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DATE: April 4, 2026
SERIES: The Gospel Is
MESSAGE: New Life
PASSAGE: Romans 6:1-11
SPEAKER: Ryan Harmon

It was in the middle of my seventh grade year that one of my worst fears was realized. My parents sat me down and told me that we were going to move to a different state. Now, I understand that's a little dramatic. There are worse things than moving, but that's the mind of a seventh grader. This was my deepest fear. They sat me down and they said, we're moving from Omaha, Nebraska, to Jefferson City, Missouri, a place I had never heard of.

So we moved, but I had a plan. My plan was that even though we moved, I would continue to embrace my Omaha life. I would continue to act as though Omaha were my true home, and I would remain miserable, and because I was so miserable, my parents would have to move us back to Nebraska. That was my plan. And thankfully, thankfully, they did not give in to my manipulation. Because in the end, I loved my time in Jeff City. That's what we called it. I made great friends, I played for a great football team. I got to live in Missouri during the period where Nebraska football was absolutely dominant, and the Tigers were horrific, and I was insufferable for all my friends.

That was a time to be alive. I love my time in Jefferson City. My address changed, but I had a choice to make. Would I embrace what was or would I move forward and embrace what was new, what was now available? Because if I had continued to embrace the Omaha life, I would have missed out on the life that was right in front of me. This weekend, as we celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ, do you know that if you have given your faith to him, he has brought you out of the old world—he has changed your address and you have new life that is available today. Because Jesus arose, newness of life is available to us right now. Will we embrace it? That's the question I want to consider together this evening.

If you have your Bibles, open them with me to Romans chapter 6. Romans chapter 6. Now, if you're visiting with us this evening, you're catching us in the middle of a series in the book of Romans. For two months now, we've been in Romans. So what I'm going to try to do is catch you up on five chapters in about two or three minutes.

In the book of Romans, Paul explained with great depth, with glorious detail, the reality of the gospel. In a world where the smartest people of the day and the most religious people of the day thought that he should be ashamed of the gospel, Paul was just the opposite. In Romans 1, verse 16, Paul proclaims, declares, I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation for all who believe. While people told him he should be ashamed, Paul was proud because the gospel had absolutely changed his life, rocked his world. He knew that in the gospel, there was power to save.

That's what the gospel is, it's God's power to save, and that is good news because we, as human beings, are in desperate need. That's where Paul turns in the very first chapter of Romans, to outline that we as human beings, each one of us, because we are sinful people, we have rebelled against God, we are utterly lost and hopeless and helpless. To be lost means you don't even know how to get yourself out of the bind that you're in. We are lost. We are stuck in sin, each one of us,



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or born into that life, and because of that, we are in desperate need. That's the first reality about us as humans because of sin.

But Paul continues and he helps us understand something else about our life under sin. It's not only that we are helpless, it's also that we are guilty. See, we have offended, we have rebelled against, the living God. And because we have rebelled against the living God, we will face judgment and we stand guilty before him. Guilty before him. And because of that, the gospel—that word that literally means good news—the gospel is good news because it is God's response to our desperate need. Paul summed all of that up in the third chapter of Romans and a verse that we are all familiar with. In Romans 3:23, he says all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. Everyone sinned. Everyone's fallen short of what God intended, fallen short of his glory.

But God responded. God's solution is the gospel. And on the cross, through Jesus' sacrifice, God made a way for guilty people to be declared righteous, to be set right with God. The biblical word for that is "justification." Through faith, we are justified. We are set in the right, we are declared innocent by God. The gospel is justification by faith. That is good news. Now that leads us into a whole new life. Because of what God has done for us in Christ Jesus, as we embrace that truth, in faith, we step into a brand new relationship with God, where we are reconciled to him, and we live with peace. But not only that, we are people of hope. Because we know that God will never leave us, he will never forsake us.

See, the cross was absolutely agonizing. We just reflected on it yesterday on Good Friday. The cross was agonizing, but Jesus courageously endured the cross, scorning its shame. And he did so because he knew what was on the other side. He knew that it was the cross and the resurrection where he would accomplish victory over sin and death. And because of that, we proclaimed last week, the gospel is the end of death's reign. It is finished. That's the first five chapters of Romans in just a few minutes, and all of it serves as background for what Paul is about to say. The truth is that if you believe all that, if you embrace that by faith—or if you have not embraced that, but you do so right now, you tell Jesus right now, I believe it, I am needy and I need you—if you do that, then that means your address has changed. God has brought you into a new world in which he intends for you to walk in new life, today. That's just what Paul begins to explain in chapter 6. So, Romans chapter 6, verse 1, Paul says:

1 What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase?

Now that might strike you as a strange question, but when you think about it a little bit, it will make sense to you. In chapter 5 of Romans, Paul made it very clear that as all the sins of the world mounted up, uncountable number of sins, God acted. As sins piled up, God's grace abounded all the more. Sins mount—a mountain range of sin—and God's grace abounds, overcomes the sins of the world. Now that is a good thing. God's grace is a good thing. His unmerited favor is a good thing. God acting on our behalf to help us, to do that which we could never do on our own, all of that is very good.

