestion? Don't be afraid, it will add to the discussion. Pardon? Being right with God.

Yes, being right with God. Anyone else make any other suggestion? That's right. To be acquitted of guilt, to be counted blameless.

I'm surprised that no one has given me the usual answer that I get. Justified means that when God looks at me in Christ, he sees me justified and never sinned. That's a pun rather than a definition, but I don't mind an occasional pun.

I remember asking my Sunday school teacher, Who were the Sadducees? He said, The Sadducees were a Jewish sect. They didn't believe in the resurrection of the body or the coming of the Lord, and that's why they were sad, you see. I've never forgotten that.

So if you want to remember it that way, to be justified is to be counted righteous. But how can God count me righteous if I'm not righteous? Well, you see, that's through the atonement. Christ died for me.

But justification is the work of God whereby we are accounted righteous. I spoke last night on forgiveness. It's more than forgiveness.

Way back in 1949, I suppose in '49, I was driving along California Boulevard in Pasadena, California. I came to a stop sign at the corner of Allen Boulevard. I stopped, and I drove north.

Now, in those days, there used to be a motorcycle policeman hiding under the pepper trees there. And as I drove north on Allen Boulevard, I noticed in the reflection of my mirror the motorcycle policeman coming rapidly in my direction. I said to the Reverend Armand Guesswein, who was riding with me, Who's he chasing? He looked back.

I had to attend to the steering wheel. He looked back, and he said, You're the only one on the street. And sure enough, the man was after me.

But I hadn't done anything wrong. Now, it's true I was driving a car with an Illinois license plate. I'd just moved from Glen Ellyn in Illinois.

But that's not an offense. They always give you a few months to change your license plate. The motorcycle policeman pulled alongside of me.

He said, Pull over there, bud. I pulled over. He parked his cycle.

He walked back. He laid his elbow ever so nonchalantly on my window frame. You have to agree, traffic cops have poise.

He seemed to be very confident of himself. He said, Mister, do you have stop signs back in Illinois? I thought, What a dumb question. But I decided against saying that to him.

I said, Yes. Mister, when you see a stop sign in Illinois, do you stop? I thought, There's another dumb question. I said, Of course.

Then he said, Why didn't you stop back there? I said, I did. I mean, I think I did. I mean, I hope I did.

I mean, did I? He said, You put your foot in the brake, but you didn't stop rolling. Show me your driver's license. Mercifully, it was issued in Chicago.

Well, he said, I see you are a visitor to our first date. We'll forgive you this time. You can drive on.

I drove on. I was glad I didn't get a ticket. I was forgiven.

I was forgiven, but I wasn't justified. Because I stopped at the next sign, at San Pascual, and let him see me stop. If I had gone through that sign, he would have given me a ticket.

I was only on probation. Now, that's the blessing of justification. God not only forgives us, but he treats us as if we never sinned in the first place.

That's what it means to be justified. Not only that, he adopts us into his family. Could you imagine going home tonight and find the neighbors out on the sidewalk saying, Oh, your house has been burgled? You

say, Oh, no.

Yes, but we think the burglar is still there. Be very careful. So you go in very gingerly.

There are signs of burglary, but you don't see the burglar. Then you find he's locked himself in the bathroom, and he can't get the lock undone. He's trapped.

You've been meaning to fix that lock, but generally you don't use it. But there he is. Then you find he's only a teenager.

You feel sorry for him. Transient. So he said, I haven't eaten all day.

You say, Well, we'll make you a little bit of supper. Where are you sleeping tonight? He doesn't have a place to sleep, so you put him up in the guest room. On Monday you take him downtown.

Find him a job. He's so grateful he comes for Sunday dinner every day, every week. And finally he marries your sister.

What treatment for a burglar? Well, that's exactly what God does for us. He not only forgives us, he justifies us. Treats us as if we never sinned in the first place, and then adopts us into the family.

That's the wonderful salvation we have. Now, every Baptist knows this. But what is your definition of sanctification? What does it mean to be sanctified? Someone make a suggestion.

Anyone, raise your hand before you speak. Yes, I'm glad I'm getting good, straight theological answers here. To be sanctified, one man said, that means to be made holy.

I said, What does to be made holy mean? Well, to be sanctified. They both mean the same thing. One's Anglo-Saxon, the other's Latin.

But it means to be set apart for God. Now, notice I said for God, because the word sanctified can mean something else. The children of Israel did sanctify themselves to do evil.

That means they set themselves out to do evil, just as we could say, hell's angels set themselves out to wreck the town of Holister. It has that negative sense. But to be set apart for God.

Now, that's more than cleansing. We talked last night about if we confess our sins, he's faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. My daughter is married and has three children.

I think I told you one is six foot four, and he's shooting big game in Africa at the moment with a camera. But when she was a little girl of 11, I shouldn't say little girl because she was as tall as her mother when she was 11. I came home late one night.

My wife didn't know when to expect me. She had gone out shopping. I was too tired to cook for myself and too hungry to wait for her to come back.

I asked my 11-year-old daughter, how about making supper for your daddy? Oh, she was pleased. It was the first time anyone had asked her officially to cook. Of course, I knew what I would get.

Meatballs. That was the first thing she learned in domestic economy, how to make Swedish meatballs. Well, I was ready for meatballs.

I took the newspaper, began to read. She started to sing to herself. She was so pleased with herself.

