

96-05-31b

Okay, we have returned from our break and we're going to pick up the pace a little bit. We slowed down in Chapter 5 and we wanted to make sure we had a clear grip on the direction that Paul is going. And he is now talking about some conclusions that could be drawn.

He's presented a lot of information in these past several chapters. He says, now here are some conclusions that people might wrongly draw about the Christian life. And once again, the subject of this letter is the Christian life.

It's not salvation. It's not how to come to Christ and get positional righteousness. How do we live now that we are believers? How do we live now that we are believers in this age since Christ has come? It's different than the old age.

It doesn't have anything to do with the law of Moses anymore. And most people in that day thought that the law was still operative and that it was a means of righteousness. And a lot of Paul's critics would hear bits and pieces of what Paul was teaching and would try to turn it back against him and say, well, he's saying that you don't have to worry about being righteous anymore.

He's giving people a license to sin. And these same arguments come up today. When we say that we're not under law but under grace, people say, well, you're just giving people a license to sin.

You're telling them that there's no requirement to keep these Old Testament commandments and things. Well, people are just going to run amok. And there's a lot of criticism that comes out of this.

And people say, well, there just won't be any motivation. It's laissez-faire Christianity. It's slouch on the couch and wait for the rapture.

And nobody's going to be motivated to serve or to contribute or to minister. When you keep talking about righteousness by faith and you're saying that people could be standing at the kitchen sink and God's righteousness is being produced or people can be driving to work or people can be watching their children during the day or performing the mundane tasks of life and that they're producing righteousness and pleasing God. Well, what about ministry? What about the lost? And what about service and morality and all of these other things? And they'll start to come up with arguments against what the plan of God is in this life.

And so Paul is going to quote some of these. We saw over in Colossians where people were falsely saying that Paul was teaching some things. And so he's going to address some of these.

He's going to present four of them in chapter six and chapter seven. He says, OK, shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? This would be somebody that is big on keeping the

Mosaic law. And they say, well, you say that the law just increases sin and that that causes God's grace to abound.

So why don't you just keep on sinning so God's grace will really abound? And he's saying, no, the death of Christ makes that impossible. The burial and the resurrection of Christ make that impossible. We've been united with him in that and we're not in the Old Testament age and God's making a different point.

And he's going to continue. We've covered verses one through 13. We talked about not letting sin reign in verse 12, that we should obey it and not presenting our members, our physical life in this world as weapons of unrighteousness to sin, but present ourselves to God as alive from the dead and our members as weapons of righteousness to God.

And then in verse 14, he continues. He says, for sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law, but under grace. Now, at first reading, we say, well, so is he saying that if we were under law, sin would have dominion over us? That the law put people under the dominion of sin? I don't quite understand what the statement means here.

And why is it that I still sin? Why do I still find sin overcoming me from time to time if sin has no dominion over me because I'm under grace and not under law? First of all, there's an interesting word here. When he talked about letting sin reign up above, it was from *basileia*, which means kingdom and *basileuo*, which means to rule and so forth. Down here, though, in verse 14, when it says sin shall not have dominion, this verb, which means to rule or to lord over something, the word for lord, like the Lord Jesus Christ in Greek, is *kurios*, K-U-R-I-O-S.

Well, this is the verb form of that word. It means to function as lord over something, to be the ruler, to lord over someone. And, of course, Jesus Christ is our Lord, and Paul is saying sin will not be your Lord.

Sin is not going to be the one that is lord over you because you're not under law but under grace. And we've already brought out the contrast that Paul has made clear in the last couple of chapters, that in the Old Testament age, this was not the case. Jesus Christ had not yet come and was not the Lord Jesus Christ for Old Testament believers.

And sin did have dominion and sin did rule. The options that we have today through God's grace were not there the way they are now. And we're in a different age.

What then, in verse 15, shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? Certainly not. This is our second *megenoita*, heaven forbid. And it's our second question.

And you can compare the first half and the last half of chapter six. The structure is almost exactly parallel. He starts with a question, a hypothetical question or a question that might have been raised by opponents.

And then he objects to it. And he says, certainly not. And then he presents the rationale.

This is why this is not true. The first question that he asked was, shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? And this was a present tense type of thing. Shall the pattern of our life be to sin and to function in sin so that God's grace will continually abound? Here in verse 15, when he says, shall we sin? This is in the aorist tense in Greek.

Now, the aorist, sometimes we think of it as a past tense, but it really has an idea that's hard to get across in English. Sometimes it means that something happens in a point of time. Sometimes it means that it happens on occasion.