So the logic of the question goes like this: if lots of sins made lots of grace abound, should we just sin more, so more grace will abound? That's the logic. Now Paul answers it immediately in verse two. He says:

2 May it never be!

May it never be. We have teens and preteens in my house, and so I imagine him saying this with this huge eye roll. May it never be. "Come on..." Or maybe if you have kids, it'd be, "Bruh." That's the modern translation. May it never be. He continues:



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2 How shall we who died to sin still live in it?

We who died to sin. If you have put your faith in Jesus, that's you. That's an identity statement. No matter your age, whether you put your faith in Jesus just a few minutes ago, or whether you put your faith in him what seems like a lifetime ago now, this is what is true about you. You, Paul says, have died to sin. And if you have died to sin, that means you are free to no longer live in it. You've been set free. We used to live in sin—that's our old address, our old country—but in Christ, we have been brought into a new country, so we don't need to live there any longer. In Christ, we have been set free. We have been brought into a new home. And now because of Christ's power, if we are in Christ, we no longer have to live under the reign of sin. How shall we who died to sin still live in it? Because of Jesus Christ and our faith in him, sin becomes a past tense reality. It's reign, its power, does not dominate our lives anymore. It becomes a relic of our past.

I have a relic of the past hanging in my office. I have an old map that would be in a social studies classroom. But it's from 1994, so on it there are countries that no longer exist. There are boundary lines that no longer exist. And to live in sin is to live as though that old map of our life is true. Paul is saying you've died, you've died to sin. To live in sin is to live as if that old country, that old world, that old reign, is still our home. But Paul says, no, you've been brought out of that country—how shall we who died to sin still live in it?

Eugene Peterson, in his translation, his paraphrase of the Bible, the Message, puts it this way. I think he captures the meaning of these verses so well. He says, "if we've left the country where sin is sovereign, how can we still live in our old house there? Or didn't you realize we packed up and we left there for good?" We packed up, we left there for good. That's the old country. Now that is a bold truth to proclaim. You have died to sin, Paul said. So as he continues, he's going to explain how God brought this about. Verse three, he says:

3 Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into his death?

So if we are in Christ, we are dead to sin how? Paul points to baptism. He said that believers have been baptized into Christ Jesus and into his death. So what does that mean? When we hear the word baptism, of course, our mind immediately goes to the practice of being immersed in water, right? Maybe some of you have been baptized here, right up here on this stage. And I think that's exactly the right image to come to mind because I think that's the most straightforward way to understand what Paul is getting at. He's talking about the act of being baptized. But we need to dig a little deeper, because we don't believe that baptism saves, and Paul seems to be saying that somehow, in this moment of baptism, that is when someone is brought into, is united with, Christ. So we have to understand, what's his background?

One thing that I think helps us understand what he's talking about is that in the early church, their practice of baptism was a little different than ours. In the early church, often baptism followed immediately after someone placed their faith in Jesus, after they were converted. Imagine that scene in Acts where the Ethiopian is talking to Philip, and Philip helps the Ethiopian understand the depths of the Old Testament and how it reveals that Jesus is truly the Messiah, the Son of God. And so the Ethiopian believes, and then he says, what would prevent me from being baptized? Answer, nothing. Let's go do it. And they went and got baptized in that moment. That was often how baptism occurred in the early church.

And so I think what Paul is doing here is he's using this word baptism as a summarizing word that is ultimately referring to the moment of conversion. Placing faith in Jesus Christ. It is faith that saves. It's faith that saves. So now, what happens is Paul is saying that in this moment of conversion, the believer is brought into Christ, joined together with Jesus, brought together with him. Through



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faith we are joined. We are united with Christ. Paul said, we have been baptized. When we believed, we were brought into Christ, out of the old country and into Christ, and we were brought into his death. See, faith changes our address. Through faith, we don't live in sin's country any longer. We don't live under its tyrannical reign. We've been brought into a new life. We've moved into Jesus' neighborhood. We're with him now. We don't live in the old country anymore. Faith in Jesus Christ changes the geography of our life, changes the prospects of our life.