She put the pan on. She put a knife on the table. She put a fork on the table.

Then she put a plate on the table. I lowered my paper. I said, take that plate away.

She said, what's wrong with that plate, daddy? I said, that's the cat's plate. I'm not going to eat off the cat's plate. She said, but I washed it.

I said, I don't care if you washed it a hundred times. That plate was sanctified unto the cat. It was set apart for the cat's use.

I remember once I had a quartet of young men singing in my meetings. They stood in front of the communion table, a little nervous when they started, but they relaxed when they were singing their second number. And one fellow heaved himself up onto the communion table.

I said, get down, get down. That table is sanctified for the Lord's Supper. Set apart.

You don't use it for pink ball or anything like that. Ping pong or anything like that, do you? No, never. So to be sanctified is to be set apart.

Now, I don't mean to be out of this world. In Adelaide, in Australia, I stayed with a young couple who had just been converted. They thought they had a lot to learn about the Christian life, so they volunteered to put the evangelist up, offered hospitality.

I noticed they were a little, shall we say, nervous, and after a few days I said, Are you disappointed having an evangelist? Well, we didn't know what to expect. We thought you'd come into the room and say, Peace be unto you, or something like that. Now, to be sanctified doesn't mean to be out of this world.

It means just to be usable for God. To be set apart for God. It does not mean that you cannot have fun.

It doesn't mean you can't have entertainment. It doesn't mean you can't have sport. It doesn't mean you can't have recreation.

But it means you must be set apart for God. Don't expect the Lord to bless you on the Lord's Day if the devil has the use of your life on Saturday night. That's what it really means.

To be set apart for God. Now, this is all my preliminary explanation before we come to the meat of the message, but I want to say something further. Why is it that believers disagree so much about a subject like sanctification? For instance, there are some who teach that sanctification is a position.

You might say, who teaches that? I don't know if you've ever heard of a theologian called John Nelson Darby, one of the founders of the Plymouth Brethren. You say, that's a very small denomination. It has a wide influence, though.

Dallas Theological Seminary is influenced by Darby's teaching. So is the whole of the dispensationalist movement. They emphasize that every believer is set apart for God.

That was Darby's emphasis. Is it true? Oh, yes. In the opening of the epistle to the Corinthians, Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, and Sopphon is our brother to the church at Corinth, sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints.

Hold on a moment. The church at Corinth, where there was drunkenness at the Lord's table, and immorality in the congregation, and fanaticism in their meetings? Yes, but he called them saints. They were set apart for God.

In one sense, the moment a man says, I put my trust in Jesus Christ, he's set apart for God. You're not your own, you're bought with a price. Any danger to this? Any heresy? Oh, yes.

If you turn around to the negative side and say, then it doesn't matter what I do, then you've missed the whole point. Now, another John, John Wesley, emphasized sanctification as a crisis of commitment. Any scripture for that? Oh, yes, Romans 12 and 1. Present your body a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is a reasonable service.

That's commitment. I remember speaking in the Queensland Bible Institute in Brisbane, and I said, anyone care to define sanctification for me? A girl in the class stood up and said, sanctification is moment by moment, hour by hour, day by day, growth in grace. I said, thank you.

I said, any other definition? A young man, I suppose he was of Methodist extraction, he got up and he said, sanctification is the deeper blessing. Then another young man with a big Scofield Bible under his arm spoke, and he said, every believer is sanctified. In one minute I had heard what seemed to be three contradictory definitions.

Now Baptists and Presbyterians and some other denominations are committed to the idea of sanctification as growth in grace. The Methodists and the Nazarenes and the Salvation Army speak of sanctification as a crisis of commitment. And the Plymouth Brethren and others of the dispensation of the school say every believer is sanctified.

It's a position. It's your privilege. How could you reconcile these positions? Now, you may notice that I preach my own theology.

I did study in seminary, but I had to learn things for myself. I'll tell you this, a lot of things they don't teach you in seminary. You begin to learn things afterwards.

One day I was puzzled about this, so I took my Greek New Testament, I took the word Hagios, which means holy or sanctified, in its various forms, and made a list of every time it occurred in the New Testament. And it fell into, first of all, one or two categories. Growth in grace, that was obviously there.

But then it also referred to a crisis of commitment, like presenting your body a living sacrifice. And then I found some that wouldn't fit. And I was able to put them into another category, and that is the position of the believer.

And it helped me to understand the moment a man is converted, he belongs to Christ. But he may not yield his life to him. So there's a danger of just saying this is my privilege.

I heard Harry Ironside say once, every time the Bible mentions the privilege of the believer, it adds something about his responsibility. That's certainly true. And then I believe that there comes a crisis in the

Christian life where a believer says, I try to live the Christian life, and I find it difficult.

Those that really are used of God come to the place where they say, all right, I'll let the Lord do it for me. I'll surrender my life completely to him. Then growth in grace occurs.

So when you ask me which school of thought I belong to, quite cheerfully and sincerely I say to all three. I believe the moment a person gives his heart to Christ, he's set apart for God. But he's got to live up to it.

I believe that he'll find as he moves along the Christian life, he'll find that he needs something more. I never call it a second blessing. I believe it's all in Christ.

I believe there are 152 blessings or more. Then he says, all right, Lord, you're going to bother us with me. Then I believe he really grows in grace.

