

Worship 11_14_2021

Mon, 11/15 9:47AM 27:01

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

paul, god, jesus, sin, point, life, newness, talks, death, grace, christ, jesus christ, letter, question, wrote, united, scripture, gospel, died, true

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It's time for us to get a little more deeply into God's Word together. So as I invite you to do each week, I hope that you will take out a copy of Scripture and have that with you. If that's a personal Bible or Bible app that you have, you're welcome to use that if you would like something there are read Bibles in front of you in all the pews. And we'll be in the New Testament this morning in a letter that's called Romans. So right after the Gospels, you have the book of Acts, and then Romans will be in chapter six there this morning, and I invite you to have that out and open in front of you as we spend some time in it. At some point earlier this morning, I suspect that many of you had something that prompted you to remember something that was perhaps you open up your phone or one of your social feeds. And you got one of those timeline photos that popped up from a while ago, reminding you of an image or something that had taken place a number of years ago, or months ago, how many of you had that experience on some level this morning. And if it's an older photo, especially maybe an older photo of children or something, you can look at that and say, Wow, a lot has changed since then. This person doesn't even look like that anymore. I don't even hardly recognize them. Now, usually those those kinds of changes take place gradually over time. There can be moments though, where it's at the decisive watershed, there's a clean break from what was and what is those things are true in everyday life, or true in our spiritual life, as well. If you've been with us at any point throughout this fall, you know, we've been studying this letter that the apostle Paul wrote to the Christians in the ancient city of Rome, it's a fascinating letter. It's an incredible letter. When the most significant and powerful sections of Scripture we've been trying to spend a little time getting into that we're going to do so once again here this morning. Before we do though, I invite you pray again here with me. Great and gracious God, we thank you for the time that we have to be here together today. Lord quiet are distracted minds, calm are distraught hearts. Let us hear what it is that you have to say. And then let us respond in ways that demonstrate our love for you, and our love. For others. Father, I pray that the words of my mouth, the meditation of all of our hearts, would be acceptable in Your sight. For we pray this in the matchless name of Jesus. Amen. I've also pointed out to you each week that we've been in this letter that though we are looking at particular sections, this is a sustained train of thought that Paul has been writing since it's sustained argument, and flow of thoughts. So just to remind you, some of the things we've seen and what was going on with this letter. This is one that the apostle Paul wrote to a group of Christians in Rome, but he didn't he had not been there. And he didn't know this particular group. So it has a different feel sometimes and some of the letters he wrote two churches that he knew very intimately, or people that he knew very closely and this group was from what we can tell a pretty eclectic group, there were some who were Christians that had come out of an ethnically and culturally and religiously Jewish background, and some that had come out of an ethnically and culturally and religiously Gentile background. So as you might imagine, in a group like that, there are a lot of questions that came up questions like, well, do we relate to God in the same way, or the different ways that we relate to God or that God relates to us? What are we supposed to do with God's law? How does that function in our life? And what about the times we don't agree? When we don't see things the same way? How do we navigate that? So a lot of early vote relevant stuff in this letter, and Paul sets forth right at the beginning, what the purpose is, he says, I'm writing to you with

the good news of the gospel. This is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes Jew, Gentile, everyone who believes. And you all need that good news. He said, because everyone has sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. We've exchanged the truth for a lie. We have plunged headfirst into idolatry and immorality and acts of injustice. So you need to hear this good news. And then he says, it's even better than you think. Because you're not justified, you're not made right with God through your efforts. There's no ladder that you're supposed to climb up. It's a free gift. He says, and you receive that, and by faith, we are justified, made right with God through what he has done for us and not what we do for ourselves. And then he gets into a couple of different examples. He talks about Abraham, he talks about Adam, and the relationships, the ways that we have those connections there and what that means for us, and then he moves into this interesting section, beginning in verse chapter six that we're going to look at today. Paul has been teaching the gospel for years he's been sharing this, he knows that there are certain questions that tend to come up when you're sharing the good news of Jesus, and you're presenting this are a lot of questions that come up. So there's a series of three rhetorical questions and answers that he gets into over the next little bit. We're just going to look at the first one today. We'll see the next couple of weeks but I wanted to give you that little setup. And I want you to listen for that as we begin in chapter six, these are verses one through 14 This again, is the word of the Lord