So what does this mean for us? Everything that Paul has said so far, these are truth statements. These are things that, he is saying, we need to know and we need to believe. Today, as we celebrate the resurrection, we celebrate the fact that Jesus rose from the dead. Do you know, if you have placed your faith in Jesus, that sin's reign, sin's power, is no longer absolute in your life? That sin-governed country is a country that you, through Jesus, have left, and you've been now brought into Jesus' world, his kingdom, his country, where grace reigns. Do you know that? To use Eugene Peterson's words, do you realize that in Christ we have packed up the car and we have left the old world and we aren't going back? Do you know that this evening?

That's the truth of the gospel. That's the life changing reality of the gospel. Through faith, we are brought under the reign of a new king, in a new land. In a new grace-filled reign, we step into a new life if we believe that. If you walk out this evening believing that, that should have profound impact on the way that we live our lives. That should change what Monday looks like, what Tuesday looks like, what every day looks like. That's just what Paul gets to in verse four, he says:

4 Therefore we have been buried with him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.

So it makes sense, if we have died to sin and we were united with Jesus in his death—that's what we just read—then it makes sense that we also have been buried with him. We're with him now. But, what do we celebrate at Easter? The grave could not hold him, that burial for Jesus was temporary. He arose from the dead. He left the tomb. He burst forth from the grave because death could not hold him. Jesus died. Jesus died, but then he rose. And his resurrection vindicates and confirms, it verifies all that was meant, in all that he accomplished on the cross. The payment for sin, the forgiveness of sin, the satisfaction of God's wrath because of sin, and the victory over sin and death. All of it guaranteed because Jesus was raised through the glory of the Father. And now he calls us to join in that life with him—that's just what Paul said. So that we too, in Christ, through faith, that we too might walk in newness of life. The gospel is new life. New life that starts right now.

You know why I'm so—I'm so passionate about this. This is a deeply personal topic for me. See, I grew up in a Christian home. Grew up in a great home. But what I believe for much of my Christian life is that the main point of Easter is that Easter was about waiting. We looked at the reality of Easter, that Jesus rose from the grave, and my thought was that his resurrection provided hope that one day things will get better. Easter was an annual reminder that I can just hold on, and a tight grip and through gritted teeth, I would say, okay, there will be a day, it's coming, things will get better. Easter was for waiting.

But Paul here, in verse 4, Paul indicates that that while that is true, there is truth to that, that's an incomplete way to look at our life and look at the glory of the gospel and to look at Easter. It's incomplete. Because although we certainly wait for a future day when Jesus will return—that is, ultimately, when all of our faith culminates in a glorious moment—while we await that day, we don't do it with gritted teeth. We do it full of hope, walking in the newness of life that is already available and one day will be final, one day will be absolutely culminated. We step in, we walk in new life now, so that we too might walk in newness of life, Paul said.



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Now that is such a hope-filled sentence that Paul essentially just repeats it in verse 5. He says:

5 For if we have become united with him in the likeness of his death, certainly, we shall also be in the likeness of his resurrection,

If we've been united with him in his death, if we are dead to sin, and Paul has said, we are dead to sin in Christ, then we can be certain, that we also will be united with him in a resurrection like his. This is that future glory that we await.

Everyone in this room—this is kind of, I don't know, not exactly Easter material—but everyone in this room will be buried one day. If you are in Christ, you will be raised from the dead glorious, just as he was. We await that, that future hope. But as we await, we walk now in newness of life, resurrection life and the realities of it, while we await the resurrection of the body. We live in the realities of resurrection life with Jesus now, as he reigns, now and forever. So Paul continues in verse 6, he says:

6 knowing this, that our old self was crucified with him,

It's even more graphic language. Our old self was crucified with him:

6 in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin; for he who has died is freed from sin.

Our old self, Paul says it was crucified. You are dead to sin. You have been united with him in his death, in his burial. Old self crucified. What is your old self? Your old self refers to your former way of life, your before-Jesus life. The life that you were bound, you were stuck in, when you were in Adam. Stuck in sin life, had no option but to live under the reign of death. That is your old self, our pre-Christ self. We are in bondage, enslaved to sin, self, stuck, hopeless, lost. And Paul says in Christ that self, our old self, our former life was crucified. It was put to death with him in order that our body of sin might be done away with. No longer bound to live under the reign of sin.

Therefore, again, we are now able to live free since our old self that was in bondage to sin has died. Paul says we are freed from sin and its power now. Not in our own strength, but because we're with Jesus. We've trusted him, we put our faith in him. Verse 8:

8 Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him. 9 Knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, is never to die again.