I've said that by way of preliminary, but tonight we're not going to talk about justification as a subject, but we're going to talk about sanctification, where the meaning clearly is committing your life completely to God and growing the way he wants you to grow. All right, then, Suzanne, if you'll come and sing again, then we'll stand and sing a chorus afterwards, and I want to give you the rest of my message. Now that we've talked about these words justification and sanctification, and I quote the verse, present your body a living sacrifice, let's turn to the epistle to the Romans.

If you have a New Testament with you, turn to the epistle to the Romans. I already told you that I heard Campbell Morgan say, a text without its context is no more than a pretext. What's the context? Look at Romans 1, verse 8. First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is proclaimed in all the world.

Were the Roman Christians of that day above average, average, or below average in faith? What would you say? Because your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world. What would you say? Above average. My next meeting is in Toronto at the Great People's Church, the largest church in Canada, founded by Dr. Oswald Smith.

I was his associate pastor at one time, before World War II. If I were to write to that church, the present pastor is Dr. Paul Smith, his son, one of the great preachers of Canada, who was my song leader at one time, believe it or not. If I were to write to that church, I could say, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, that your missionary giving is spoken of throughout the whole world.

That's probably the most missionary-minded church in the world. In Oswald Smith's day, they were supporting 300 missionaries, and it wasn't a wealthy congregation. Does that mean they're above average, average, or below average? Above average in mission giving.

It's quite clear that the Apostle Paul was writing to spiritual people, to people who had faith that was talked about all over the Christian world. I'd like to ask a question. You have read the Epistle to the Romans.

No doubt you've studied it in Sunday school or Bible class. What would you say in a couple of words is the topic, the subject, of the first three chapters of the Epistle to the Romans? I'll give you a clue. Romans 3, 23 says, All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

What would you say, in a couple of words, is the subject of the first three chapters? Anyone? I take it you've read it. What's it about? Well, it doesn't mention Christ. It's man's need, yes.

But somebody said sin. It's the guilt of sin. That's why he's in need.

He's guilty before God. I heard a black preacher in Los Angeles preach justice. You know how men cry out for justice? But he says, suppose you're guilty.

Then you want mercy. Is mercy all you want? No, you want forgiveness. There are some great black preachers.

He really rang a bell that night. But everyone, every last man born into this world faces the problem of the guilt of sin. I don't know if I mentioned to you last time I spoke to you, but I remember a man saying to me, I think I did, I mentioned the man in the mayor's parlor who said, If God makes the rules, can't God bend the rules and just forgive you? But then he wouldn't be God.

Do you remember, and I don't mean to be political, but do you remember when President Gerald Ford issued a pardon to Richard Nixon? He had no doubt some good reasons for that. He thought the trial of a president would wreck the country. So he issued him a pardon.

But what about the man who was already in jail? He's been speaking on television recently. What was his name? Yes, Gordon, Gordon Liddy. Gordon Liddy suffered.

Why didn't he get a pardon? You see, God cannot make plea bargains or make deals or anything like that. He must be just. Every last one of us suffers from the guilt of sin.

That's our problem. The first chapter of Romans tells us how terrible sin is. The second chapter tells us every Gentile is a sinner.

And it says the Jews are sinners, too, even though they have the word of God. And it sums it up by saying, All have sinned and come short of the glory of God. Notice the pronoun, all.

There was only one exception. That was the Lord Jesus Christ himself. I remember talking to some Roman Catholic friends, and they said, What about the Blessed Virgin Mary? I said, She said, My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior.

She needed to be saved, too. I believe in speaking highly always of the most blessed among women. Some people, as in reaction to Catholicism, don't give enough respect to Mary, the mother of Jesus.

But even she needed to be saved. She was just a human being, like us. Only one exception, Jesus Christ.

So there we have a problem. What's the answer? Well, you find it in Romans chapters 4 and 5. There isn't time to read right through, so just look at the key verse, Romans 5 and 1. Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. What is justification? It means being acquitted of guilt, being counted blameless, justified, never sinned.

Here are our sins. We're guilty before God. What happens? God forgives us.

Not only forgives us, he justifies us, treats us as if we've never sinned in the first place. I was preaching in Santa Clara, California, for First Baptist Church. I wrote to the pastor.

I said, If there's any college or university around, I'd like to have meetings at noon or sometime during the day. When I arrived, he said, You'll be speaking at the University of Santa Clara. I thought, What university

is that? I knew the University of California and its branches.

I knew the California State University. I knew the private universities, USC and Stanford. I said, Is that a Roman Catholic university? He said, Yes.

Jesuit. What else did they want me to speak? He said, Yes. Well, I said, I'm grateful to join the 23rd.

I went along. The priest said to me, You're very welcome. Just speak.

I said, What would you like me to speak about? Our common heritage? He said, If you wish. But we'd much rather you'd speak on faith and works, scripture and tradition, a definition of the Church, a definition of salvation, and what Baptists and Catholics may do that there may be one fold and one shepherd. I said, I'll begin with the last point first.

I said, Baptists, like other evangelicals, believe there is one fold and one shepherd. The one shepherd, obviously the Lord Jesus Christ, and the one fold, all true believers in him. He had already taken his place among the 600 students.

He said, We're not too far apart then. We believe in the one fold, all validly baptized. Immediately I thought of Adolf Hitler, who had been, in his words, validly baptized.

But it didn't seem nice to mention him. I mean, so I told him about the story. I said, One of our Baptist students in Seminary was held up by a gangster in the alley behind Washington Boulevard, the corner of Sacramento, and robbed of five dollars.

