

Session 5

THE COST

Romans 6:5-11

Memory Verse

¹⁰ For the death he died, he died to sin once for all time; but the life he lives, he lives to God. ¹¹ So, you too consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

– ROMANS 6:10-11, CSB



The Cost

THEOLOGICAL THEME: Followers of Jesus have been united with Christ in His death and, consequently, in His resurrection. This eternal reality has immediate effects on the way we die to sin and live for Christ in this life.

? Do you hang onto things from the past? Keepsakes? Items you associate with certain memories or experiences? Why or why not?

? In general, what do you think makes it hard to get rid of things we have held on to for many years whether physical possessions, old habits, or something else?

Even if you are not naturally a collector of things or afraid of throwing things out, we have all found ourselves going through old boxes and belongings deciding what is worth holding onto. Maybe it was when you were packing to go away to college or when you got married. Maybe you have had to go through a family member's home or belongings for them. More than likely you picked up something random and insignificant and thought, "Why was I keeping this? Why did I think I would ever need or use this again?" A hideous sweater you never wore. An old pair of shoes that are falling apart. Hobbies you never got around to trying. Jeans you will never wear again. Sometimes we hang onto things for years even though we know we will never need them or use them in the future. But we hang on anyway.

Why? We rationalize our inability to get rid of things on the off chance that there might be some occasion where we would be lost without this one thing. In reality, though, it needs to go. But we stuff it away in the back of our closet, taking comfort in the fact that it isn't totally out of reach should the need arise.

If we are being honest, we do this with more than old clothes and trinkets. We often do this with our old sin patterns, our toxic habits, and the vestiges of who we were before we knew Christ. That is what Paul wanted to get through to the Roman Christians—their old selves had died with Christ, and He was calling them to new life made possible by His resurrection.

Paul wanted to make sure the believers understood the connection between Christ's death for their sin and the Christian's own death to sin.¹ We are united in Christ's death, so we don't have to die—even though we have been guilty. His death defeated sin and death and freed us from its rule and reign over us.

Because we are united in His death, Paul emphasized that we are united in His resurrection as well. This union with Christ means eternal life with Him and a life here and now surrendered to Him. Christ has made us alive in Him, and our lives should reflect that new life here and now in thought, word, deed, relationships, worship, work, and everything in between.

1. Jesus Frees Us from Our Past (Romans 6:5-7)

At the end of Romans 5, Paul reiterated, “where sin multiplied, grace multiplied even more” (5:20). With that truth comes a clear tension. We all want more grace, but how can our behavior change to reflect Christ, if we increase in sin? This is what Paul fleshed out in chapter 6. He framed this section around two questions that he asked in 6:1-2: Should we continue in sin so that grace may multiply? How can we who died to sin still live in it? Verses 5-11 were part of Paul's response to these two questions.

Paul wanted to make explicitly clear that believers have been fully united with Christ in His death in order to live a new life.² Ours is a death like His, and a resurrection like His. Our death to sin and new life point to Him who has given us the benefits of His death and resurrection.

 What does it mean to be enslaved to sin?

 Since all believers still sin, are we still enslaved? If not, what is the difference?

In verses 6-7, Paul began to elaborate on what it really means to be united in Christ's death. Based on the truth he gave in verse 5, "we know" (v. 6) with certainty that sin and death no longer reign over us as they once did. This is the difference between being enslaved to sin and being a transformed follower of Jesus in a broken world. Sin is still a reality because we are not yet fully united with Christ as we will be in eternity. But it does not hold the power to control us anymore. It has been "brought to nothing," annulled, abolished.

Our sin has been crucified, so that we are freed from sin. Before we knew Christ, we were bound to and enslaved to sin. But in being united with Christ in His death, we are freed from the chains that used to bind us. Our old selves were put on the cross with Christ. That old person is no longer who we are.

 Are there areas of your life in which you still feel enslaved to sin?

 What is keeping you from walking in the freedom that Christ offers?

Christ died for our sin, but was raised to life again. He died that death for us. The point of our dying to sin is so that we are also raised to new life with Him. This is the freedom found in Christ. We don't have to be trapped anymore. We don't have to be imprisoned anymore by our own thoughts, actions, and failings. We can be free from the shame that comes with our sin patterns. The reality of our sin has been fully atoned for and fully redeemed in the finished work of Christ. We have been justified: released from sin and set right with God through Jesus. The work is already done.

2. Jesus Secures a New Life (Romans 6:8-10)

Paul declared in verse 5 that we will be united in a resurrection like Christ's. In verses 8-10, He went on to explain this truth. We can't stop at the atoning death of Christ. Christ died so sin would no longer enslave us to death, but He was also raised that we, too, would know life eternal with Him. If we believe and trust in His death, we must also trust Him to bring us to new life. Christ's past action changes our present and future reality. Just as we were united in His death, so, too, are we united in His new life.



How would you explain new life in Christ to someone not yet believing?



How might this look different for people who come to faith in Christ at various ages and stages of life?

If sin truly has no more hold on us (v.7), this has significant implications for our lives as Christians. Simply put, our lives should look different. This idea is often posed as a question: How does your life look different now than it did before you met Christ? It is tempting to think we need a dramatic “before and after” experience. If you started walking with Christ at an early age, it may feel like your sins were less apparent before salvation. Yet, all of us have sin patterns. All of us have chosen sin over surrender to God at some point. And in some seasons, sin patterns—be it actions, thoughts, mentalities, or attitudes—have had more control over us than

they should. The hope that Paul reminded believers of in these verses is that our future resurrection with Christ is certain, and that certainty of eternal life must inform our life in the present. This is the costly part of walking with Jesus—dying to our old selves for the sake of the new man or woman that Christ is shaping us into.