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what Shall we say, then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? By no means? How can we who died to sin still live in it? Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death. We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have been united with Him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with Him in a resurrection like his. We know that our old self was crucified with Him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. For one who has died and has been set free from sin. Now, if we have died with Christ, we believe that we also will live with him. We know that Christ being raised from the dead will never die again, death no longer has dominion over him. For the death, he died, he died to sin once for all, but the life He lives, He lives to God. So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin, and alive to God in Christ Jesus. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body to make you obey its passions, do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness. but present yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life, for your men, your members to God as instruments for righteousness for sin will have no dominion over you. Since you are not under the law. But under grace. God's grace is greater than your sin, God is always able to redeem and restore those are the points that Paul have been making this up to this particular section of the letter, which is why he shifts now it says that does not mean that you're supposed to continue indulging this sin in your life, it does not mean that you're allowed to continue in the ways that you had walked prior to knowing Jesus, if we belong to Jesus, he says, There is a decisive change. And that has to show itself that needs to be witness of that in our own lives. So here's what I want to consider as we look at this particular passage, what he means when he's talking about us being united with Jesus Christ, what what he's getting out when he talks about us being united to Christ and how that happens. And then, in particular, what he means when he says that we've been united to Christ in His death, and His resurrection. And in finally looking at that really interesting expression, I think, at the end when he says that we are to present ourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life. Paul uses some really interesting language. In this section, he's talking about our relationship with Jesus Christ at its heart. Christianity is not about adhering to a set of its instructions, or even attempting to model your life after some famous ancient teacher at its heart. Christianity is about being brought into a relationship with Jesus Christ, the Son of God. And one of the striking things in this passage, I hope you noticed it when you were reading or listening. One of the striking things is all the language that Paul uses to show this, he talks about us our relationship as being in Christ or into Christ with Christ with him, we are united, there's all these words that he's using to show that kind of an intimate connection, we say, Well, what exactly is he describing? What's he describing? What what is? What's the results of this? How does it happen in the first place? He's talking about our union with Christ about being united to Jesus Christ. And, and this is so much more than just a loose or very

tenuous connection. This is not just wearing a t shirt that says, I'm with him. He's saying, There's something much deeper happening here. We are in Christ, we are with Christ. To be united to Jesus Christ is to have the Holy Spirit, so thoroughly bind us to Jesus, that whatever is true of him, becomes true of us. Think about that for just a moment.