There's a punctiliar aorist, which means like when Christ died. That's often in the aorist tense. He died once for sin.

That's in the aorist. That's a punctiliar aorist. Sometimes there's an ingressive aorist.

That means the point at which this action began. Sometimes there is a constative aorist that gathers up all of the action over a period of time and considers it as one lump thing. There is an aorist that talks about something that happens once in a while.

It's an occasional type of thing. There's a culminative aorist that takes something that might have happened over a period of time and sums it all up and looks at it from the standpoint of results. This is, I think, an aorist that talks about yielding to sin on those occasions when it's convenient to do so.

We find ourselves tempted to give in to some temptation or to commit some sin and the thought crosses our mind, well, I'll get over this here in a little bit and I'll confess it to the Lord and I'll be right back where I am now. And because I'm under grace, this sin is no big deal and I'll just indulge myself in this anger or in this impatience or in this sour mood that I'm in or I'm just going to have a little spell of self-pity here and then I'll clean up and I'll confess it and I'll be right with the Lord and everything will be fine. And if we find ourselves on occasion excusing our sin because we're under grace, that's what Paul is talking about here.

His first question and answer was, shall we just live in sin and not have any concern about righteousness whatsoever? And he says, absolutely not. We have a new life. Now he's saying, shall we sin from time to time because we're not under law but under grace? And because we're under grace, we don't have the penalty of the law coming down on our head.

We don't have to worry about being stoned or having to be impure and outside the camp and all of these other things. We're under grace and the law doesn't apply. So on those occasions when I feel like I want to indulge myself in some sin, why don't I? I'm under grace and God has so completely applied his grace that sin doesn't seem to be an issue anymore.

That's the point that he's bringing up here. So now he's going to bring up the rationale to address that avenue of distortion. Verse 16, do you not know that to whomever you present yourselves as slaves to obey, you are that one slave whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death or of obedience unto righteousness.

So he says, and we say, well, what do you mean slave? He's already said that the power of sin has been broken and so forth. So what's he talking about being a slave? If I give in to this sin on an occasional basis, how am I a slave? Think about this. When a slave engages in a task, who decided that that was a task that needed to be performed, the slave or the master? It's the master.

When you're an enlisted pogue, an enlisted guy, you don't get to think up the strategy. You don't get to define the mission. Orders trickle down from on high, dig this ditch.

You don't know necessarily why or anything else that says dig the ditch. And so you dig that ditch and you're following those orders and you're accomplishing that task. And you don't necessarily have any stake in whether the hole gets dug or not.

Your only stake is whether or not you're obedient. If you're disobedient, you come under a penalty. But somebody else has something they want to get done and they issue the order.

That's the way a slave functions. The point that Paul is making here is if you acquiesce, if you become a slave to sin, you may not think that the consequences to you are very great, but the difficulty is that because you are functioning as a lackey or as a slave to sin, sin is accomplishing its objective. It's getting its mission accomplished.

And in a large sense, when you look at the plan of God, you look at the conflict between God and those who rebel against God. You look at the point that God is demonstrating about himself in contrast to those who You look at the point that God is demonstrating about himself in contrast to those who are headed by Satan and the fallen angels and extending down to unbelievers and so forth. There are points being scored in this contest.

There are arguments being advanced and being rebuffed. There are demonstrations being given. You see this in the first couple of the first chapter of Job, where God tells Satan, look at my servant Job, and Satan says, well, if we put him in this situation, he'll fail.

He'll curse you. He's only loyal to you because you've blessed him. His only motivation is that he's having the good life.

You take the good life away, he'll curse you to your face. There's an issue between Satan and God, between those who side with Satan and those who side with God. We have the opportunity to advance God's case, to demonstrate God's point.

God's point is going to be demonstrated and God's case is going to prevail. Our choice is which side are we going to be on, the defense or the prosecution? Are we going to be on the winning side or the losing side? And when we give in to sin, it's like when we introduced this lesson tonight, we were talking about children and obedience. And if they figure out a way to get by and they figure out a way so that the boat is not rocked and parents don't get upset, spankings are not given, and the parents are kind of glad that nothing bad enough has happened, they have to stop what we're doing and discipline the children and so forth.

We think, well, the household is running smoothly, the food did finally get eaten, the room did finally get cleaned up, what I wanted done did finally get done. And I don't really want to just make a big issue and stop and have a spanking and all of the attendant grief that comes with that. And we think in terms of the flow of the day and the atmosphere in the household and the kids are cute and you don't want to interrupt a good time with a spanking and so forth.