Death no longer is master over him.

10 For the death that he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life that he lives, he lives to God.

By faith, if we have died with Christ, Paul says, we can believe that we also will live with him. A future, glorious life with Christ, is our eternal hope. And we can be confident of it. We can be confident of it because of the greatness of Jesus Christ, because of what he accomplished on the cross and what he accomplished in rising from the dead. Vindicating. Victoriously announcing that sin and death has no dominion over him. Jesus died and he was raised, and he is never to die again.

Isn't it astounding? Isn't it astounding to consider that the body that rose from the grave, Jesus' resurrected body—it has never died again. It has continued ever since that day. Imperishable. Jesus overcame sin and death. Death is no longer master over him, Paul said. See, for our sake, God took



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on flesh—God the Son, the word, became flesh and dwelled among us. Jesus, in taking on flesh, submitted himself to living in the atmosphere where death was in charge, but Jesus never succumbed to sin and death. Sin never touched him. He lived a perfect, sinless life, and then he went to the cross as the powers of sin and death rallied against him. He went to the cross, free of sin, a perfect sacrifice. And as sin thought it had mastered Jesus, Jesus mastered sin. He bound forth from the grave because death cannot hold him, because he's the master.

To be the master is to be in charge. Jesus is in charge now. He died to sin once for all. Once for all. Dying once for all means that he forever now lives to God. And this is the critical thing for us to understand. If we belong to him, if we have been joined together with him in faith, then we also live to God with him. We also live to God with him. And that's what Paul says in verse 11:

11 Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.

Throughout this entire chapter so far, everything Paul has said have been statements. They've been truths that he is encouraging us to believe, to embrace. But here in the last verse of the section that we're going to cover this evening, for the first time, Paul now has told us something that we are to do. Everything else is what we call "indicative" statements—these are statements of fact. Here for the first time is an "imperative" statement. Paul is saying, "Now, do this." This isn't a suggestion. This is a command. What we are to do in light of the glorious truth, the glorious truth of Easter? What we are to do, Paul said, is we are to consider ourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus.

"Consider." That word is an interesting word. It means something like "believe deeply." Embrace the truth of it. Live out your lives on May 5th, and on November 11th—every day live out the truth of what has been declared in Jesus Christ. Live out the truth of what was won at the cross. Live out the truth of what was announced when Jesus rose from the dead as king. To live that out, to consider yourselves dead to sin, live to God.

So my question as we close here: when you think of yourself, what do you think? When you think of yourself, when you look in the mirror, do you see, do you think of, your old self? Your caught in sin, self? Your in-bondage self? What do you think of? Because let me tell you something—that's not how God thinks of you. God looks at you, if you have placed your faith in Jesus Christ, and he sees someone who is now dead to sin and alive to him. With him forever.

This Easter 2026, what might it look like to take a step of faith this week and actually believe that that is true and live like it? To walk tall, to walk confidently, knowing that you are no longer the condemned, that you are now declared righteous by God, that you have put aside the body of death and sin and you are now living in the newness of life available in Christ Jesus? What might that look like this week?

In 2019, my dad passed away, and I had the incredible privilege of speaking at his funeral, of giving a eulogy. But we also, as a family, had to do that thing that is so difficult to do: we had to gather together and write his obituary. And the reason that's so hard is because what an obituary is, by definition, is it is an announcement of death. A death notice. Let the world know he is no longer with us.

I hope you don't mind, but as we close, I wanted to read an obituary for you. Because your old self has died. And I thought, what better time to make a public announcement of its death than here on Easter?

Your old self has died. After a period of rebellious resistance, it finally passed. How long your old self lived is not significant—what matters is how your old self lived. Your old self



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lived a difficult life. It was marked by ungodliness, unrighteousness, and a knack for suppressing the truth. Never satisfied. It had an unhealthy obsession with false gods and selfishness and self-worship. This led your old self to embrace envy, strife, arrogance, slander, and pride. It was addicted to comparison and belittling others to make itself feel better. In summary, it showed all the characteristics of the terrorizing reign of sin and death. Due to all this, your old self was under the wrath and judgment of God. It was condemned and hopeless. Ultimately, death came shockingly quick to your old self. It died in the moment faith was placed in Jesus. Your old self has died, but, no one's grieving. No one is grieving because it was immediately replaced with what is new. A new, alive to God of life. Alive and living under Jesus' grace filled reign.

The gospel is new life. We have been brought out of the old country. We've been brought into Jesus by faith. Because he arose, because he lives, because he reigns, we are free—free now to walk in newness of life.

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