

Thursday #2 Complete Commitment

by J. Edwin Orr

The sermon emphasizes the importance of complete commitment to God, which involves understanding and living out the doctrines of justification and sanctification.

Duration: 53:19

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, John 10:16, Romans 6:7, Romans 7:15, Romans 7:19, Romans 12:1, Ephesians 4:22-24

Topics: "Revival Theology"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the doctrine of renewal and the concept of complete commitment to God. He uses a story about a Hopi Indian to illustrate the idea of having two dogs that represent the struggle between sin and righteousness. The preacher emphasizes that every person is born with the guilt of sin, except for Jesus Christ. The solution to this problem is justification, which means being set right with God and declared innocent through faith in Jesus Christ. The preacher also emphasizes the importance of dedicating one's whole life to God and living a holy and acceptable life as a living sacrifice.

Transcript

Thank you so much, that was choice. Tonight I'm going to talk about another doctrine connected with the subject of renewal. That is summed up in the words of Romans 12 and 1, present your body a living sacrifice.

In other words, complete commitment. However, I want to teach it with a scriptural background, at the same time illustrating it so that you won't forget the points. There was a Hopi Indian giving his testimony in Arizona.

He said, before I get converted, I go to town on Saturday night, get drunk, and my big mean dog bite everybody. Then said he, Jesus Christ come into my life. He give me a great big friendly dog.

Big friendly dog love everybody. Make friends. But he said, now I have two dogs, and they fight.

There was a chief sitting in the front seat. He said, huh, which dog winning? The brave thought it over. He said, whichever one I say, sick them too.

When I first heard that story, I thought, how true that was of my early Christian life. I was converted when I was nine years of age. But as I grew up into my teens, I got to be quite compromising.

Sometimes I got so pious, I went to church on Sunday, twice without being told, went to Bible school, Bible class into Sunday school, went to the midweek service on my own. I even gave out hymn books at the door once. I was feeding the great big friendly dog.

Other times I backslid, ran around to the gang of fellows on Saturday night, kept bad company. I was feeding the great big mean dog. Now that's our problem.

What are we going to do with the old mean dog? Now there's some Christians who teach you can shoot the old dog dead. But they admit that you can raise another pup. So we won't argue about the age of the dog.

We want to deal with that problem. Your main hindrance in living the Christian life is not the Communist Party or the American Association for the Advancement of Atheism. I think it was Pogo who said, we have discovered the enemy and they is us.

I am my biggest hindrance. That's the problem we want to talk about tonight. But we'll do it in an orderly way.

I'm going to use the overhead projector. There are two theological terms. Don't be scared of them.

What does it mean to be justified? Does anyone care to give me a definition? Raise your hand before you speak. Yes. To be declared innocent.

That's fair. Any other suggestion? Just as if I'd never sinned. That's as much a pun as a definition.

But they stick in your mind, puns, don't they? I remember when I was in Sunday school, asking my Sunday school teacher, who were the Sadducees? He said the Sadducees were a Jewish sect who didn't believe in the resurrection of the body or the coming of the Lord. And that is they were sad, you see. I've never forgotten that.

Never forgotten it. So, justified means just as if I'd never sinned. Actually, it means to be acquitted, pardoned.

No, it's more than pardoned. How shall I illustrate that? I did talk the other night about forgiveness, didn't I? I was driving along California Boulevard in Pasadena. I came to a stop sign at Allen Boulevard.

I stopped. Now, there's generally a motorcycle policeman hiding under the pepper trees at that corner. And as I turned around and went north on Allen Boulevard, I noticed in the reflection of my mirror this motorcycle policeman coming very rapidly in my direction.

I said to the Reverend Armand Guestwine, who was riding with me, who is he chasing? He looked back. He said, You're the only one in the street. But I hadn't done anything wrong.

Now, my car had an Illinois license plate on it. I'd just moved from Glen Ellyn. But it's not wrong to drive a car with an Illinois license plate in California.

I was beginning to feel indignant. Sure enough, the cop came alongside of me. He said, Pull over there, bud.