And this fellow said to the gangster, You're robbing the wrong sort of people, my friend. That's my last five bucks, and I'm only a student of the Baptist ministry. If you're going to steal from somebody, why don't you rob somebody who has some money? And I said, What did you say? He said, I say, Why don't you rob somebody who has some money? The man said, What did you say about the Baptists? He said, I'm only a student of the Baptist ministry.

The man said, I'll give it to you back. I'm a Baptist myself. Well, of course, my Catholic friends thought this was hilarious.

Then they began to wonder why I told that. I said, It's not what you say you are, it's what you are. That's why I say all true believers in him, Adolf Hitler, no doubt, was sprinkled as a baby, didn't make him a Christian.

And I don't think that even being baptized by immersion makes people a Christian. They've got to be born again, and that's their confession. That's my view.

So here we have it. Therefore being justified by faith, then a student said to me, But what about works? Does your Bible say, What does it profit though a man say his faith and have not works? Can that kind of faith save him? I said, Yes. Don't say your Bible.

There's only one Bible. There are different translations and versions. Yes, it says that.

Then aren't we saved by two things? By faith and by works? I said, No, not really two things. It's one thing. We're saved by the faith that works.

If it doesn't work, it's not true faith. I've already talked to you about repentance and the evidence of the Christian life. They didn't get me.

It was new to them. So I said, Now look, my next-door neighbor is a devout Irish Roman Catholic. We're very good neighbors.

They wanted to go to a wedding in Mexico, but they couldn't go because they had a tiny little baby. So my wife said, Leave the baby with us. Leave his bottle and formula.

I'll take care of your baby. Go and enjoy yourselves. You don't get a chance so often with small children.

They said, Oh, no, Mrs. Orr, we couldn't do that. You mean you don't trust me with your baby? I've raised my own. Oh, no, it's not that, Mrs. Orr.

It's just that we wouldn't impose on you. She says, You leave the baby with us. So they did.

That's my wife's temperament. Just as soon as she gets to heaven, she'll measure Peter for a pullover. My wife is not a public speaker, but she has the gift of helps.

That's a gift. Now, I said, Would you agree that looking after that baby was good works? They agreed. I said, While they were in Mexico, I was having my afternoon nap.

I always try to get 30 minutes as a horizontal Baptist, in the middle of the day. I heard our lawnmower go. So I peeked out the window, but there wasn't anyone in our garden.

A man sort of knows subconsciously the sound of his own lawnmower. I thought, Now, my wife is really pulling a fast one on me, trying to make me feel guilty. So I got up, but I couldn't sit.

Then I discovered she was mowing the neighbor's lawn. I said, What are you doing? She thought it would be a nice thing to manure their lawn while they're away, because children just track the dirt into the house. While they're away, it won't matter.

Would you go and get a bag of steer manure? Well, it would never have occurred to me. But when they came back, not only did they find the baby in good condition, but the lawn was in good condition, too. So I said, Would you agree that was good works? They agreed.

I said, Mrs. Orr didn't do that because she felt that what Christ did on the cross was only 92.5% effective, and she had to make up for it by 7.5% good works. She felt that what Christ did on the cross for her was 100% effective, and she was just glad to do it to please the Lord. So therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

It's by faith. Hold on a moment. These people in Rome had their faith spoken up throughout the whole world.

Why did the apostle Paul take the trouble to write all this about justification by faith when they already knew it? They were all justified by faith. They knew this doctrine. Why did he take the trouble of recapitulating the whole doctrine of justification by faith? I think there's a reason for it.

He was setting up something for a parallel, because now we're going to deal with a second problem. What is the subject of Romans 6 and 7? I'll give you a clue. It's Romans 6, verse 1. What shall we say then? Are

we to continue in sin that grace may abound? In the King James Version, what shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? In Philip's translation, what shall we say then? Shall we sin to our hearts' content and so exploit the grace of God? But isn't that what we do? Remember I asked the question, how many here have not sinned since the day of the conversion? Nobody volunteered.

I said, what about those sins? Shall we just keep on sinning that God can forgive us some more? Supposing Sears Roebuck announced that on the 15th of January 1986, to commemorate the anniversary of the firm, Sears Roebuck and company are prepared to forgive every outstanding debt against the firm. That would be great news for some little widow whose husband had died and left her not enough money to pay the bills. But what do you think would happen between now and the 15th of January? Tom, Dick and Harry would go to Sam's U-Drive and get a truck.

They'd open a charge account. They'd charge it. They'd buy everything they could get their hands on.

They would have furniture delivered. Because if they're going to be forgiven on the 15th of January, you might as well run up a big account. That's human nature.

Now the Apostle Paul is saying to us in effect, God has been so decent to us to forgive us freely. What shall we say then? Shall we just run up an account of sin so that he can forgive us some more? In the King James Version it says, God forbid. In the Revised Standard Version it says, by no means.

Phillips says, he's an Englishman, what a ghostly thought. It's certainly a negative. My wife said to me, how can they translate something in Greek to mean God forbid or by no means? Why does it mention God in one case and it doesn't mention the other? She didn't understand how they translated that.

Actually it's not Greek. It was not Greek in the original statement. You see, the word amen is not Greek.

It's Aramaic. It means, so let it be. May it be so.

Certainly. Exactly. That's why my brother here in the third row keeps on saying, amen.