And we're just thinking about the immediate effects. And we don't stop and think about the larger reason why we are parents and they are children. This is another thing you can think about and scratch your head and say, why did God orchestrate the human race so that each succeeding generation starts out under the authority and under the training of the preceding generation? God didn't have to do it that way.

We could exude out of a rock face somewhere and be human adults. We could come up out of the mud like Adam and there would be some designated swamp areas, tar pits or whatever and every so often here would come another human being. God could have done it any kind of way.

Why did he choose to have us be generated from our parents and to grow up? It's a wonderful picture of God and his creation, his children. It's a great training exercise for the parents as well as for the children. And there is an important thing going on when we train our children.

We're teaching them self-control. We're teaching them to think. We're teaching them to weigh the consequences of decisions that they make and actions that they engage in.

And it is not enough to get the household running smoothly. It's not enough to just get the room cleaned up. Even though I had to say it seven or eight times, they did eventually get it cleaned up and that was really the goal.

That's not the goal. The goal is to give an instruction and have it obeyed the first time. That's the goal.

Why? Because that trains the child to function in life. It trains the child to function under authority. It teaches the child self-control.

It teaches the child to weigh the consequences. If I slough off, if I get distracted, if I disobey, there are consequences. That's a critically important lesson for life.

And in reality, the room getting cleaned up is just an excuse to teach this principle. But if we think in terms of how clean is the room and did the food get eaten and did the hands get washed and all we're concerned about is getting these tasks done, we miss the point because the reason God has assigned children to us as a responsibility is to train them up in the way that they should go. And that's what we have in the spiritual realm as well.

The circumstances of life and whether our life goes smoothly or whether we achieve this goal or gain this blessing or whatever it is, these are secondary to what God is teaching us as we go through these things. And if we get caught up in the circumstance, get caught up in the details, we can miss the lesson that God has for us that is eternal in nature. We're going to see that in some of the passages that we look at here.

And so when he says in verse 16, don't you know, once again, he's going back to this pattern, if you know something, it's going to change the way you operate. If you knew this, you wouldn't even consider this possibility. You wouldn't settle for yielding to sin once in a while and saying, well, I'm under grace.

I'll just confess and go on. That's just the area of weakness that I have. I'm a victim of my upbringing or whatever.

And God's grace covers that. We won't be satisfied to slough by because it isn't just getting through and avoiding God's discipline or getting restored. God is trying to teach us something.

He's trying to teach us to not side with sin, to not let it make its point. And that's why he says in verse 16, do you not know that if you present yourself as a slave to obey, you are that one slave whom you obey, whether of sin, which results in death. The mission of sin, the way that it rules, the outcome that it produces is death.

And every time we settle for sin, every time we excuse ourselves because we're under grace, we're producing death. We're accomplishing the mission that sin has in life, which is death. If we present ourselves as weapons of righteousness, if we concentrate on obedience, if we don't settle for anything less than obedience, if we're constantly striving to be more obedient, to be more faithful, to be more oriented to God's plan, that leads to righteousness.

Notice it doesn't say to life. It says to righteousness, because the issue here is what is the outcome of those things that don't have their source in God? They have their source in Satan. They have their source in the self, in the sinful nature.

Those things will always result in degeneration, disintegration, corruption, and death. The only place where there's life, the only place where things go from good to better and from better to best, the only place where the second law of thermodynamics does not apply and things really do get better is when they're associated with God, when they're sourced in God. Every time we face a decision, every time we face a temptation, we can either throw another rotting carcass on the

death pile or we can let God produce righteousness in us through obedience.

Verse 17, he says, but God be thanked that although you were slaves of sin, you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered, that form of doctrine to which you were entrusted. This is an interesting word. It's a passive form of a word paradidimi, which means, didimi means to give and para means alongside.

There's also a word for receive, which is lombano, and there's a similar combination. Para lombano means to receive alongside, to take in close. If someone came up to you and gave you, handed you a crowbar and you took it and held it in your hand, the Greeks might use lombano for that.

If someone came up and handed you a precious gift, they would use the word para lombano because it's something that you would receive and you would embrace. You would take it to yourself. You would take it alongside yourself.

If a friend came up to you, you might para lombano. You might take them right alongside you. So para means this thing comes in close contact.

It comes right alongside. The same is true with didimi, to give. You can give something or you can entrust it.

