

“It’s All in the Dying”

Devoted to God

Romans 6:1-23

Pastor Jeffrey Stivason

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Jeff: Well you know, every time I hear Sig give that introduction I feel bad about putting something like this up. (*Laughter*)

Participant: You’d better explain it.

Jeff: Yes. It’s got two penguins, a father penguin and a baby penguin. And the baby penguin says, “Dad, who’s losing?”

And the father says, “I don’t know, son. We’re penguins.” (*Laughter and applause*)

Participant: Can you say that to Nashville? (*Laughter*)

Transcriber’s Note: Pittsburgh defeated Nashville for the Stanley Cup.

Jeff: No. I figured I’d better get that out of the way before we pray. So Don, would you lead us into it? (*Music*)

Heavenly Father, we are thankful for the many blessings that You give to us, and chief among them is the Lord Jesus Christ. Father, we thank You for Him, because in Him we have access to You. We have access to Your Holy Spirit who brings to bear upon our lives every good and blessed gift from the Son. And Father, we are thankful for that growth in grace that we experience by virtue of both being united to Christ and having all of His blessings poured out upon us. As the Holy Spirit shapes and molds us after the image of Christ, we look forward to the day when You will come again, or we will meet You in death and then be glorified. Father, these are chief blessings for sure. But we also thank You for the many other good things that You supply to us. You give us families and friends. You give us a group like this, where we can gather together and certainly study Your word and be encouraged by the fellowship of other men. Father, we thank You for our jobs and we thank You for the roofs over our heads. And we thank You for the many, many things, even the sleep that You gave to us last night. And we think of brother Bruce, and pray that sleep would be his. Father, we ask and pray that You would pour out every blessing upon us and teach us through them all. And we ask it in Jesus’ name. Amen.

Men: Amen.

Jeff: Okay. Well let’s get right to the outline this morning, men. And as we do, I want you to understand something about what it is that we’re doing. I want you to understand again this idea of the cake batter. And I’m going to say a little bit more about that this morning. But we are working our way through sanctification, not step-by-step as it were, but we’re thinking about sanctification as it really is and as it really happens in our lives, many different things all working together to bring about conformity to the image of Christ in our lives.

And so we’re always going to be repeating things. If you are looking at the Ferguson book, if you’re reading that, one of the things that you’ll discover is this. You’ll discover that there are always things that we learn about being pulled up into this chapter, and always things that we haven’t learned about being pulled from future chapters and mentioned, and then unpacked later. That’s sort of the method that I’m following as I

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teach this study. And yet, if you’re looking at the book, there is enough difference between what we’re doing here in these classes and the book to be a good overlap, and yet not a repetition.

So today we’re going to be thinking about a statement that I’ve broken up into three different points. The statement would be that *right thinking leads to right living, which leads to right dying*.

Now that’s important. I think each one of those things is vital for our lives, and we’ll look at each one of those things. And so before we do that, let’s turn now to the text that we’re going to consider.

Now if you’re looking at Ferguson, Ferguson is going to have us look at the first fourteen verses. But I’m going to draw from those latter verses, verses 15-23, in this class as well. And who has a loud, booming voice that has enough power to sustain through 23 verses of reading? Don? All right, Don, 1-23.

Don: Okay.

Jeff: All right.

Don: *“What shall we say, then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it? Or do you not know that as many of us that were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.*

“For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we no longer should be slaves of sin. For he who has died has been freed from sin.

“Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him. For the death that He died He died to sin once for all, but the life that He lives He lives to God.

“Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal bodies, that you should obey it in its lusts. And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law, but under grace.

“What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? Certainly not! Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one’s slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness? But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered. And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness. (I speak in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh.)

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“For just as you presented your members as slaves of uncleanness, and of lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves of righteousness for holiness. For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. What fruit did you have, then, in the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death.

“But now, having been set free from sin and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life. For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” This is the word of the Lord.

Men: Thanks be to God.

Jeff: All right. Thank you, Don. Okay, so let’s start with our first point. Let’s think about *right thinking*. And let’s do that by thinking about some concepts that we’ve already thought about.

Union with Christ is pivotal in our thinking when it comes to thinking about our justification, sanctification, adoption. any one of the benefits that we possess in Christ has to come back to union with Christ because all of those benefits flow from that union we enjoy with Him.

Now I said to you that these talks on sanctification were like thinking of a mixing bowl full of batter. And let me give you an idea. If your wife or your daughter,--or maybe it’s you!—maybe you make chocolate chip cookies and the batter is a little bit runny. And if you’re like me, that’s kind of the way it turns out. And when you want to dip in for a chocolate chip—after you wash your hands, of course!—and what happens? You pull that chocolate chip out and it’s not like pulling a chocolate chip out of the bag. Pulling that chocolate chip out of the batter, it has batter all over it. Maybe it’s stringy with batter. It always comes along with something else when it’s in that mixing bowl.