That means he agrees with me. Let it be so. But the Aramaic had another word, the very opposite.

Chalila. May it never be so. When Peter said to the Lord, far be it from thee, Lord, he used that word chalila.

No doubt he was speaking Aramaic. That was the language they used among themselves. Not Greek.

Aramaic. Chalila means, may it never be so. And that's the idea here.

What shall we say then? Shall we just keep on sinning so to God and forgive us some more? By no means. What an idea. God forbid.

Certainly not. Yet we do that. And that's our problem.

What can we do about the power of sin in our lives? The first two chapters, chapters 6 and 7, deal with the problem that Christians face. The problem of the power of sin in their lives. We all face that.

Every last one of us born into the kingdom of God faces the problem of the power of sin. We still do things we shouldn't do. That's why I told you the story.

What about the old black dog? What about our old carnal nature? Romans 6 and 7 deal with the problem of the flesh. I don't mean the flesh on our bones. It's not literal.

It means the carnal nature. If it meant the flesh on our bones, then a big fat man would be a lot worse sinner than a little thin man. And holiness would be a matter of diet.

Well, there's some truth in that, you know. Ever hear of Miss Bertha Smith? She was talking to a Baptist priest and she said to him, you're too fat. He was sort of scared of her.

Holiness, there is a sort of wholeness in keeping down obesity. But we're not speaking of the flesh. We're speaking of the carnal nature.

The old man, the old Adam. In Ireland they say the old Paddy. Don't get your old Paddy up.

Every one of us faces the problem of the flesh. Now, some people may disagree with me. I heard a Baptist pastor in Melbourne preach an excellent sermon on Romans 7, but he applied it to unbelievers.

Let's have a look and see whether that would be the case or not. We can't deal with the whole chapter. Let's take Romans 7.15. In the King James Version, it's old-fashioned English.

Here we have in the most modern translations, I do not understand my own actions, for I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. Is that a believer or an unbeliever? Could be either. Look at Romans 7.19. I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do.

Look at 7.22. Yet I delight in the law of God in my inmost self. Look at 7.24. Wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body? Now, we ask, for I do not do the good I want, but I do the evil that I don't want to do. Is that a believer or an unbeliever? You could say that's either.

But you couldn't say, in my heart of hearts, I delight to do the will of God, and say that's an unbeliever. The unbeliever doesn't delight to do the will of God. He hasn't even obeyed him in taking the first step.

That's the first step of conversion. It's only a believer that can say, in spite of my weaknesses, in my heart of hearts, I delight to do God's will. And then it says, wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death? The unbeliever enjoys his sin.

He may suffer from hangovers, but he enjoys his sin. A believer does not enjoy sin. He may be tempted for the moment, but he hates himself afterwards.

That's a mark of being a believer. I remember a soldier coming to me on the island of Palawan in the Pacific, during the war. He said, Chaplain, I've been attending your service ever since I landed on this island.

I'm just disgusted with myself. He said, I never touched strong drink. But some of the other guys were teasing me, and they said, you're not man enough to try it.

He said, I can take it or leave it. So he said, I took a drink. It must have spiked it or something.

Or maybe I'm not used to drink, but it made me drunk. He said, could I be a Christian and get drunk? I said, how do you feel about it now? He said, I hate myself for it. I said, I think you're a Christian all right.

That's the mark of a Christian. He may trip and fall, but he'll repent. That's the mark of a Christian.

Wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death? Here are four points. A person who knows what's right doesn't always do it. He knows what's wrong, but sometimes does it.

Yet in his heart of hearts, he delights to do God's will, and the whole thing gets him down. Is that a believer or an unbeliever? The seventh chapter of Romans was written to believers in the flesh, to believers in the flesh, to believers under the law. Put it whatever way you like.

It describes us. We all go through this stage. Perhaps I could say a majority of Christians are still in this stage.

I don't know. But that's our problem. However, Romans chapter 6 already gives us a clue to the answer.

Look at Romans chapter 6, verse 14. For sin shall not have dominion over you. You're not under the law.

You're under grace. What does that mean? Sin shall not have dominion over you. That means that sin won't boss you around anymore.

The Lord Jesus said, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin. The Apostle said, whatever overcomes a man to that, he is enslaved. We talk about being slave to bad temper, slave to lust, slave to strong drinks, slave to drugs, slave to this, slave to that.

But it says you don't need to be a slave. Why? Because you're not under law, you're under grace. What on earth does that mean? You're not under law.

The law doesn't help you to keep the law. It doesn't help you to do God's will. It's only a warning.

I was preaching in the Moody Church in Chicago for Dr. Harry Ironside when three gangsters came in and stole the collection. I suppose that could happen only in Chicago. Dr. Ironside wasn't a bit upset.

He just said, let's thank God no one got hurt. But I said, it must have been a big collection with a congregation this size. Oh, he said, we have an insurance policy against that very thing.

I had never heard of a church that kept an insurance policy against people stealing the offering, but I was learning. Now, if those three young men had been apprehended, do you think they could have said to the judge, honest, Your Honor, we didn't know it was wrong to rob a church? They knew it was wrong. They knew the law, but it didn't help them keep the law when they wanted to do otherwise.

You're not under law, you're under grace. I like that old definition of grace, unmerited favor. In Christ we have unmerited favor, and there's enough grace in Christ to help us to do God's will.