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Now, the Holy Spirit's so intimately connected to Jesus, that whatever is true of him, becomes true of you. How is it that we are justified before God Paul is saying not through anything that you have done? Through what Jesus has done? His righteousness credited to your account given to you and apply it to you? How is it that any of us are called sons and daughters of God? Because we are now co heirs with Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God? How do we know that our sins have been dealt with? Because Jesus underwent the judgment of God against sin? How do we know that we can look to a promise of resurrection because Jesus is the one who is alive? Who has triumphed over the grave and stripped bare the power of the enemy, God, the Spirit so thoroughly unites us to Jesus the Son, that what is true of him, becomes true of us. That's incredible. That's why Paul was using all this language here of being in Christ or with Christ or being united him. There are a lot of theologians actually who will say that this idea of union with Christ is really the animating principle of Reformed theology. That really, it's all in some way. This is kind of showing us what is at the heart literally, of everything that us being brought into this relationship with Jesus through the work of God is what everything else is based upon. And everything else flows from that. We see okay, then how does that happen? If something suddenly like that's, it sounds incredible, maybe you think that sounds incredible, I would love to have something like that be true of me. How does that happen? By grace, through faith. Paul's been getting at this point. So far. So many times in this letter, you may remember the way he's been talking about this, he speaks of the free gate free gift that we receive, by placing our trust in what God has done. So our union with Jesus Christ, the sharing of all of his benefits, it's not something that happens when we check off all the boxes, want to make sure that we've polished up our spiritual resume, when we've ascended high enough on whatever ladder we think that there is, and Paul says, This is a free gift. It's been extended to you. You receive this through faith in Jesus Christ. students out there, I know some of you guys are working really hard towards some kind of degree. And if you get that degree, when you get that degree, there'll be a part in there where it says that this degree confers all the right privileges and responsibilities appertaining there too. And you usually have to work quite hard to earn that. Well, the good news of the gospel is that our union with Jesus Christ means that we have all the rights, privileges and responsibilities appertaining there to from being a child of God, but that's something that's given to us. And we receive that it's by grace, through faith. And Paul also talks in this section about he uses the imagery of baptism, baptism is the sign in the seal of this covenant blessing, Paul talks about being baptized into Christ. And I'm going to say more about that imagery in just a moment. And we're actually going to be celebrating a baptism here, later on in our service. But I want to make just a couple important points when we're talking about this, even in the way that Paul is talking about this here. He says, particularly that we are baptized into Christ. But remember, Jesus himself said that we baptize in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. One God, eternally existed in three persons so that that Trinitarian belief, that's the foundation of everything else. When Paul says that were baptized into Christ, he's not truncating, that he's not shortening that on some level. But he, he is particularly highlighting how this identification with Jesus is what makes all of these things true. And the act of baptism, it's this, this outward washing, it's a washing with water, accompanied by the promise of the word we speak of that as being an outward sign of an inward reality. And Paul is using that imagery of that outward sign to talk about this inward reality here, he says, By grace, through faith, we are united to Jesus Christ, that is what cleanses of our sin. That is what gives us a new identity. So that that outward sign it is that it's a sign, but it is pointing that deeper reality to the work of the Holy Spirit. That brings us into relationship with Jesus Christ so that we can be said to be baptized into Christ. I want to point out some of this language here because it's so rich, it's so deep. It's so significant, when Paul was talking about us, being with Christ and in Christ and united to Christ that happens by grace, through faith. And when that happens, we receive a new identity, a new standing a new status before the

throne of God, and that means that we like Jesus, or to consider ourselves dead to sin, and alive to God. That's a particular point I'd like to look at now. And that is to be united to Jesus Christ means that we are to consider ourselves dead to sin, and alive to God.

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Paul says this in verse five, listen to this again, for if we have been united with Him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with Him in a resurrection like his, for united with Him in a death like his will be certainly united with Him. In a resurrection like is there there's two kind of aspects to this. They're They're distinct, but they're not separate. They're distinct, but you can't really pull them apart. The first is that he is speaking of the physical promise that we have in Jesus Christ of a bodily resurrection. When our Lord returns, He is speaking of that, through that imagery, just as Jesus physically died and was literally physically wrecked, directly resurrected, so to will all of those who belong to Him experience that. This is an astounding claim. And it reverberates all through the pages of the New Testament. I want to point out just a couple verses to to come from Jesus himself first and in John 6:39 to 40. Jesus is teaching at this point and he says and this is the will of Him who sent me that I should lose nothing of all that He has given me. But raise it up on the last day for this is the will of my Father that everyone everyone who looks on this Unimed believes in Him should have eternal life and I will raise him up on the last day. Jesus is speaking of the resurrection That we will have in him. He goes on later in John's gospel, you know, the famous scene between Lazarus and his sisters, and after Lazarus had died, and Jesus says this, I am the resurrection in the life. Whoever believes in me though he die, yet shall he live and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this? There's another passage just after this in the book of Romans is the last one I'll give you they're, they're all over the place. I just picked three right there all over the place. Here's one Romans 8:11 says if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you. At the same spirit that raised Jesus dwells in you, he's going to do the same thing for you. That is saying, Jesus said, I'm going to raise up every single person that the Father has given to me, I am the resurrection in life, do you believe that? So he is speaking of this promise of resurrection in the end, however, that's not the particular focus that Paul is really getting out. In this section. I pointed that out. Because these things are distinct. They're not separated, they are distinct. Here, though he is talking about walking in a newness of life. There is a spiritual reality that takes place that should take place now in our lives that mirrors this, a bringing out of death and into life. This is verse four. Listen to that one more time. In verse four, he said, In order that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life, or dead to sin. minime alive to God in Christ Jesus, he says, that means there is a newness of life in which we are to walk, we are to die to sin, and it's dominion over us. There's some very interesting language here in verse six, that it may or may not come quite through as clearly as I think maybe it should or is clearly there's a really interesting point in verse six. When it says this. It says, We know that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin, you see that they're in your Bibles. And if you're looking at it in yours, I suspect that in most cases where it says old self, there's a little footnote right there. And down at the bottom, it tells you that you could translate that old man. Here's why that's significant. If you're with us last week, you remember the passage we looked at in Romans chapter five, the passage last week was Paul saying you are either identified with Adam, the one who brought sin and death into this world, or you're identified with Jesus, the one who brings righteousness and life into this world. When Paul there says where it says your old self, then he's getting at something more than just an internal personal quality or some invisible character trait that you used to have. Because the language there originally literally says, Your old man, it's letting us know that Paul was saying, our union with Adam has been terminated through Jesus own death. And because of that, the enslaving power to sin has been broken. That's a really significant point that he's making there. That identification that you had with Adam, that we all have, just by default of our humanity says, that's been that's done, it's been broken. It's been terminated, been crucified, actually, in Jesus Christ because of what he has done. That's why you consider yourself dead to sin, and alive to God. In Christ Jesus, our Lord, as the gospel. So triumphantly reminds us everywhere. Death is never the end of the story. We have died to sin. But that death is not the end of