So I parked the car. He parked his cycle. He came back.

He laid his elbow on the window frame and spoke to me ever so nonchalantly. You must agree, traffic cops have poise. He said, Mister, do you have stop signs back in Illinois? I thought, What a dumb question.

But I said, Yes. Mister, he said, When you see a stop sign back in Illinois, do you stop? I was going to say something smart. Then I thought, No.

So I said, Yes, I do. 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. So he looked at it. He says, Well, I see you are a bona fide visitor to our fair state, so we'll forgive you this time.

You was pardoned. I wasn't justified. You know how I know? Because the cop followed me.

And when I got to the corner of San Pascual, I made quite sure he saw me stop. I was on probation. Now, when God forgives us, he not only forgives us--that's a wonderful thing--but he treats us as if we'd never sinned in the first place.

Supposing you get home tonight. I hope this illustration won't be fulfilled. The neighbors are out on the sidewalk, waiting for you.

They say, Your house has been burgled. You say, Oh, no. Well, we've called the police, but they haven't come yet.

So you go in, and then you find a comic tragic situation. The young burglar has accidentally locked himself in the bathroom. Can't get out.

Now you've got him. However, he's so young, and he says he hasn't eaten, out of work, can't get a job. You ask him to stay for supper.

You think, Well, we won't turn him in. We won't lay charges. Next day, you go down to town, you know somebody needs some help, you get him a job.

He's grateful. He comes for Sunday dinner every Sunday. Finally, he marries your sister.

What treatment for a burglar. Well, that's the way God treats us. Rebels in arms against him, he not only forgives us--that's a wonderful thing--but he treats us as if we had never sinned in the first place.

We're declared innocent, acquitted. That's the meaning of justification. Now let's take the second term.

What does it mean to be sanctified? Could you give me a good pun on that? What does it mean to be sanctified? Someone tell me. It means set apart. That sense of separation.

Set apart for God. Someone might say, Joseph Solomon said pardoned. You might say it means to be cleansed.

That's implicit, but it's more than cleansed. I'm a grandfather five times over, but I remember many years ago, 30 years ago or more, about 30 years ago I came home. My wife didn't know when to expect me.

She'd gone out shopping. I was too tired to wait for her return, too hungry, too hungry to wait for her return, too tired to cook my own food. So I said to my 11-year-old daughter, how would you like to make supper for your daddy? She was pleased.

First time she'd ever been invited officially to cook. Of course, I knew what I would get. Meatballs.

That's all she knew how to make. Meatballs. First lesson in domestic economy.

But she was so pleased, she started to sing to herself, put a pan on the stove. She came and put a knife on the table, came and put a fork on the table. I was reading the paper, waiting for the food.

She came and put a plate on the table. I stopped her there. 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 a cat's plate. She said, but I washed it.

I said, I don't care if you wash it a hundred times. That plate was sanctified unto the cat. That's the meaning of the word sanctified.

By the way, the word used in a negative sense. The children of Israel did sanctify themselves to do evil. Just as we could say, hell's angels set themselves out to wreck the town of Hollister.

There's a negative sense. But when we speak of sanctification, in this sense, we mean set apart for God. Now that we have some idea of what we mean by these two terms, justified, sanctified, let me say they are equally part of our salvation.

We've been justified, sanctified, we shall be glorified. I would like to direct your thoughts, if you have a New Testament with you, turn to the epistle to the Romans, and look at the salutation in chapter 1, verse 8. First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is proclaimed throughout the world. The church at Rome in those days was famous for its faith.

Would you say they were above average, below average, or just average Christians? I think you'd say they were above average. I had a phone call long distance today from California. I'm supposed to preach next week in the People's Church in Toronto, the biggest church in Canada.

I used to be associate pastor with Oswald Smith. Now that is that great missionary church. They support more missionaries than any other congregation in the world, so far as I know.

If I were to write to them and say, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you in Toronto, at the People's Church, because your missionary zeal is spoken of throughout the whole world. Would that make them above average, below average, or just average? It would make them well above average. Now, the church at Rome was above average.