I take it everyone here has flown in a plane. It's unusual to meet anyone who hasn't flown somewhere. But supposing someone who had never flown before got on a plane for Los Angeles, and the stewardess comes along and says, We're serving filet mignon steak or fried chicken.

What would you like? And the person says, I won't have anything. The stewardess says, Well, if you would, you can have either. I won't have anything, thank you.

After she moves along, the passenger in the next seat says, Aren't you hungry? Oh, yes, I'm hungry, but I can't afford it. I brought some peanut butter sandwiches. I think the passenger would say, Did you not realize it's all paid for in your ticket? It's all paid for in your ticket.

You're not under law, you're under grace. To meet your problem of the power of sin, it's all in your ticket. The Lord made provision for it.

Then it says, Likewise, reckon yourselves dead to sin, but alive to God. Do you have a bad temper? Did you ever see a corpse sit up on a coffin and lose his temper with everyone? No. The corpse lies flat.

Next time you're tempted to lose your temper, reckon yourself dead. You say, But alive to God? Yes. When the pastor says, We need a Sunday school teacher, would you take a class? You say, Here's a chance to be lively.

You say, Well, I've tried this and it doesn't work. I agree with you. Trying this doesn't work.

You say, Then why are you telling us to try it? I'm not telling you to try it. I'm telling you to trust it. I have seen pilgrims in India lie on the ground, make a stretch with their fingernails, stand up, step forward, put their toes where their fingers were, lie down again, make a stretch with their fingernails, stand up, step forward, put their toes where their fingers were, lie down again, make another stretch, yard by yard, furlong by furlong, mile for mile for a hundred miles.

And if you were to say to a Hindu, What are you trying to do? He'd say, I'm trying to save my soul. What would you tell him? I told him, You don't do it that way. Christ died for you.

In fact, you won't be saved until you realize you can't save your own soul. You can't save your own soul. Only God can save you.

In the same way, when it comes to living the Christian life, you say, Well, I've tried. I've reconsecrated my life. I've gone forward to reconsecrate and I've made New Year's resolutions and I've made commitments and so forth, but it doesn't last very long.

It's not trying. It's when you commit yourself completely. That's the answer.

The real answer, I would say, to the problem of the power of sin comes in the last section, Sanctification, Romans 8 and Romans 12. 9 and 10 deal with what is called the Jewish parenthesis. But look in chapter 8. It says, You are not in the flesh.

You are in the Spirit, and the Spirit of God really dwells in you. And if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he doesn't belong to him. Notice this.

If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus Christ from the dead really dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will give vitality, it says, give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit which dwells in you. In other words, you cannot live the Christian life yourself, but the Holy Spirit can live the life of Christ in you. He is the Spirit of Christ, and he can live the life of Christ in you.

Scientists have perfected a bomb that can kill a million people at once, but they can't raise the dead. Can anyone raise the dead? The Holy Spirit has raised the dead, can raise the dead. If the Holy Spirit who raised Christ from the dead really lives in you, he can give you the vitality you need to live the Christian life.

You say, Well, why doesn't he? It's because you have to be set apart for him. As I said, he's not going to live the life of Christ in you if you give part of your life to the world and the flesh and the devil. He's not going to share you with the world and the flesh and the devil.

I don't mean to be crude, but I vividly remember in Glendale, California, a dentist, a man was arrested for stabbing a dentist. He was spluttering when they arrested him. He said, This guy was making passes at my wife.

She was his receptionist. I went on to talk to him about it. And he said, Well, you say you love your wife? I said, Of course I love my wife.

Well, he said, So do I. Let's share her. He said, I'm not going to share my wife with anyone. That led to the stabbing.

Perhaps that's a rough illustration, but do you expect the Holy Spirit of God to share you with the devil? No, no, you must be set apart for God. It doesn't mean you must be perfect, but it means you must be willing to be set apart for God. And the climax comes in Romans 12 and 1. Present your body a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service, your spiritual worship.

Present your body. You say, Well, couldn't that be little bit by little bit? No. Now, I'm sorry I have to refer to the Greek here.

It's not fair to talk to some people about Greek verbs when they have never had a chance of studying the peculiarities of that language. The tense here is aorist infinitive. It means a point of action, not a process.

I think the best translation comes in the C.B. Williams translation. It's also in the amplified version. Present your bodies.

It says, Make a decisive dedication of your whole life to God. It must be decisive. Actually, it's in the verb rather than the noun, so it really means dedicate decisively your whole life to God.

I attended meetings of the Christian Endeavor Movement in the old days. That movement seems to have died out now. But I remember in those meetings, every once a month we had a consecration service.

And those who were full-time members were expected to get up and say something like this, I've failed Christ many times, but he's never failed me, so tonight I want to consecrate my life afresh to him. And I did that regularly. But it didn't make a bit of difference.

I was trying to hold on to Christ with one hand and onto my besetting sins with the other. I didn't let go. I had to come to the place where I said, Lord, you can have all there is of me.

Those who say it's just bit by bit, day by day, growth and grace, look at it this way. Supposing you went to a great conference where they spoke on living the Christian life, and you get convicted. You say, I know, I've got a bad temper, I've got a critical tongue, I've got a love of money.

But Lord, I'll surrender all. This year, 1985, I'll surrender my bad temper. It gets me into trouble all the time.

I'll be glad to get rid of it. Lord, I'll surrender that this year, but I'll keep on criticizing everyone until next year. But I promise you, exactly a year from now, I'll stop criticizing.