That’s the way we ought to think about the blessings, the benefits, the fruit that emerges from sanctification. All of these things are not necessarily to be thought of as steps. I mean, this is not like a pattern of ingredients as we go step 1, step 2, step 3. The life of sanctification is like the bowl where they’re already poured in and mixed. That’s the way we ought to think about it.

Now I say that because again, we’re thinking about sanctification, we’re thinking about right thinking because that’s one of the things that we’re going to think about. And we are going to think today not necessarily just about right thinking. We’re going to think about the content of right thinking. And that’s really the first point. So we’re adding to what it is that we’re thinking about. We’ve been thinking about thinking, and now we’re going to think about the content of thinking. Do you follow me? Okay. (*Laughter*)

Now what I want you to understand is this. I want you to understand that this is not positive thinking.

Participant: Right.

Jeff: I’m not talking about positive thinking. Positive thinking would be looking at myself in the mirror and saying, “I’m going to think away this extra ten pounds that I’m carrying right now,” right? That’s not going to happen until I get involved in one of these things that our brother was talking about. Unless I meet at Montour and get myself riding

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a bike, or get myself up early and do some exercises, that’s not going to happen. I need to actually do something about it.

But there is a sense in which we need to think about how we think before we can think about the content of thinking. And so I want to say to you that we’re not thinking about positive thinking.

Well if we’re not thinking about positive thinking, like we’re wishing something were true that’s not necessarily true, but we’re hoping that if we wish hard enough—you know, like Dorothy, clicking our heels together, wishing we were in Kansas again, than what is it that we’re thinking about? Well, let me put it like this. Let me give you two examples.

The first example that I want to give you is just a regular run-of-the-mill example. Then the second example I’m going to give you ties in with something in our text. It ties in with baptism.

The first example is this. Think about your child’s birthday. And your child says this. He says, “Dad, I want this for my birthday.” And then he comes to you and he asks you right before his birthday. “Dad, did you get what I asked you to get?”

And because he’s been bugging you forever, you say to him, “Son, I did get it. Calm down.”

And he says, “Well, can I have it?”

And you say, “Not until your birthday. You’ve already gotten the surprise out of me. You got it. But now you’re not going to get it until your birthday.”

Now what does that son walk away with? He walks away thinking, “I have it, but I don’t have it yet.”

Participant: Right.

Jeff: Okay? So that’s the kind of thing that we need to think about when we think about being transformed in our minds. In other words, there are things that are true that we need to think about. That’s the first thing I want to say to you.

The second illustration involves baptism. Now I realize that probably among us we have divergent views of baptism. There are those who are believer Baptists, and there are those who are correct in their theology, infant Baptists. *(Laughter)* I’m not trying to stir up any trouble with regard to that. *(Laughter)* I simply want to pass that over. *(Laughter)*

Participant: Chicken! *(Laughter)*

Jeff: I am a Penguin, Sid. Sig, I am a Penguin, not a chicken. *(Laughter)* What sound does a penguin make?

Participant: Wa! Wa!

Second Participant: Oink, oink. *(Laughter)*

Jeff: All right, Sig, all right. I know that I cannot count on you for assistance. *(Laughter)* I’d be up their oinking if I were following you. *(Laughter)* All right. What was the second thing I was saying? *(Laughter)*

Participant: Baptism.

Jeff: All right. I want you to think about baptism. This illustration is not unique with me. It’s by a guy named Booth in his book on baptism. I can’t think of the name of it, but it’s published by P and R.

Transcriber’s Note: Puritan and Reformed Publishing.

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Jeff: But basically what he does is that he says this. Now this is going to be true whether you are a believer Baptist or an infant Baptist. So it’s easily transposed from one to the other.

So a father invites his son into the room and says, “Son, you know I have a fortune.” And he says, “Yes, Dad; I know that.”

And the father says, “Well look. I want you to know that I’m planning on leaving that fortune to you. You are a son, and you have followed my patterns and my ways because you are my son. And so what I want to do is that I want to give you a ring. Now that ring is a real sign of the fortune that you’re going to inherit. And when I’m dead you will inherit that fortune.”

Now that sign is not an empty token. That sign, that ring, is actually part of the fortune that man will inherit. So he knows that every time he looks at that ring, it’s not an empty sign. It’s not just a ring. It’s not something that his dad got out of the candy machine and that he can just toss away. No, that’s part of the fortune! And every time he looks at it, he ought to think, “That’s what I’m going to inherit. I’m going to inherit the fortune, of which this is a part.” In other words, it’s not an empty sign.

It’s just like thinking about the gift. It’s not an empty thinking. The boy knows that his father already possesses it. These are ways in which we ought to think about the things that Jesus tells us are true. These are the ways we ought to think about those things.