Keep that in mind. I'd like to ask this question. You've read this epistle.

What would you say, in a couple of words, was the subject of the first three chapters of the epistle to the Romans? Would you care to raise your hand to reply? Anyone? Just a suggestion. What's the indictment of the whole human race for what? What kind of rebellion? Well, can you use the word sin? It's an indictment. The first chapter tells us how terrible sin is in the sight of God.

Then the Apostle explains that all the Gentiles are sinners. Then he says the Jews are sinners too, even though they have the word of God. And it's summed up for us, Romans 3.23. All have sinned and come short of the glory of God.

Every last man born into this world faces the problem of the guilt of sin. I'll write it down for you. Here's the problem, the guilt of sin.

Every last man born into this world faces the problem of sin. Was there an exception? Oh yes, the Lord Jesus Christ. The only one.

Even Mary, his blessed mother, said, My spirit rejoices in God my Savior. She needed a Savior too. So there we have the guilt of sin.

The first three chapters. The fourth and fifth chapters are the answer. They deal with justification.

The key verse is Romans 5.1. Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Now remember, what does justification mean? Being set right with God, being acquitted of guilt, being declared innocent. That takes care of our problem.

But notice, by faith. Now you've already heard me preach on repentance, and you heard me say that the word metanoia doesn't only mean a change of attitude, but it results in a change of lifestyle. As the Apostle Paul said, and as John the Baptist said, Bring forth fruits, meet for such repentance.

Some years ago I went up to hold a week of meetings in First Baptist Church of Santa Clara. I called the pastor. I said, If there's any college in the neighborhood, try and arrange meetings during the day for me.

I love to speak to students. When I arrived, he said, You're going to speak in a series of meetings in the University of Santa Clara. I said, That's a Roman Catholic university.

He said, Yes. Jesuit. But they want me to speak? I studied for a while at Loyola in Chicago, but they never asked me to speak to the students there in those days.

It was long before John the 23rd. So I asked the priest in charge, What do you want me to speak on? Our common heritage? He said, If you wish. But he said, We'd much rather if you'd speak on faith and works, scripture and tradition, a definition of the gospel, a definition of the church, and then knowing where I was holding the meetings, what we Baptists and Catholics may do that there may be one fold and one shepherd.

I said, Alright, I'll begin with the last point first. 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.

The priest had taken a seat among the 800 students. He said, We're not too far apart then. We believe in one fold of all validly baptized.

I knew of so many choice Roman Catholic friends, but at that moment I thought of Adolf Hitler. It didn't seem to be nice to mention him. So instead I told them a Baptist story.

When I was studying a Northern Baptist seminary in Chicago, one of our students was robbed by a gangster in the alley behind the seminary, the corner of Washington and Sacramento. He was robbed of

five dollars. Baptist students work their way through school generally.

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

The man said, Here, look, I'll give you back. I'm a Baptist myself. All my Catholic friends roared with laughter.

And then they got the point. It's not that you say you're a Baptist or that you're a Catholic. It's that you're a true believer.

That's the point. And they got it all right. Then the first question was, does your Bible say faith without works is dead? I said, I don't say your Bible.

There is one Bible. There are many translations and versions. But yes, the scripture says faith without works is dead.

Then aren't we really saved by two things? By faith and by works? I said, Well, let me put it this way. James, the brother of the Lord, said, What does it profit though a man say he has faith and have not works? Can that kind of faith save him? I'd rather say we're saved by the faith that works. I believe in works.

I believe in good works. I said some further. My next door neighbor is a devout Irish Roman Catholic.

He and his wife wanted to go to Mexico to a wedding, but couldn't go because of their tiny little baby. My wife said, Now leave the baby with us. We'll take care of the baby.

Oh, no, Mrs. Orr, we wouldn't impose on you. I raised up my own. Wouldn't you trust me? Oh, it's not trust.

We wouldn't impose on you. She said, Leave the baby. Leave the formula.