But I'll go on spending money as I want to until 1987, and then I'll start tithing. That's not full surrender. It must be everything you know about.

You say, what about the things you don't know about? Well, wait till the Lord tells you about them. I had to come to that place in my life, and Billy Graham came to that place in his life at Forrest Home, where he made a complete commitment. And as I said, everyone that I know that God is significantly using, I'm not talking about the charlatans who seem to have captured public attention and so forth, but everyone that I know that God is significantly using has come to a place of commitment and said, Lord, you're going to have all there is of me.

Perhaps I should just conclude with a word of personal testimony. I've done that so far. I was converted when I was nine, but I didn't live the life.

When I was a teenager in college, I didn't swear or get drunk or anything like that, but none of my classmates knew that I was a Christian. But I came to the place where I said, Lord, I want to do more for you. We had a big campaign in the city of Belfast.

I had a friend who belonged to the Salvation Army, Charles Coulter. He died a couple of years ago. I never knew a young man who prayed as much as Charlie Coulter.

I had a great regard for him. I said, Charlie, do you think there's anything deeper in the Christian life? Oh, yes, he said. I said, I don't know what to believe.

The Baptists teach this, the Methodists teach that, the Presbyterians teach this, the Pentecostals teach that. I don't know what to believe. Do you know anyone who has had an experience where a total commitment is really out and out for the Lord? Oh, yes, there must be some.

Finally, we decided to go and see an Englishman who was pastor of an Irish church. His congregation thought he was a saint. Allow me to observe that if any Irish congregation ever regarded an Englishman as a saint, he was a saint.

So we went to see him. God bless him, he was having a campaign way up country somewhere. Monday was his day off.

He traveled all the way up to the city to see two young men about total commitment. He spent from eight until ten. I threw every objection I had to him.

I said, Edwin, listen, you agree you have a need. I said, yes, I want to serve God, but I'm hindered. Well, you agree you have a need.

You think God hasn't provided for that need? You mean that God just threw you in the water and told you to swim? I said, well, I want to know what he's provided then. Well, we talked about it, and just as the clock struck ten, after two hours of talking, he said, Edwin, you seem to think that the hindrance is your besetting sins. It's not.

God can deal with sin very easily through the blood of Christ. It's your will. At that moment we were in a sitting room upstairs.

His senior minister downstairs thought, those two boys have spent two hours with my colleague. He'll be tired. He traveled up a long distance to see them.

I'd better get rid of them. Do you know how a minister gets rid of you? He says, let's have a word of prayer. So the four of us got on our knees to pray.

We didn't get up off our knees until two in the morning. God started to speak to me. First question was, what about your besetting sins? I said, Lord, I hate them, I loathe them.

I'd be delighted to be delivered of them. I meant that. Then the next question was, what about your will? Well, I said, Lord, I'm willing for anything.

I was taking a correspondence course from the China inland mission to go to be a missionary in China at the time. I said, Lord, if you want me to stay at home, I'll stay at home. If you want me to go into the ministry, I'll go into the ministry.

If you want me to stay in business, I'll stay in business. I was so willing, I felt rather pleased with myself. Then came a question that I didn't anticipate.

What about your girlfriend? Well, she's willing to go to China, or she's willing to stay at home, or she's willing... Well, I said, what's that to do with it? The thought occurred to me, I hope the Lord's not going to ask me to give her up. Then I started realizing, this is the one thing I'm not willing to do. So I started to argue with the Lord.

I said, Lord, this girl has been a blessing to me. If it hadn't been for her, I wouldn't have started going to meetings. A lot of fellows start going to meetings because of a girl.

To tell the truth, that's why I started going to the Christian endeavor, because of this girl. But the question remained, if the Lord asked you to, would you be willing to give her up? So I said, well, tell me whether you want me to give her up or not, and then I'll tell you whether I'm willing or not. And I felt my heart get cold.

I thought, I should never have asked that question. I said, but... Then I remembered a friend of mine, a young Irishman, who was always falling in love with the girls. Then he'd go to a prayer meeting, and he'd feel he was out of God's will, or he was premature or something, and he'd go and tell the girl, I shouldn't have said that, you know.

And it became a joke among the girls, don't let him go to a prayer meeting. He'd let you down. I thought, I was brought up with a respect for womenfolk, for girls.

And I thought, I can't just go along and... I said, all right, Lord, if you want me to give this girl up, let her give me up. And I won't try and get her back. And that's exactly what happened.

I don't know why, but suddenly I found myself free of commitment. It nearly broke my heart. Three weeks later I was in full-time service.

I was in Australia a month ago. It used to be when I went to Australia, people would come up and say I was converted in your meetings in 1936. Now they come up and say, my grandparents were converted in your meetings.

But if there ever was any blessing in my ministry, I'll trace it back to the 14th of August, 1933, when I said, Lord, you can have all there is of me. And I meant it. We didn't stop praying until two in the morning.

Oh, I felt such an experience. I don't want to go into any detail to describe it, but I certainly felt that God had answered my prayer for filling me with his Holy Spirit. He didn't give me glossolalia, but he gave me such an awareness of himself.

When I was walking home, I felt I could have jumped over the river instead of crossing by the bridge. Got home at three o'clock in the morning. I thought I'd have to pray again, so I knelt by the rocking chair in the kitchen.