All right. So union with Christ and what it is we’re going to be thinking about—this is how we ought to be thinking about those things.

Now when you look at our text, there are three words in the text that tell us how we ought to be thinking. The first word is the word *consider*. Now this is a word that has an astronomy background. This is when a man looks up at the stars. This is actually the derivative of the word. When he looks up at the stars he’s studying them. He’s observing them. He’s trying to pull them close by his observations.

Well that’s the way we ought to look at these things that God is telling us in His word. We ought to consider the things that go along with our union with Christ as true. We ought to consider them.

The second thing that we find is that we ought to *know*. We ought to know these things. Now there are a couple of different ways that we can think about knowing. One way you can think about knowing is to *know about*. Some people know about God, but they don’t know God. That’s one way you can think about it.

There are people who can know us, but not like our wives know us in the Biblical sense. There are things like that which we can say when we think about knowing.

But in our day and age, I want to share something with you that I think is a really vital thing when it comes to knowing, because I think that the Scriptures sometimes use *knowing* and *wisdom* interchangeably. And yet sometimes we sit back and we say, “How do I know what wisdom is?”

Let me give you a handy way to think about this because it has helped me in the past, and I hope it helps you. In our world—and this is in our world—we are in the information age. Well, information is data. You can go to the Internet and you can find data out there,

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can’t you? Well when you find that data, what do you do with it? You categorize it. And when you categorize it, that’s knowledge, isn’t it?

Now what do you do after you categorize it? Well, you have understanding about it, right? In other words, understanding asks, What can I do with the knowledge? What can I do with this categorized information that I have?

But that’s not enough in the Biblical sense of the word. In the Biblical sense of the word we have to be asking ourselves, What ought I to do with this information that I have categorized, so that I know what I can do with it, right? So what ought I to do?

Well the Bible here is talking about this idea of this is what we ought to know to be true. Paul is helping us categorize information. Now we haven’t gotten to the content of this knowledge yet. We’re getting there. But we’re just thinking about how it is that we are to think about the knowledge that we’re going to think about in just a minute.

So we are to consider it carefully, observe it closely. We are to know it. In other words, we are to think beyond just scattered bits of information. We are to have it categorized so that we might know what we ought to do with this information.

And then this particular passage talks about *believing* it. Now what I want you to understand is this. This idea of *belief* carries with it information. It carries with it the idea of knowledge. And what we ought to think about when we think about this particular aspect is being *persuaded* of what we know and what we’ve considered, being persuaded of it.

So when we think about thinking, this is how we ought to do it. We ought to look at it closely. We ought to consider it carefully. We ought to know what we ought to do with what it is that we know, and we ought to be persuaded of it.

Now I just want to tell you what that is. That’s genuine saving faith. That’s really what we’re talking about here. It takes saving faith—knowledge, assent and trust, what we talked about last week—in order to know that these things are true. That’s what we’re talking about here, saving faith, all right?

So let’s move on, and here’s what I want you to understand. If you know this, then this is what you ought to know. (*Laughter*) It’s a kitty looking in a mirror and seeing a lion.

Participant: Okay.

Jeff: Okay? That is a nice way to sum up what it is that I’ve been saying. That kitty is not wrong in its thinking about its reflection.

What does the Scripture say? “*He who is in me is greater than he who is in the world.*” And when we look in the mirror we ought to see Christ, okay?

All right. Let’s think a little further. Let’s think about the *content* of our thinking. Now I want to tell you right now that there are two things we ought to think about in this passage. The first one is that we ought to be thinking about *death to sin*. We ought to be thinking about death to sin, dying to sin.

Now I’m going to say this morning that we need to think about death to sin in at least two ways, okay? I want to talk about it *judicially*, and I want to talk about it *experientially*.

Participant: Amen.

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Jeff: Now I want you to think about it judicially for a minute. Does anybody remember the O.J. Simpson trial?

Participant: Yes.

Jeff: Everybody? All right. You know, there are people who say, “I can remember where I was when John F. Kennedy was shot.” Well I wasn’t born then, so I can’t relate to that. But I can remember where I was when the O.J. Simpson verdict was announced. I can remember where I was. I was at Grove City college, watching the verdict being announced on television.

Now I don’t know about you. I just know that there was a great deal of doubt about his innocence at the time his verdict came in, okay. And when—

Participant: That hasn’t changed. Go ahead.

Jeff: All right. (*Laughter*) I thought I had a dissenter. All right. Thank you for that. Now I want you to think about that. The example that I’m going to give is going to—well, let me just do it first. When that verdict, not guilty, came in, O.J. Simpson could have gone anywhere in the country and been safe. He did not need to fear charges being brought against him again. He had been cleared of those charges, right?