I'll take care of the baby. Go and enjoy yourselves at the wedding. Take the other children.

So for a week we had a squalling little baby. Now I said to my friends at Santa Clara, Would you call that good works? They all agreed. I said, Mrs. Orr didn't do that because she felt what Christ did on the cross was only ninety-two percent effective.

She did it just because she wanted to please the Lord. The works follow the faith. So I believe in works.

I believe in faith, but faith comes first. Now we keep this in mind because I'm going to ask you a question. Remember I said, Do you think that the church at Rome was above average or below average? You all agreed it's above average.

Why did the Apostle Paul write to them about being justified by faith when he already had commended them that their faith was spoken of throughout the whole world? Why discuss this? I think it was to set up the main point of his letter, and you'll find this introduced in Romans chapter six. Look at the first verse. What shall we say then? The King James Version says, Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?

God forbid.

I notice in the Revised Standard Version it says, Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? By no means. I knew J. B. Phillips who made the Phillips translation, and his is a very English one. Shall we sin to our hearts' content and so exploit the grace of God? What a ghostly thought.

Now my wife often asks very straight questions. She says, What is it that's translated, God forbid, by no means, and what a ghostly thought? Well, actually it's an expletive. The word Amen is not a Greek word.

Neither is it Hebrew. It's Aramaic, carried into the Greek. It means, May it be so.

So be it. Certainly. Yes.

That's Amen. There's an opposite word in Aramaic, Chalila, and that's May it never be so. When the Apostle Peter said to our Lord, when he said he was going to the cross, Far be it from thee, Lord.

That's our translation. He spoke Aramaic, no doubt, in his conversation at home. He would have said, Chalila, May it never be so.

Now this is the carryover of that expression. What shall we say then? Shall we just keep on sinning, that God may forgive us some more? God forbid. By no means.

What a thought. Chalila. Yet isn't that our problem? Is there anyone here who would dare say, since my conversion I have committed no sins whatsoever? I had one man, by the way I don't ask that anymore, I just mention it because one man came up to me and said, Look at me.

He said, For seventeen years I haven't committed a single sin. What would you say to a man like that? I said, Are you married? He said, That's not a sin. I said, Didn't say it was, but are you married? He said, Yes.

Is your wife here? That's my wife over there. I called her over, I said, Madam, I don't want to be too personal, but would you agree with your husband that for seventeen years he hasn't committed a single sin? She said, No sir. I left him arguing.

Now let's face it, that's our problem. Remember I said every last man born into this world faces the problem of the guilt of sin? Well our guilt is all gone, but every last man born again into the family of God faces the problem of the power of sin in his life. Take that old Calvinist hymn, Rock of Ages, Be of sin the double cure, cleanse me from its guilt, and power.

Remember I told you the other night about the bad temper I had when I was a boy? But I thought I was a Christian with a bad temper. My father, James Orr, had a bad temper. My grandfather, James Wright, had a worse temper.

They were both Irish. My first name is James. So I thought I was entitled to a certain amount.

In fact, sometimes I rather enjoyed losing my temper, you know, making people feel that I can speak out like that and all the rest of it. But it was an awful hindrance to my Christian testimony. Those unconverted girls in the office where I was working in that time used to say, ha ha, look at the Christian endeavorer now.

I attended Christian Endeavor. Look at the Christian now, temper, temper, temper, temper. I'd say it's not bad temper, it's righteous indignation.

But it was bad temper, and it was my problem. Now what can you do with the old mean dog that you have? You find Romans chapter 6 raises this question. We're dealing with the power of sin.

Let's write it in. And of course you can see the answer is sanctification, but that needs some explanation. What we mean by this, most people are so scared of the word.

Now I was speaking at the Queensland Bible Institute in Brisbane, in Australia. I asked the students, what do we mean by sanctification? A girl got 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? Up got another young student, a young man. I could see he was going to contradict her. He was a Methodist.