My mother was a light sleeper, so I thought I'd better try and be quiet. A bit like Finney, you read in his autobiography, he had stuck a handkerchief to his mouth. I kept the handkerchief to my mouth while I was praying so as not to waken her.

At breakfast, she said, You were late last night. I said, Yes. What time did you come in? I was in the habit of equivocating by 55 minutes.

If I came in just 5 minutes to 12, I would say, After 11. Well, 5 minutes to 12 is after 11. But that gave a wrong impression.

So I was going to say, After midnight. Three o'clock is after midnight. Then I thought, I've just had such an experience with God, I can't equivocate.

I said, Three o'clock. She said, What were you doing out till three o'clock in the morning? I said, Charlie Coulter and I went to a prayer meeting. She said, Where do they have prayer meetings till three o'clock in the morning? I said, It wasn't that sort of prayer meeting.

She said, Oh, I find it so hard to talk to my mother about spiritual things. You see, they know you. Your mothers know you through and through.

I said, Well, Charlie and I went to talk to Pastor Rudkin. We wanted to be filled with the Holy Spirit. I thought Mother was going to give me the usual maternal lecture.

Now, I'm very glad to hear about this, but you know, since your father died, you haven't always been thus and so. But instead of that, two tears rolled down her cheeks. She said, Just before you were born, your Aunt Nellie came back from Canada.

She had had an experience with God in the Christian and Missionary Alliance. She said, I didn't understand, but I wanted whatever Nellie had. She said, I had two children and was expecting another.

I left your father with Alan and Evelyn, my older siblings, and she walked down to Botanic Avenue, where the faith mission was having a meeting, dealing with commitment. So she went forward to give herself completely to God. She was hoping that she would feel something, but she didn't feel anything.

She walked home. She thought, Well, I meant it. Lord, I am thine, O Lord.

She was singing to herself, I have heard thy voice. When she got home, she found both children with high fevers and my father in desperation. She said, with a little tinge of regret, I didn't have a minister like Aunt Nellie.

All I had to do was to look after a dying husband and sick children. My father died of TB. So did my older brother.

My mother was in a sanatorium for two and a half years. Then she said, But I wondered if God would claim the unborn fruit of the womb. I said, Lord, even of all those of me, you may have thought that that was some kind of sinless perfection that I claimed.

I said, Mother, I must say something. I want to tell you that sometimes I have stolen money out of your purse. The Lord began showing me things, but my attitude had changed.

Just show me, Lord, and I want to put it right. I'm trying to give you this because I'm not preaching a theory or a theology so much as a theology that became an experience in my life. Total commitment.

You say, Well, I consecrated my life, but what's my problem? I want to ask this question. Is there any area of your life that's not totally moneymaking, education for academic glory, your sex life, any area where you feel the Lord has a little running controversy with you? Now you understand. I think I'll close with a simple illustration.

There was a busy man in Belfast, my native city. The phone rang. It was his wife's voice.

She said, Come home quick, Jim. It's Johnny. He said, What's the matter with Johnny? That was his little boy.

She rang off. He rattled the phone. He says to his workmate, It's not like a woman who says, Come home, it's Johnny.

What's Johnny? But he got a taxi and went home. Sure enough, there was the doctor's car outside. He ran up the steps with apprehension.

There was his wife and the doctor and Johnny. He said, What's wrong? Johnny had his hand in a vase, a very expensive Chinese vase worth \$300, and couldn't get it out. The doctor wanted permission to break the vase.

The man says, Not on your life. That's worth \$300. He says to his son, You little brat, what have you been doing? He started scolding the child.

The mother said, Listen, Jim. Our little boy Johnny can't go through life with a vase on his hand. You've got to do something.

The doctor wants to break it. But the father was so upset, little Johnny got alarmed. Finally, Johnny said, Daddy, what would it help if I dropped my penny? He had dropped a penny into the vase.

The British penny is a big coin about the size of a half dollar. He had his fist around the penny and couldn't get the fist out of the vase. He was willing for his father to smash a \$300 vase for the sake of holding on to his penny.

That was exactly like me. I said, All right, Lord. I'm willing to surrender all.

It becomes a total commitment. If I asked you, Are you converted to God, no doubt you'd say, Yes. Praise God.

Are you sure of it? Yes. I have the assurance of salvation. Are you totally committed to him? You'd say, Well, sometimes I think I am and sometimes I know I'm not.

Or you may say, I'm not sure. Then you ought to settle this. I'm not going to give an invitation to come forward.

You could come forward here. We could have prayer with you. You might go away thinking you've done something.

I think what you should do is make an appointment with God tonight, if need be, if possible. If not tonight, maybe Saturday night. Whenever it's most convenient.

And pray through until you can say, Lord, you can of all there is of me. If you're married and your helpmate is a Christian, pray together. If you're just dating, you're far better praying alone, because I don't see how you can find out God's will if you're romantically distracted.

If you're married, pray together. If you're single, pray alone. Pray the prayer, I will not let thee go except thou bless me.

God is more anxious to help you than you are to be helped. But don't forget what I said. Just as justification is not by works, it's by faith, and the works follow.

So to be wholly surrendered to God is by faith, the same faith that you exercised when you accepted Christ as Savior. That same faith. You simply say, Lord, I'll trust your word to do this for me.

I present my body a living sacrifice. We're going to close the meeting by singing, and I think we ought to sing those two verses again. 266, verse 2 and 3.

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