things. In fact, it's really only the beginning. The other point he's making there is that because we have died to sin, we're now alive to something new. We're now alive to God in Christ Jesus and having been made alive. We are called to live.

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Haven't been brought to life. We're called to live. Now, you remember that opening section? I told you there's a rhetorical question. Now we're going to come back to that this section Paul brings up right there at the beginning, he had been saying God's grace can cover all sin, God's grace of bounds even so the question is, well, if that's the case, if that's the case of God's grace, can cover over everything of God's grace abounds. Then does it matter how we live? That question always comes up, right? That's not unique to Paul's audience. People everywhere all the time have that question. They think they found a loophole. People think they find a loophole, they say, oh, okay, so grace can cover every sin. In fact, the more sin the more grace so it doesn't really matter how I live, then Paul is bringing this up. And he is saying, No, you are to present yourself to God as one who has been brought from death into life. This is the final idea I want to look at with here this morning final idea presenting ourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life. That phrases down in verse 13. present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life. They're the rhetorical Question Paul brings up there's writing in verse one, as I mentioned earlier, he'd been, he'd been preaching the gospel, he'd been planning churches for decades. So he knew that when he talks about the gospel, when he talks about the good news, when he says, there's nothing that you do to deserve this, this is a free gift. You receive it by faith, it doesn't matter how much sin is there, God's grace of bounds and all of those. He knew that there are always people who asked that question, say, well, then does it matter? Can I continue in my sin? Maybe sometimes that question is, maybe sometimes a question is coming from a legitimate place. People are honestly asking that, as I said, it's usually people thinking that they found a little out right there. And then maybe there are saying, Well, okay, I mean, Paul, if you think about it, I would like to have as much grace as possible. So that means I should sin as much as possible. Right. And Paul answers, he answers firmly and without any doubt right here. I saw something a couple of weeks ago to brought this to mind for me, actually, there was a few weeks ago, I suspect some of you saw an interview that Steelers head coach Mike Tomlin had with the press and at one point during the press, he was asked if he had any interest in a vacant head coaching job at the University of Southern California. Now, usually, when players or coaches get asked something like this, they they give a non answer, right? Like, hey, we're just focused on today, one day at a time, we're gonna take this, you know, we'll worry about tomorrow, tomorrow. They kind of blow it off. If you saw this Tomlin. I mean, he responded very, very strongly. He said this. And as only Mike Tomlin can write, he said, he said this. Hey, guys, I don't have time for that speculation. That's a joke to me. I've one of the best jobs in all professional sport, why would I have any interest in coaching college football, this will be the last time I address it, not only today. But moving forward. Never say never. But never. Anybody else have any questions about any college jobs? Some of you guys saw that interview right? When Paul asked his rhetorical question, and he says by no means it's a it's a very unique grammatical formulation that he uses. There's a lot of ways you could say no, that's a unique formulation. It's the strongest way that you can offer up a negative in the Greek language. So had Paul access to Mike Tomlin's interview? I think he might have borrowed some that language. He would people would ask, Hey, Paul, if Paul, if God's grace covers our sin, then we should send more in order to get more grace, right. And he may have said, Hey, guys, I don't have time for that speculation. That's a joke to me. I've been given new life and adopted by the King of the universe, why would I want to step down to a lower level, this will be the last time I address it. Anybody else have any questions about whether we should keep sending once we've been united to Jesus? I know that's the connection I made when I saw that interview. So here's the point. I mean, we get it right, we get this Paul's point there is clearly saying the point you don't abuse God's grace. That's not the point. Yes, it abounds. It's abundant. It's far more than we could ever ask or imagine it's deeper and wider, and more eternal than you could ever possibly understand. But you don't abuse that then. The point is not to just say, well, then it doesn't matter what happens in my life. present