He said, sanctification is the deeper blessing. I said, thank you. Any other definition? Another young man got up with a big Schofield Bible under his arm, and thus fortified, he said, sanctification, every believer is sanctified.

In one minute I heard what appeared to be three contradictory definitions of sanctification. Now I'm not speaking of sainthood in the medieval sense. I have a great admiration for Mother Teresa.

I'm sure you do too. When she goes to her award, no doubt the Roman Catholic Church will first of all make her the blessed Mother Teresa, and then she'll be Saint Teresa of Calcutta. But I'm not speaking of that special sainthood.

I'm using the word saint in the sense that the Apostle Paul uses it when he wrote to the Corinthians. Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, and so often is our brother to the church at Corinth, sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints. All of us who are believers are saints, in that sense.

That's the biblical sense, too. In one minute I heard three definitions that seem to contradict each other. If you want to keep these in your mind, I'll associate them with three great men of God, each of whom was called John.

Growth and Grace, John Calvin. That's a Calvinist view. A crisis experience, a deeper experience, John Wesley.

That every believer is sanctified, John Darby. Ah, some of you don't know that name. Who was John Darby? Someone tell me.

Yes, one of the founders of what are called the Plymouth Brethren. That's a nickname. They prefer to call themselves Christian Brethren.

John Calvin, Growth and Grace. John Wesley, Crisis of Commitment. John Darby, a position that we all have.

Which is right. I find to my amazement that you find scripture for all three. I've already quoted Paul's greeting to the Corinthians, called to be saints.

Now is there any difficulty to this? Oh, yes. I heard Harry Ironside, pastor of the great Moody Church, who was a follower of John Darby in the School for the Bible, saying, Every time the Bible speaks of our privilege in Christ, it adds a word about our responsibility. Take the Ephesian letter, one of the greatest of all, to tell us of the privilege we have in Christ.

Then Paul said, I, Paul, a prisoner of the Lord, beg you to walk worthily with the calling over which you are called. In Los Angeles, the police find a young fellow drunk in the gutter. They locked him up, went through his pockets, found he was the son of a multimillionaire from New York.

They telegraphed to New York police. The boy's father put up the money and they flew him back to New York. Now while the young fellow was in the gutter and while he was in the cell, what was his position? He was the son of a millionaire, born to privilege, born, as we would say, with a silver spoon in his mouth.

But what was his condition? Just a drunken bum. The scripture says we are privileged, but we must live up to that. So you have to balance one truth with the other.

Is there any scripture for John Wesley's position? I'll give you one good, and I'm quite sure nobody can contradict me at this point. Romans 12 and 1 says, present your body a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. You might say, well, couldn't that be bit by bit, moment by moment, present, you know, every morning you say, Lord, I'll give my heart to you again.

No, no, it doesn't mean that. Ask any of the pastors or any of the laymen who have studied Greek. That is written in a special Greek tense, the aorist infinitive.

It's a point of action. Present all at once, as much as you know of, instantaneously. The best translation I know is the C. B. Williams translation.

You find it reflected in the Amplified Version, you know, the Amplified Version published by Zondervan. Make a decisive dedication of your whole personality to God. Actually, it's in the verb, verb, not in an adjective.

It's dedicate decisively your whole personality to God. Now, I used to attend the meetings of the Christian Endeavor movement. That's where I learned to speak as a teenager.

I thank God for Christian Endeavor. Once a month we had a consecration service. Once a month I would get up and say, like the others, I failed Christ many times, but he's never failed me, but tonight I want to consecrate my life afresh.

I was aware of things wrong in my life, but the following Monday of the next month, it is the same thing again. Up and down, up and down, up and down, getting nowhere. Why? I was holding on to the Lord with one hand and onto my sins with the other.

There was nothing decisive about it. Wouldn't you say that it's typical of our evangelistic campaigns that the committee reports so many first-time decisions and so many rededications? Why, if a marriage had to be made up as many times as some Christians have to rededicate themselves, we wouldn't consider it a very successful marriage. So, there's your difficulty.