Now when we think about our death to sin, we need to think about death to sin being situated upon and united to the *forensic* aspect of justification that we experience in Christ. In other words, when we were saved, one of the things that happened was that we were declared not guilty on the basis of Christ’s righteousness.

Participant: Amen.

Jeff: On the basis of His obedience. Not guilty, forgiven, now righteous in the sight of God. But on the basis of that forensic aspect of our salvation, we also need to understand that we were taken from one sphere, one dominion—that is, sin—and placed in another dominion—that is, the kingdom of God. We ought to understand ourselves to be forgiven, free, unencumbered by the old dominion.

I’ve asked you this before. Who has read *Pilgrim’s Progress*? Have more than half of you read it? No? Okay. All right. Still, shame on you! (*Laughter*) Anyway, in that, Christian leaves the armory and he’s going down into the valley, and he’s confronted by Apollyon. And Apollyon says to him, “What are you doing in this country?”

And he says, “I’ve left your country.”

And he says, “You’d better do yourself a favor and get back to my country.”

You see, that’s the idea of having been removed from one dominion, one kingdom, and placed into another. And that’s the way we ought to think about death to sin. We’ve been taken from one sphere and we’ve been moved to another. We’ve been taken from the kingdom of sin and death and been moved into the kingdom of God and life. That’s the way we ought to think about it.

Now let’s think about the *experiential* aspect of that, experientially. Let’s think. Let’s go back to O.J. Simpson for just a minute. O.J. Simpson did not and could not have an experience—well, I guess he could, but not in the same way we’re talking about it theologically and Biblically. He could not have an experiential aspect of his declaration of not guilty. Why could he not have that kind of experience in the way we’re talking

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about it? Here’s why. It’s because there was no power in him. That declaration of not guilty invested nothing in him internally.

So what did he do? He went out and got himself into more trouble. His behavior after that verdict did not vindicate that verdict.

Participant: Amen.

Jeff: But that’s not true of the Christian. The Bible clearly says that the Christian will live in such a way so as to vindicate that declaration of not guilty. What does James say? Do you remember what he says in James chapter 2? He talks about our works vindicating our faith. That’s the idea. What we did in this life will not save us. The work of Christ is what saved us. But our works will cast vindication and the light of vindication upon what Christ has done. In other words, we will be different because we have the power to be different on the basis of what Christ has done in us. Okay?

So we are dead to sin. Now you say, “Well what in the world does that have to do with anything? If I’m dead to sin, “I’m dead to sin.” Well it’s the next thing that we need to think about. It’s this. We are not just dead to sin in terms of passivity. But we are *alive to Christ*. Why? So that we might walk in Him.

And I want you to know something. There’s an experiential element to this that we have to remember. In other words, let me put it this way. I was just talking to one of you earlier. And the idea here is that because I’m in Christ, if I do something that violates the law of Christ, what happens to me? I begin to feel guilty. That’s not false guilt!

Participant: That’s right.

Jeff: I’ve broken a genuine law of God and I feel guilty about it! I shouldn’t say, “I shouldn’t have this guilt.” No, you should have this guilt! And that guilt should drive you to repentance.

Participant: Amen, brother.

Jeff: And when you repent, what will you experience? If you’re thinking about the gospel, you’ll experience what it means to be forgiven.

Participant: Amen.

Jeff: You know, I want to tell you something. I was talking to my son yesterday. We were talking, and he has some friends who are atheists. And I was just telling him. I was saying, “Son, it’s good to have friends who are outside of the church. But it is not good if we brush our differences with them underneath the carpet.”

And he said to me, “But Dad, a lot of times that produces a lot of strife in the relationship.”

And I said, “Let me ask you a question, son. Just let me ask you a question. If you were in contact with somebody who hated your mom and dad, would you be close friends with them?”

And he said, “No.”

I said, “I didn’t think you would. You wouldn’t be able to.” If somebody hates your Savior, you can be acquaintances with them. You can be friendly with them. You may even be able to be friends in the outermost sense. But there’s no way you can be intimate friends with them. I think it’s impossible, because if you’re always brushing under the

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table that relationship that produces strife in your life, then what does that say about your love for the Person with whom you profess to be in a relationship?

We have to walk in Him, and that’s got to be experiential. There has got to be a living, active, experiential component to this. If it’s true—and it is true!—but if it’s true in your thinking, it has to have an experiential component to it.

So that’s right thinking. And right thinking will lead to right living. And that’s walking the walk. Now let’s think about this for a minute. Does anybody have any questions, because I haven’t had a coffee for a while. Yes?

Participant: I just wanted to comment on what you were just saying.

Jeff: Please do. Feel free to, any time.