? Why is it significant that Christ has died but will not die again? How does this impact our lives in Him?

It is kind of odd for Paul to say that Christ will not die again. But his point was clear: our new life is forever; it doesn't require any more death. Jesus' death for us was sufficient—He completed the work for us, once and for all. Death no longer has power over Him because He defeated death. And because we live in Him, death doesn't reign over us either. It can't. Jesus has claimed us for eternity. His was a one-time death for an eternity of life. His death for our sin was final because He was without sin.³ As Christians, our death to sin is a continual death. Meaning, though our eternity is secured in Christ, and therefore sin doesn't have an eternal power over us, we must daily choose to die to the sin of our flesh (Rom 12:1).

Jesus' work of the full and final sacrifice means, not only that His blood has restored our relationship and access to God, but also that we are free to live in His righteousness.⁴ It's often said that we must remember not only what we are saved from but also what we are saved for. The life of the Christian shouldn't be solely focused on avoiding sin, but also on pursuing holiness.

? If you're a believer, how does your life currently reflect the new life you have in Christ? What needs to change?

3. Jesus Makes Us Alive in Him (Romans 6:11)

To conclude Romans 6:1-10, Paul told the believers to consider themselves “dead to sin and alive to God.” This means we are free from holding on to who we once were outside of Christ. Unfortunately, many of us have been made alive in Christ yet still hold onto the death that no longer defines us. We are alive, yet we go about life with our grave clothes on.

 Having been freed, why do you think Christians so often find themselves bound to their sinful ways?

 Do you feel the tension between who you once were and who Christ is calling you to be? In what areas of your life do you feel this the most?

A life in Christ means that we need to continually be reminded of who God says that we are now. This is what Paul meant by “counting” ourselves dead to sin and alive to God. If we have been saved by Him, our eternity is not in question. We are dead and alive in Christ. Yet we are still living in the flesh, in a broken world. We have to be reminded of our identity as Christ-followers.⁵ We must continually consider the truth of our new identity in Christ.

 What ways do you daily remind yourself of who God says you are and how you are to live according that identity?

 What habits or rhythms have you found particularly helpful?

One of the best ways that we can remember who God says we are is by faithfully reading and trusting His Word. Here are just a few places that God’s Word reminds us of the newness of life that we have through Christ:

- Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, and see, the new has come! (2 Cor 5:17)
- For through the law I died to the law, so that I might live for God. I have been crucified with Christ, and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I

now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. (Gal 2:19–20)

- Once you were alienated and hostile in your minds expressed in your evil actions. But now he has reconciled you by his physical body through his death, to present you holy, faultless, and blameless before him (Col 1:21–22)
- So if you have been raised with Christ, seek the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. (Col 3:1–3)
- Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Because of his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead (1 Pet 1:3)

We have to constantly seek to remember what is true because we are prone to believe the lies that culture, other people, and the enemy tell us. Those lies say that the sin we are seeking to resist will truly satisfy this time. They say that God doesn't have our best interests at heart; that He is holding out on us. They tell us we will never be good enough. The list goes on and on. We face the temptation to believe these lies each day. What a gift we have in being reminded of the truth. Our problem often isn't knowing, but remembering and truly believing who God is and who He says we are based on the blood of Jesus Christ.

 Which of the verses listed above do you need to cling to the most right now? Why does this resonate with you specifically?

Conclusion

Paul reminded the believers in Rome—and he reminds us—that they had been united with Christ. We are united in His death, and therefore we are also united in His resurrection. This inherently changes our identity, both for eternity and the present.

As Christians, we can't simultaneously be alive to sin and alive to God. Those two realities can't co-exist. If Christ has released us from the hold that sin had on us, we must also relinquish the hold we have on our sin. Christ has given us freedom

from sin, and yet we often reach back—to our old selves—for the sin that so easily entangles. As those justified by Christ, we must also follow Him towards the sanctification He had promised.

❓ Are there vestiges of your old self that you can't seem to get rid of? How can you submit these areas to Christ, seeking ongoing freedom from these areas of sin?

❓ Who are the people around you that spur you on to live in the newness of Christ? In what areas do you most need their accountability and help to point you to Christ? If you don't have those people, start praying for the Lord to bring those people into your life that can help you daily die to sin and live for Christ.

❓ How does living new life in Christ point others to the truth of the gospel?

CHRIST CONNECTION: Christ alone has made it possible for us to be freed from the sin which enslaved us. His blood has restored us to God and given us hope for resurrection through Him.

MISSIONAL APPLICATION: The freedom we have through Christ alone should prompt us to demonstrate to those around us that they can experience the same freedom. Every person is bound by sin with no means of release on their own. Our call is to point others to the One who has the keys to free them.



FOR NEXT WEEK

Christ Crucified

Main Passages

- 1 Corinthians 2:1-5

Session Outline

1. Only Christ and Him Crucified (1 Corinthians 2:1-2)
2. His Power Perfected in Weakness (1 Corinthians 2:3-4)
3. God's Power, Not Human Wisdom (1 Corinthians 2:5)

Memorize

¹⁰ For the death he died, he died to sin once for all time; but the life he lives, he lives to God. ¹¹ So, you too consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

- Romans 6:10-11, CSB

Daily Readings

- Monday - 1 Peter 1:14-16
- Tuesday - 1 John 3:6-10
- Wednesday - 2 Corinthians 7:1
- Thursday - 1 Thessalonians 5:23
- Friday - Philippians 4:8
- Saturday - 1 Peter 2:24

References

¹Thielman, Frank. *Romans*. Edited by Clinton E. Arnold. Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2018.

²Ibid

³Ibid

⁴Ibid

⁵Ibid