You can para didimi. You can give it with the intent that that person para lombano, that they receive it and take it in close. Well, this says that God has given us that form of doctrine and he has entrusted it to us.

It's something that should be drawn close, something that should be important to us. It's not just idle truth. It's not just a ritual to go through to listen to.

We're supposed to take it on board. We're supposed to take it alongside and be changed by it. And he says that we were slaves of sin, but we obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were entrusted.

It was entrusted to you. You were entrusted to it. The two of you were side by side, this doctrine and you.

And having been set free from sin, and notice the relationship between verse 17 and 18. If we have a problem, we say, you know, my temper always gets the better of me or I'm so impatient or I'm constantly failing in this particular area or whatever. What is the answer? We know that we fail and that knowledge doesn't give us power to change.

What is the answer? He says here, obedience from the heart to that form of doctrine to which we have been entrusted. That sets us free from sin. That's what gives us the power to change.

We know that our willpower is lousy. Our willpower fails under pressure. Our energy, our flesh, our strength fails under pressure.

What is it that does not fail? It's the power of God. Where does the power of God come from? The Word of God and the Spirit of God. That form of doctrine to which we have been entrusted is the Word of God.

And when we make it a priority, we make it the object of our faith and God, the Holy Spirit, uses it as his sword and his voice in our soul. That puts the power of God in our soul and sets us free from sin. Having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness, meaning that we're now accomplishing the goal of righteousness.

What is the goal of righteousness? Is it to rehabilitate the world? Is it to improve the government? Is it to feed the hungry? Is it to clothe the naked? Is it to stamp out disco in our time? What is the purpose of righteousness? What is its mission? Righteousness has as its goal the reflection of the glory of God, the communication of the character of God. That's what its mission is. So we have the opportunity to either show the living God or to produce death every time we make a decision.

And being a slave of righteousness means to reflect the glory of God. He says, I speak in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. And he's talking about his slavery example.

We are not slaves of God. Jesus says, you are no longer slaves. You are sons.

Paul says the same thing. Jesus said, you are no longer servants. I call you my friends.

And Paul said, you are no longer slaves, but you are sons. And if sons, you are heirs. So he says, when I use this example of slavery, I'm speaking in human terms trying to make a point.

We're not slaves of God. And then he says, you are slaves of sin. Just as you presented, he's talking about the goal that the master has.

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. When you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. What fruit did you have? What was the result? This is the whole point.

What fruit did you have? What was the production that you had and the things that you are now ashamed of? The result, the end, the culmination of those things is death. Now having been set free from sin and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness and its end, everlasting life. For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." And that verse, Romans 6.23, applies to salvation, but it also applies to the Christian life.

And we know that by some of our parallel passages, which we're going to look at right quick. Let's

look at Ephesians chapter 2, verse 10. In Ephesians chapter 2, Paul says, We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

We have been saved, and he goes on to say that in the past we were once Gentiles in the flesh, uncircumcised and without Christ, aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, strangers from the covenants of promise. But in verse 13, now in Christ Jesus you who were once far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. He is our peace and so forth.

And in verse 19, now therefore you are no longer strangers, foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God. And in verse 21, he says, The whole building is fitted together and grows into a holy temple to the Lord, in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit. We have a new mission.

We serve a new purpose in this age. And the purpose is that we show forth God's glory. You can see this also in Colossians chapter 2, verse 8. We were in Colossians not long ago.

He says here, Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ. What does that tell us? We can be deceived as believers. We can miss the boat.

We cannot serve the mission that God has for us in this life. And that's why he says beware. Someone may cheat you.

Someone may lead you down the path. And he says in verse 11, In him you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ. Remember when we were talking about identification in baptism? In Christ we put off that body.

He says this explicitly in verse 12. We were buried with him in baptism. This is the second time we've seen that phrase.

It doesn't say crucified with him in baptism. Buried with him in baptism. In which you were also raised with him through faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead.

You who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, he has made alive together with him, having forgiven you all your trespasses, having wiped out the handwriting of requirements. And look at verse 15. Having disarmed principalities and powers, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it.

This deliverance, this baptizing of us into Christ in his death, his burial and his resurrection, disarms the principalities and powers. It makes God's point. And when we live in that way, we're producing the fruit that God saved us to produce.

We're not making the point on the wrong side. Of course the same thing we see in Galatians chapter 3. We looked at that last time. But let's bring this down to practical terms.

We are heirs according to promise. If we have been baptized into Christ, we've put on Christ. It tells us this in Galatians 3.23. Paul says there, Before faith came, we were kept under guard by the law, kept for the faith which would afterward be revealed.

Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ so that we might be justified or declared righteous by faith. That's everything we've talked about in Romans, isn't it? After faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor, i.e., we're no longer under the law. For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.

For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There's neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male or female, you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise.

Now, we have talked some about being an heir, and this says if you've been baptized into Christ, and that's clearly talking about salvation, you've put on Christ, you're a son, and if you're a son, then you're an heir. And so this makes it sound like every believer is an heir. We're all going to inherit in the kingdom.

But what does he say? He says you are heirs according to the promise. What is the promise? The promise has some conditions for inheritance. Remember the promise to Abraham that attached to circumcision? Those who are circumcised participate in the promise and participate in the covenant.

Those who refuse to be circumcised will be cut off from their people and they're outside the promise. What is the promise for us? If we are heirs according to the promise, what does the promise say about our heirship? Let's just take a moment and explore this. We can go back even to the teaching of Jesus Christ in Matthew 19, 27-29.

How do we come to inheritance? Matthew 19, 27-29. Peter answered and said to Him, We have left all and followed You. Therefore, what shall we have? What is our inheritance? What can we expect? Jesus said to them, Assuredly, I say to you, that in the regeneration, when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

And everyone who has left houses, or brothers, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for My name's sake, shall receive a hundredfold and inherit eternal life. Of course, the traditional understanding of eternal life, you would have to forsake all to be saved. But we understand that when the Greek phrase eternal life, which is *zoe*, the word for life, and *ionos*, which means of the ages, or of the eternal, this is life that partakes of the eternal things.

And this is the inheritance package. Eternal life talks about the fullness of what God has promised us. Those who have been obedient, who have trusted Christ to the point of not worrying about being separated from family, not worrying about whether you have a house or not, not worrying about brothers, or sisters, or father, or mother, and so forth, for My name's sake shall receive a hundredfold and inherit eternal life.

But many who are first will be last, and the last first. This is in the realm of believers. This is in the kingdom.

There are some believers who look like they're great sheikhs in this life, and they're going to be boot blacks in the millennial kingdom. And there are those who were like the beggar, the leper that sat at the rich man's gate, who will be high up in the kingdom. This has to do with inheritance.

It's conditional. The promise says you've got to operate in faith. You've got to be willing to trust God to the point of not worrying about things that people consider important.

What are the things everyone considers important in this life? House, land, security, family, acceptance, success, security of income, and so forth. And Jesus says if you seek those things, you will lose your life. But if you lose your life for My sake in the Gospels, you will find it.

That's a part of the promise that attaches to being an heir. Paul says in Galatians 3, you are heirs according to the promise. That's what the promise says.

We have another passage in Matthew. It's in Matthew 25, verse 29. Again, this is Jesus speaking.

To everyone who has, more will be given, and he will have abundance. But from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away. And cast the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness.

There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. This is a servant. This is someone who belongs to the household of faith, but did not.

This is at the end of the parable of the talents. All of the servants received a gift from the Master. Some of them were obedient and invested it and did what the Master wanted to, sought the Master's interest with that.

The others, this unprofitable servant, did not have the Master's interest at heart. And he is not going to have abundance in the future. That's a part of the promise of inheritance.

We can see this in 1 Corinthians 6 and verse 9. 1 Corinthians 6, 9. Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, thieves, covetous, drunkards, revilers. There's one, revilers.

Talking bad about people. Extortioners. The unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God.

And such were some of you, but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God. Remember that power combination in our soul, the Word of God and the Spirit of God. So, the unrighteous, those who are not pursuing righteousness by faith as believers, are not going to inherit.

That's a part of the promise. You can see this in the same book here over in chapter 15 and verse 50. 1 Corinthians 15, 50.

Now I say this, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does corruption inherit incorruption. Galatians 5, 21. After this long list of adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contention, jealousy, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambition, dissensions, heresies, envies, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like of which I tell you beforehand, just as I told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

Now, why does he bother to go through that list? If he were talking about unbelievers, it's simply a matter of having no faith in the Son of God, that you don't see the kingdom of God, you don't enter the kingdom of God. But this is talking about inheritance. And we are heirs according to promise.

But the promise that assures us that righteousness that comes through faith gives us a confident expectation of inheritance. That same promise guarantees that if we fail to pursue the plan of God, we will not inherit. Many other passages, you can see this in Acts 20, verse 32.