Participant: It would seem to me that some of it has to do with your motivation. You know, when you have a friend who is not a believer, and you’re sweeping things under the rug because you want to maintain a relationship, you’re sort of embarrassed about what you believe, that’s one thing. But it seems to me that there’s another approach, and that’s when you’re like Paul. *“I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means win some.”* If that’s your motivation, then there’s wisdom.

Jeff: If that’s your motivation, you’re only going to be intimate friends if that person comes to the same Lord as you have. (*Unclear*)

Participant: I would think intimate friends, but again, Paul says, *“I have become all things to all men, that by all means I might win some.”* In other words, “when I was with the Jews I was a Jew. When I was with the Gentiles, I was a Gentile.” He was working hard at doing that.

Jeff: He was working hard at doing that, but I think there has to be a fundamental difference in terms of his own vulnerability toward them, in terms of his own—I mean, let’s put it this way. He’s not likely going to sit down and share something intimate about which he struggles with somebody who is hostile to his Savior and hostile to his way of life. He’ll save that for somebody like Barnabas or Mark, right?

Second Participant: The end result of him having and being all things to all people was that he was stoned and all kinds of things.

Jeff: Yes.

Participant: They were going to kill him in a variety of ways because he couldn’t have that intimate relationship and they didn’t like what he was saying, even though he was trying to make those connections. And yes, he had a lot of great things happening, but there was also that tension behind the scenes.

Jeff: Yes, absolutely. Yes?

Participant: We can’t imagine Paul being quiet about the gospel. (*Unclear*)

Jeff: That’s right.

Participant: It’s impossible to think of that.

Jeff: Yes, which is going to divide. Yes, Sig?

Sig: I have a good friend of mine. We used to work together. We get together regularly now. And he’s not a Christian. He’s brought up a lot of questions, and we talk about Christ in great detail.

Jeff: Yes.

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Sig: But I also share with him. I’m vulnerable with him about my relationship with my wife, about my relationship with my son. I know his daughter, I know his wife. And I don’t do that as a ploy, that if he sees me more realistic, he’ll see Christ. He’s a friend. And I hope and pray that he would come to know Christ, and I tell him that. And I point out to him where I think his thinking is off, and I tell him why. But I think that first and foremost he is a friend. And I don’t want to minimize that friendship because he’s an atheist. I don’t think he would say that he’s an atheist. He believes there’s a God, but he doesn’t see it the same way I do. Do you know what I’m saying.

Jeff: I’ve heard about people like you.

Sig: I know. *(Laughter)*

Jeff: I’m not saying that—

Sig: I’m not saying that you’re saying cart-blanc he that you can’t be a Christian and have good, intimate friends who aren’t Christians. I wouldn’t marry a woman who wasn’t a Christian.

Jeff: Right, right. But I think that’s an anomaly, and not—

Sig: Maybe it’s an exception.

Jeff: Yes.

Sig: I don’t know about it being an anomaly.

Participant: No, I don’t think so.

Jeff: You don’t think it is?

Participant: No. I think we’re called to be open and honest with our friends.

Jeff: To the same degree?

Participant: If you feel comfortable with that person.

Jeff: But that’s not to the same degree.

Participant: No, I’m saying that if you feel comfortable with that person. There are some people you can’t open up to just because of the differences in personality, not whether they’re believers or not. I think there are more than differences in personality. If a person is hostile to your faith,—I mean Sig can obviously share with this person despite the disagreements that this person has, and this person’s not hostile in return.

Jeff: Oh, yes.

Sig: He’s not hostile when we talk about Christ. He’s open-minded. He’ll think about it. He won’t necessarily agree to it.

Jeff: Right.

Sig: And he’ll point out things he sees as questions in the Bible that don’t make sense. And I was hoping I could maybe sneak him into Bishop Rodgers’ house some night, *(laughter)*, and we could talk, and maybe he could solve these problems. But yes, you’re right. It’s not an anger-based thing, where he comes around and says, “Sig, get away from me! I don’t want to talk about it!” It’s not like he’s a project, where I’m trying to convert him.

Jeff: Yes. All I’m saying is that basically I think that’s an exception rather than the rule. I think that oftentimes, when you share Christ with people, even friends, I had many friendships that I had before I was a Christian, where I gently shared Christ with that person, and the friendship basically fizzled out.

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Sig: Well I’ve had those, too.

Jeff: Yes.

Participant: I agree with you, Sig. It’s possible, yes. We can be close, and I think of his example. We can have friends.

Jeff: Oh, I think we can.

Participant: You can have discussions about what you believe.

Jeff: Yes.

Participant: One other case I think of is family relationships, parents of kids who aren’t believers I mean they have relationships that are genuine; they love their kids.

Jeff: Yes.

Participant: If they’re hiding their faith, then that’s not right. But if they’re working hard at how they best communicate their faith to their loved ones, or an uncle or a grandchild,--

Jeff: I know what you’re saying and I think that’s true. However, I think that on the child’s part, the child is probably not as open and as honest in return.