yourselves, as those who have been brought out of death, into life, walk in a newness of life, walk in a newness of life, we point out two quick things to you about that particular idea of walking in a newness life. First, it is now possible. Second, it is almost always difficult.

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It's not possible. The pastor Did you heard a little bit ago and Ezekiel was God saying, I'm going to take away your old heart, I'm going to give you a new heart, I'm going to put my spirit in you. And you're going to be able to walk in my ways that God says almost that same exact thing later in the book of his ego. That's how you know it's an important idea. I'm going to take away your old heart, I'm going to give you a new heart, I'm going to put my spirit in you that will enable you to walk in my way. So apart from G apart from Jesus, we don't have any desire to live in the ways that God has called us to. Nor do we have any real ability to do so. When the Holy Spirit works in our hearts, He gives us not only that desire, but the ability to do so. So it is possible. It is it's also often difficult. We can acknowledge that. We can say that it's hard. Although our sinful nature has been put to death, it doesn't go down without a fight. It's no longer the unbeatable enemy that it once was. But it's also thrashing around even though it has received a fatal wound. In fact, much of chapter seven will see this soon. Much of Chapter Seven is Paul discussing the struggles that do still take place, even after we are walking in this newness of life. You know, that chapter? He says, I know the things I'm supposed to do. I don't do them. I know the things I'm not supposed to do. I keep doing those. So it is difficult. It's possible, but it is also difficult. So how do we do it? How can we how can we present ourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life? give you just a couple little practical points here as we wrap up this particular time how is it that we can present ourselves to God as those who have been brought from death? into life. First is this, know how it is that God is calling us to live? We need to know how God is calling us to live. This isn't intuitive. None of us are just born with this understanding is something that has to be learned God has revealed Himself in Jesus Christ, the living word. And he's shown us His ways in Scripture, the written inspired Word of God. So we want to know what it looks like to walk in a newness of life. We don't just get to determine that for ourselves. If we want to know what it looks like to walk in a newness of life, then we have to turn to the author of life and listen to his voice. To spend time in Scripture. Saturate yourself with it. On your own personally, when we're together, corporately, there's a lot of resources we want to offer. We talk often about the podcast that we put together here as a church that you can read the Bible podcast, it's a daily Bible reading, just help you go through scripture, you can customize that to set it up in some different ways, or just ways to spend time in this. But if we want to walk in a newness of life, we need to know what that's supposed to look like first. And the second thing is to draw near to God. Draw near to God in prayer. And in worship, we're doing that now. Together. We're drawing near to God in prayer and worship. It's also something we can do all through the week, because the more time you spend with somebody, the more you end up adopting some of their mannerisms, or characteristics, even their qualities. Look, that's true for us. Just together, the more time you spend with another person, the more you end up just kind of adopting those things. It's so much true, more true then, for drawing near to our Lord. Spend time with him drawn near in prayer in worship. And then go ahead and do those things. Right, you actually got to live them out, reach out to others in the name and for the sake of Jesus through what you say and what you don't say. Your what you do and what you don't do. You can reflect this newness of life that we have in Jesus and as we reach out in love to others because of the love that we have for God and we are presenting ourselves as those who have been brought from death into life.