Romans 12.1 says present your body a living sacrifice. Dedicate your whole life. People in the charismatic movement talk about being filled with the Holy Spirit.

Can your life be filled if it's full of garbage? I remember in Brazil, a minister asked from the floor once, is it possible to be half-filled with the Holy Spirit? I thought he was being facetious at first, but he was very sincere. He meant modestly, I do believe the Holy Spirit has blessed me, but I wouldn't like to claim to be filled. So I said to him, well, if you take a gallon can and you put in half a gallon, it's half-filled, but it's also half-empty.

Put in three-quarters of a gallon, it's three-quarters filled, quarter empty. Put in a gallon, it's filled. But if you're not sure, put in a little more, it will overflow.

The overflow is a test. If, for instance, in the vessel of a man's life there are things that shouldn't be there, how can his life be filled? It has to be decisive. Some of you might say, isn't that suspiciously like sinless perfection? Oh, no.

I said at any given moment, when I knelt before God when I was twenty-one, at a crisis of my Christian experience, I'd been converted more than ten years, twelve years in fact, God spoke to me about my bad temper. I had to say, well, Lord, I don't want to have a bad temper like this. Please deal with it.

After a month, I found I'd kept my temper for a month. I started to brag about it, and the Lord said to me, now you're proud, and that's even worse. It's progressive in that sense.

So I can't think anyone gets to a place where he can't be improved, where he doesn't fall short. Whoever knows to do good, does it not, to him it is sin. Whatsoever is not of faith is sin.

A committed Christian might say, well, I haven't robbed a bank, I haven't told an outright lie, I haven't done this, I haven't done that, but he still falls short. That brings us to the third definition. Any scripture for Calvin's position? Oh yes, Romans 12 and 2. Be not conformed to this world, but rather be transformed by the renewing of your mind.

By the way, it's continued tense there, not instantaneous, not eros infinitive. Keep on doing it. How? By the renewing of your mind.

There's a cognate for repentance. It's not the word repent, which means change your mind. It's to renew your mind, to do it again.

Say, Lord, I give myself completely to you again. Any time you fall short, you may come to the Lord and renew your vows. So when you ask me, do you believe in positional sanctification, critical sanctification or progressive sanctification? I say quite cheerfully, all three.

And you'll find some of the answer here. We're dealing with this problem. We know we are Christians.

Positionally, we're set apart for God. That's our privilege. But now you find Romans 6 and 7 deal with our problem.

How can we make it real? Romans chapter 7. Now, some people say this applies to the unconverted. I heard a Baptist pastor in Melbourne preach an excellent evangelistic sermon on the radio to the ungodly, using text from Romans chapter 7. But I think if you were to test it, you'd find that Romans chapter 7 deals with the believer. Look at Romans 7.15. I do not understand my own actions.

I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. Romans 7.19. I do not do the good I want, but the evil I don't want to do is what I end up doing. Romans 7.22. Yet in my heart of hearts I delight to do the will

of God.

Romans 7.24. Wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death? Is this a believer or an unbeliever? Take the first point I quoted. I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. That could be an unbeliever.

In verse 19, I don't do the good I want, but the evil I don't want is what I do. That could also be an unbeliever. Some of them anyway.

But look at verse 22. I delight to do the will of God in my heart of hearts. The unbeliever cannot say that.

If he really meant that, he would take the first step and be converted to God. But he hasn't even done that. And look at Romans 7.24. Wretched man that I am, who will deliver me from this corpse? The Romans had a custom of chaining a murderer to the corpse of his victim.

Let him drag around the corpse for a few days. That's the figure of speech here. I hate my sins, and yet here I am tied to them.

Is that a believer or an unbeliever? When I was in the service, I found that the unbelievers enjoyed their sin. It was believing men who were upset when they sinned. So I think Romans chapter 7 describes a believer.

I remember in India once asking--I gave them points--a person who knows what's right but doesn't always do it, who knows what's wrong but sometimes does it yet in his heart of hearts he wants to please God, and the struggle gets him down. So I asked a crowd of about 5,000 people, does anyone here know anyone like that? And a little Indian woman shouted, My husband! But I think if we are honest we have to say, Me. It's our problem.