Participant: They can’t be.

Jeff: Yes, they can’t be. That’s what I mean.

Participant: As we go through Christ’s high priestly prayer, He prays to the Father, and one of the last things that He says is that we will all be one.

Jeff: Yes.

Participant: It is the idea of being one in our concept of righteousness and justice and God’s love. I have friends who are non-Christians who are very easy to get along with, people I take to a ball game, people I work with. But I think you’re right. We are closer to Christians. There’s that depth that we don’t get to with non-Christians.

Jeff: Yes. In the prayer you’re talking about, when you think about it, He says, “*And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.*” So there’s this idea that *knowing* is the basis of that prayer. Knowing God is the basis of that prayer. That’s the basis of the unity that He’s talking about.

Participant: Christ is also praying about the disciples, not the whole world.

Jeff: That’s right.

Participant: And I think that speaks to that fact, that there is that union that passes away. God loved Adolf Hitler, but He’s not in union with him.

Jeff: Well Jonathan Edwards used to talk about *the love of benevolence and the love of complacency.*”

Participant: This is a profound start, meaning that if we don’t get this right, everything else gets messed up. For example, I was riding Uber with a guy yesterday, and he was asking if I could lose my salvation. If we don’t quite get how this topic relates to our regeneration and our saving faith, then it’s going to make us believe, if he’s a believer or not, it might lead me to am I truly saved? It will also, as one who is a believer, affect how you interact with those around you, because I’ve seen people time and time again who say, “Well, I’m all things to all people, so I can relate to them just like Paul.” However, being all things to all people makes you nothing with anybody. So you have to

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be genuine and your being Christlike will come out of it, and Christ will use it to His glory.

Jeff: Yes, absolutely. Yes, Don? Wait a second. Hold on, Don. Somebody else is first.

Participant: I’ve had an experience such as Sig, a best friend of mine and I kept on witnessing to him. But lo and behold, years later I just started praying for him.

Jeff: Yes.

Participant: And he came to me and he said, “I started going to this Bible study.”

And I said, “Really?”

And he said, “Yeah, and I really enjoy it.”

“Oh,” I said. “I’ve been asking you all these years.”

He said, “You never said anything to me about that.” (*Laughter*) A miracle!

Jeff: Right. Go ahead, Don.

Don: I think there has to be a balance.

Jeff: Yes.

Don: There’s a real fine line. Yes, on the one hand we are to make disciples. And the efforts of Sig and others who have made efforts to try to be genuine and communicate the gospel I think are wonderful. On the other hand, Paul does say in 2 Corinthians 6 “*what fellowship has light with darkness*”, etc.

Jeff: Right, sure.

Don: “*Unequally yoked*” doesn’t just mean marriage.

Jeff: Right.

Don: It means close, intimate friendships or business relationships, or whatever. There is a point where it’s almost impossible at times to have that to the degree that you would have with another Christian.

Jeff: Yes. I think we’re all saying the same thing. We’re not saying that one excludes the other. We’re just saying that to a lesser extent or to a greater extent we think there is viability on either side.

Let’s think about *right living* for a few minutes here. I want you to think about the body. And I want you to think about the focus on the body that we see in this particular passage. The body is not the prison house of the soul. That’s what Plato said—*soma sema*—the body, the prison. We are going to be resurrected with this body.

I mean, think about the Westminster Larger Catechism. The Larger Catechism says that for the unbelievers, their grave is like a prison. But think about what it says with regard to the believer. It says that their grave is like a bed. And so we’re going to be resurrected. This body is not just important now. It’s important later.

We are not to let sin reign in our members, in our bodies. Now I want you to think about it for just a minute. I want you to think about this *indicative* and *imperative* relationship. And I’m only going to bring it up because they’re part of the ingredients that we’ve already looked at. Remember, the *indicative* is what God has done for us, what God has completed for us in Jesus Christ, and what the Spirit has brought to us. So it’s done; it’s finished. The *imperative* is the life that is to flow from it. In other words, you are light. Be light, right? That’s the idea. The indicative is that you are light in Jesus Christ. Now comes the imperative—be light. Be what it is that you are.

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This is the whole idea of the zygote that I was telling you about. The zygote has all the chromosomes that it needs to be a fully developed human being. And yet it will develop into the human being that it already is. It won’t get more chromosomes. It will grow into the chromosomes it already has. So that’s the indicative and the imperative.

Now I want you to think about this. Go back in your mind to the Emancipation Proclamation. Now think about slavery in the South before the Emancipation Proclamation. You walk up to a slave and you say to him, “You are freed!” He’s going to think you’re mocking him.

Participant: Right.

Jeff: But if it’s after the Emancipation Proclamation and you walk up to him and say, “You are free!”, and he says, “What do you mean? I’m still in chains.”

“No, no, no! You are free! The President has declared you to be free! You’re emancipated!” And then he starts taking off his chains and he starts thinking like a free man.

Now there’s baggage with that. But what I’m saying to you is this. What I’m saying to you is that God is not mocking you.

Participant: Right.

Jeff: when He says, “*Do not let sin reign; do not be a slave*”, He’s not mocking you. He’s saying, “You aren’t a slave. Don’t be a slave.” That’s what He’s saying. That’s important. It goes back to that right thinking.

The Lord has enabled us to will and to do, right? In “Calvin and Hobbes” Calvin says, “Sorry, I’m here against my will. I refuse to cooperate.” (*Laughter*) That’s not us. That can’t be us. We’ve been given new minds.

I want you to think about it like this. The way we need to think has to affect the way we desire and what we do. This cannot be us.

I want you to think about something else. And what we’re doing is that we’re getting down lower into the passage. We’re actually getting down into verse 12 at this point. He talks about the presentation of *instruments* and *the whole*.

Now I want you to think about this. He talks about this whole idea of the presentation of our bodies in an individualistic way. In different parts of the chapter and here, he is saying, “*Do not offer the members of your body as instruments of unrighteousness.*”

Now I want you to think about that. I mean, you can think about what you do with your hands, where you go with your feet. You can think about what you look at with your eyes. You can think about all kinds of things. And he says, “*Do not offer the members of your body as instruments of unrighteousness.*”

Think about Job. “*I have made a covenant with my eyes, not to look at a woman lustfully.*” In this Old Testament way, he is thinking about how it is that he’s going to offer his body as an instrument of righteousness, and not as an instrument of wickedness.

But he’s not just talking about this. If you look in chapter 12, there’s not only this offering of the members of our bodies as instruments, but there’s a change in tense and there’s a change in focus. Now he’s talking about the offering of our whole selves. And it’s almost like he says, “Don’t offer the instruments of your bodies, the members of your

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bodies, to wickedness. And then he says, “Offer your whole selves.” And then the tense of the Greek changes to an *aorist*.

What is he doing when he’s talking about his whole self and he’s talking about the *aorist*? He’s saying, “Look, guys. Get it into your heads what I’ve been talking about with regard to thinking. Decide in your head that you’re going to be this, because you are this. And offer yourselves accordingly.”

I want you to think about it like this. I gave you the zygote illustration. I want you to think about the illustration of somebody playing a musical instrument. I decide that I’m going to learn how to play a musical instrument. I offer my whole self to this endeavor. I am going to learn how to play the harmonic if it kills me, right? That’s our thing.

And what happens? I take lessons with the teacher, and I go to those lessons. And every week he says to me, “Do you not practice?”

And you say, “I practice faithfully. I practice half an hour a day.” (*Laughter*) “I really work at this.”

And, you know, he says, “Well you really need to practice more. You need to practice an hour a day.”

And you go back and he says, “You’re still not making any progress, no discernible progress.”

But you say, “I am practicing.”

Anyway, my point is this. My point is that you can determine to give your whole self to the endeavor and sometimes feel like you’re just not making any headway. And that can be a carry-over, one to one, with the Christian life.

And yet all of a sudden one day, after six months or a year, your instructor says to you, “Wow! You know, you still stink at playing the harmonica.” (*Laughter*) “But you are better!” (*Laughter*) You know, that’s the idea of the Christian life. (*Laughter*)

You know what? I’m going to tell you something. I’ll never forget. One year I decided that I was going to pray for three things. And I decided that I was going to journal as I prayed. I got to the end of the year and I said to myself, “I have not grown one single solitary inch with regard to any of these three prayers that I’ve been praying. I have not grown.” And I decided that I was going to sit down and read my journal and find out what went wrong.

And when I read my journal, I found out what went right. I realized that in reading the year’s journal that I had grown in each of the three areas that I was hoping to grow in. I was just living too close to it to really see the growth.

That’s the idea. We need not only to present ourselves day by day, knowing that we’ll fail in the process. We need to present ourselves, our whole selves, with the determination that this is the right thinking that we’re supposed to be thinking. And this is what we’re supposed to be doing as a result of that thinking.

This is not what we’re supposed to be doing—Calvin again. Calvin is sitting at the desk. He’s saying to his teacher, “I got 75% of the answers correct. And in today’s society, doing something 75% right is outstanding! If government and industry were 75% competent, we’d be a state.” (*Laughter*)

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That is not the Christian life! We cannot say to God, “I did 75% to my ability.” And you ought to be happy that that’s not right.

What does God expect from you?

Participant: 100%.

Jeff: You know, this is theological math. This is why I like the humanities and not engineering, or anything like that. God does 100% of our salvation, right?

Participant: Amen.