Now what's the answer to the problem? Romans 6 verse 14 gives us a promise. Sin shall not have dominion over you. You're not under law, you're under grace.

Now the Lord Jesus said whoever commits sin is a slave of sin. We talk about a man being a slave to lust, a slave to drugs, a slave to drink, a slave to gambling, a slave to bad temper, and so on. It says whatever overcomes a man to that he is enslaved.

But this says you don't need to be a slave to any bad habit. Why? You're not under law, you're under grace. What does it mean you're not under law? Well the law doesn't do anything for you except to warn you.

I've seen speed signs 55 miles an hour and people sailing through at 75. The law doesn't help you keep the law, it's only a warning. But it says you're not under law, you're under grace.

I like the old-fashioned definition, grace is unmerited favor. There's enough grace in Jesus Christ to help you. I take it everyone here has flown in a plane some distance.

You buy your ticket and the stewardess comes to you and says, we're serving beef filet mignon or chicken, southern style. What would you like? You say, well I can't afford it so I brought my own peanut butter sandwiches. It's in your ticket.

You didn't need to bring peanut butter sandwiches. They feed you very well on board a plane. The same thing is true, we're on board the ship for the heavenly country and it's in our ticket.

You say, well tell me how do I get it? Well look at Romans chapter 6 verse 11. You must also reckon yourselves dead to sin and alive to God. Dead to sin? You've got a bad temper? Did you ever see a corpse sit up on a coffin and blow his top? No, he's dead.

He lies dead. Reckon yourself dead, but when you have a chance to serve the Lord, count yourself alive. You say, but I tried this and it doesn't work.

I agree with you. What did you say? I said I agree with you, it doesn't work. You say, then why are you telling us to try it? I didn't tell you to try it.

I'm trying to mystify you at this point, I to get the point. In India, I have seen pilgrims 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 another stretch, up and down, yard by yard, furlong by furlong, mile by mile, for a hundred miles. And if you were to say to one of those Hindus, what are you trying to do? He'd say, I'm trying to save my soul.

What would you tell a man like that? I told him, look, it's not only difficult to save your own soul, it's impossible. He said, then why does Almighty God expect anyone to be saved? I said, because he has provided a savior. Put your trust in him.

Now in the same way, it's not only difficult to live the Christian life, let's face it, it's impossible. Now I know there's a Catholic classic called *The Imitation of Christ* by Thomas AbbaKit, and there's a Protestant classic called *In His Steps* by Charles Sheldon. There isn't anyone listening to me who can imitate Jesus Christ and walk in his steps.

Then why does God expect us to do it? Because he has provided the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Christ, to live the life of Christ in us. He can do it. Scientists have perfected a bomb that will kill a million people, but they can't raise the dead.

Can anyone? Yes, the Holy Spirit has raised the dead. And it says in this promise here in Romans chapter 8, if the Spirit of him who raised Christ Jesus from the dead really dwells in you, he who raised Christ from the dead is able to give vitality to your mortal body also through his Spirit which dwells in you. The answer to the problem of the flesh is sanctification by the Spirit.

Don't be scared of the word sanctification. It's a New Testament word. It means complete commitment.

When you say, Lord, you can have all there is of me. Now, you know, the wonder of justification is, someone could come into a meeting on Sunday night here, after struggling and sinning and struggling, you could say, well, I'm going to trust Jesus Christ as Savior, and it works. He becomes a child of God by faith.

In the same way, a believer who's tired of his up-and-down experience can make a complete commitment of his life to God and say, Lord, you can have all there is of me. And it works. Now, you remember I asked the question, and I could ask it here.

How does a poor, lost sinner rise from the low level of sin to the high level of justification, being declared innocent by faith, by works, or by feelings? He says, by faith. Well, what about the works? They follow. How does a poor, defeated Christian, living an up-and-down experience, rise from the low level of carnality to the high level of complete commitment? Is it by feelings, by works, or by faith? It's by faith.