Jeff: He completes 100% of it. What does He expect from us? Here’s the imperative. He expects 100% from us. What does that equal?

Participant: 100%.

Jeff: That’s right, it equals 100%. That’s theological math. (*Laughter*)

What are we talking about? This is a caveat. What are we talking about here? We are talking about *incidences* of sin versus *patterns* of sin. You say to me, “But I still sin.” Yes, you do. Yes you do, and yes you will, until the very day you die or until the day the Lord returns. But if you can see a pattern of sin in your life, then that’s where you need to focus your energy on breaking that pattern, because sin no longer has dominion over you.

You know, I want to tell you men something and I want to be straight with you. When we develop patterns in our lives, that’s when we tend toward secrecy, and that’s when we tend toward living a double life. Nobody knows it except us and maybe a few others who are living that life with us. But that’s the kind of thing that Galatians 5 is talking about when we practice sin. The Bible knows we’re going to sin. There will be incidents of sin. But whenever we start developing a practice of sin, we need to run first to Christ and seek forgiveness, and then run to a brother and say, “Brother, I need some accountability at this point because I’ll tell you what. I’m heading in a bad direction.” So that’s freedom from sin. That’s the caveat.

Right dying. Let me just go through this really quickly. We need to be fructified. We need to be fruit bearing. There’s fruit that begets death, and there’s a fruit that begets sanctification, which leads to eternal life. And that’s the end of sanctification.

We think about glorification in Romans 8. We’re justified and we’re not sanctified. He doesn’t mention that. He mentions *glorified*. Glorification is the end fruit of sanctification. So fruit begetting sanctification and eternal life is what we’re after. And we’ll say more about that at some point, but that’s where I’ll leave it now. So we’re done, unless you have any questions.

Participant: I have a comment.

Jeff: Yes.

Participant: An example of this that came to my mind is Peter, two cases of Peter—one in the boat on the Sea of Galilee, when he says, “*Lord, if it is your will, call me, and I will come forth.*” And he did.

Jeff: Yep.

Participant: He did. And then his incident of sin was losing faith, and Christ addressed him in that loving way, “*O you of little faith!*”, knowing that he was going to get great faith.

Jeff: Yep.

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Participant: Because at the end, he died right, believing in Christ.

Jeff: Yeah, but I want you to remember something. This is important. I want you guys to remember that little faith lays hold of the same Christ that great faith lays hold of.

Participant: Amen.

Jeff: Right? So if there’s a problem with your sense of being kept, the problem is not with Christ, but with you.

Participant: Amen.

Jeff: Right? So you need to be like Peter. *“Lord, increase my faith”*, which translates into “increase my sense of being kept by You,” right?

Participant: Amen.

Jeff: That’s the idea. So, you know, you can stumble through this life like Little Faith in *Pilgrim’s Progress*, or you can go through it like Faithful or Hopeful or Christian. All of them had different strengths and weaknesses. But the idea is that even a little faith lays hold of the whole Christ. Yes, Don?

Don: Yes. Going back to what you said in the beginning about our inheritance?

Jeff: Yes.

Don: You know, I think a good illustration of that is what happened to me, what happened to most of us when we were kids. “h, I can’t wait for what I’m getting for Christmas!” I remember in the 70s my mom said, “I’m getting you something different for Christmas this year, and if you don’t like it I’m going to kill you.” *(Laughter)* I was waiting, anticipating what it was. I knew I had it, but I had to wait till Christmas to get it.

Jeff: Yes.

Don: And that’s the same kind of thing. We are sure that we have *“the inheritance that will never spoil, fade or perish.”* But we’re waiting for the completion of it till Christ comes or when we die.

Participant: I think there’s something you said today that really hits me which I think is very truthful. More and more, if we’re in Christ, when we sin, we get this guilt complex, this guilt. If we sin and don’t have this feeling of guilt,—I just did something wrong; this is not right!—then I think we’ve missed the mark there. More and more and more we have this guilt complex even with little things that we never used to think about before.

Second Participant: Amen.

First Participant: Now suddenly there’s a guilt thing that comes in. It seems like it’s very small, but it’s still saying this when we feel guilty.

Jeff: Yeah. And there is a cleansing of the conscience, too, that happens when we go to God, right? And yet even that cleansing of the conscience sometimes doesn’t always have that sense of completeness for us in this life. But that’s because of our own response to the gospel and not because of the gospel, right? But you’re right, you’re absolutely right.

Participant: Think of how God dealt with sin when pride came into heaven. He threw it out. He threw Satan out because Christ said, “I saw him thrown out.”

Jeff: Yeah.

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Participant: Now he has access too, but limited access. So look to Christ, always look to Christ.

Jeff: Always look to Christ. That’s a good one. All right. Have a good day, gentlemen, and a nice weekend. (*Applause*)