And the works follow. The strange thing is this. Those people, many who know that their justification is by faith, try to take their sanctification by works.

They're always trying something. They're always adopting some plan of study, or making some promise of the New Year, they're going to do this, that, and the other thing. It doesn't work.

It's by faith. And when you get to the place where you say, Lord, I've tried to live the Christian life, but I'm not succeeding very well at it. But now I'm going to turn the whole thing over to you.

You say, Lord, you can have all there is of me. That's presenting your body a living sacrifice. Or, in a better translation, dedicating decisively your whole personality to God.

But it's bound to have a challenge for you. Some people want to make a deal with God and say, well, that'll apply to my church life, but in business, I won't get very far unless I do some smart things. Or somebody might try to accept their sex life, or their ambition.

No, no, it must be total commitment. Now, if this were an evangelistic meeting, and some young man waited behind, and I talked to him, and I said, all right then, are you willing to accept Jesus Christ as your Savior? And he says, well, look, I'll try. What would I say? I'd say, good for you.

You keep on trying, now. Here's my card with my phone number. Call me up any time.

I know you're trying. I'll be praying for you. No, I wouldn't say any such thing.

I'd say, it's not trying, it's trusting. But if I say to you, are you completely committed to the Lord, fully surrendered? Would you like to be? You say, well, I'll try. It's not trying, it's trusting.

It comes to a complete commitment. Now, in these days of the widespread charismatic movement, some people may say, well, is this the same thing as being filled with the Holy Spirit? Yes and no. I shudder when I meet people who claim to have a gift of the Holy Spirit and are not living right.

There are some like that, as we all well know. But I think that Romans 12 and 1 is our preparation to be ready to be filled with the Holy Spirit. There is a parallel.

Nowhere in the scripture does it say, O God, convert me. It says, repent and be converted. But what does he do? He regenerates us.

Now, in the same way, nowhere does it say, O God, surrender me. It says, present your body a living sacrifice. What does he do? He fills us with his Holy Spirit.

And our life becomes totally different. Now, we've talked a lot about revival here in the sense of renewal. This is the message for the individual.

You could take a piece of chalk and draw a circle and stand inside the circle and say, Lord, revive me. But perhaps this is what you need. Lots of Christians seem to think that God does a wonderful thing in saving

their soul, and then he sort of throws them into the tank and says, swim for it.

Oh no. He has made provision for your needs. And your greatest need, now that you are a child of God, is to live a life to glorify Jesus Christ.

And when he has come, he convicts the world of sin, he guides you into all truth, and he glorifies Christ in you. It's the work of the Holy Spirit. You say, well, why doesn't he do it? Because he won't share your life with the world and the flesh of the devil.

I don't mean to be crude, but I want to give you an illustration that you won't forget. I remember in Glendale, California, an angry husband went to a dentist's surgery and beat up the dentist. The police came and arrested him.

He said, he's been making passes at my wife, she's his receptionist. He said, when I protested, he said, well, you say you love your wife, so do I, let's share her. He said, I'm not going to share my wife with anyone.

And most of us feel an instant sympathy with him. But do you think the Lord wants to share us with the world and the flesh and the devil? No. We've got to be set apart.

That's the very meaning of the word, to be set apart for him. It doesn't mean we can't have fun, it doesn't mean we can't have sport, it doesn't mean we can't have recreation, it doesn't mean we can't have entertainment, but we can't just go on sinning. Shall we continue in sin that God can forgive us some more? God forbid.

That doesn't make the Lord very happy. I'm not going to give an invitation. If I gave an invitation, some people would come forward and think they've done something.

I'd rather say, you go and make an appointment with God, and pray this thing through. Say, Lord, have I ever really given myself completely to you? That would be very well worthwhile. Let us stand for prayer.

Let's close by singing a prayer, the third and fourth verses of this hymn cleanse me. Fill my poor heart with thy great love divine, take all my will, my passion, self and pride. I now surrender, Lord, in me abide.

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