These two passages in Acts are especially good. Acts 20, verse 32. So now, brethren, this is Paul talking to the Ephesian elders, giving his farewell before he goes to Rome.

So now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified. These are elders of the church. Paul's not saying if you're saved, you'll get an inheritance.

He's saying, I commend you to God and to the word of His grace. In Romans 6, we just saw that obedience to the form of doctrine to which you were entrusted. He says, I'm entrusting you, I'm commending you to God and to the word of His grace that's able to build you up and to give you an inheritance among all those who are declared righteous, those who are sanctified.

A few pages over in Acts, in Acts 26, we have a similar concept. My notes say Acts 26, 81, which is clearly not the passage. The verse is 18.

Jesus had spoken to Paul and said, I will deliver you from the Jewish people as well as from the Gentiles to whom I now send you to open their eyes, to turn them from darkness to light, from the

power of Satan to the power of God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me. This is a part of Paul's apostolic commission is to encourage believers to be among those who receive an inheritance through faith. We can see this.

We won't have time to turn there, but Hebrews 9, 13-15 and compare that with 10, 35-39. So the bottom line is we want to be on the good side of this equation. We want to receive an inheritance.

We want to be those in whom the plan of God is fulfilled and accomplished. How do we do that? We need to follow Paul's injunction to reckon ourselves dead to sin, to die to sin and live to God just the way Jesus did. How do we do that? We've already had a clue that it comes through the Word of God.

We need to take advantage of that form of doctrine to which we have been entrusted, the Word of God's grace that is able to build us up and sanctify us. That's what we're doing tonight. We're listening to the teaching of the Word of God.

We're looking at what God has said. The question becomes what are we going to do with what we have learned? Are we going to act on it? Is it going to make a difference in the way that we think, in the way that we decide? Are we going to pause and ponder it? We started our lesson tonight looking at Proverbs 2 and it presents us with the choice. Solomon, I think, is recording the words of David and it says, My son, if thou wilt receive My words, if you lay up My commandments with you, if you incline your ear, if you apply your heart, if you seek and you search, if you lift up your voice and cry out for these things, then you will understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God.

We have to decide that this is more important than the earthly things that we tend to pursue. That's why Jesus said, Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness. How do we seek righteousness? This is how.

It's the life that we are to live through faith. As we close tonight, let's take a quick look at Galatians chapter 6. This really is a parallel to the last half of Romans chapter 6. Galatians chapter 6, verses 7 through 10 especially. Do not be deceived.

God is not mocked. For whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption.

But he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life, eternal life. And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap what? If we do not lose heart. We will reap if we don't lose heart.

Patient continuance in well-doing, seeking for glory and honor in the imperishable things as we saw in Romans chapter 2. And in verse 10, Therefore as we have opportunity, let us do good to

all, especially to those who are of the household of faith. This is going to result in action, but it's action that's motivated by a right understanding of the plan of God and a right understanding of the nature of righteousness, that we're not righteous because of these good things that we do, but these good things flow out of the righteousness that God creates within us. This is the choice that we face each and every day.

This is the purpose of our life. The reason that God gives us breath, the reason that He sustains us, is that in the ordinary circumstances of life, the people that we deal with, the decisions that we make, the day-to-day ongoing mundane chores of life, present us with an opportunity to decide how we're going to live and how we are going to evaluate things in life. Are we seeking our own pleasure? Are we seeking security? Are we seeking approval? If we are, those things lead to death.

It makes points on the wrong side of the plan of God. In this age, unlike any other age, we have the opportunity to make points on the positive side, to prove that even in a fallen body, fallen world, fallen nature, the power of God is so great that with His Word and His Spirit inside us, God's righteousness can be produced and we can be transformed by the renewing of our minds. As we continue through Romans, Paul is going to bring out the positive side and tell us how this is accomplished, especially when we get to Romans chapter 12 when he says to not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewing of our minds.

It is a positive motivation. Like we were talking about during the break, Paul is not trying to scare us with the judgment seat of Christ. He is not trying to scare us with loss of inheritance.

He is encouraging us to take advantage of the positive side of what God has provided. There is no reason and there is no need for us to continue to be under the lordship of sin. If we wake up and know the things that we are being taught in God's Word and allow the Holy Spirit to use those things and to make those the object of our faith, we have nothing to fear and we have everything to gain both now and in the day when Jesus Christ will judge the secrets of men.

Let's close in prayer. Father, we thank you that you have given us the wonderful privilege of living in this age. We have a bright hope that did not exist in Old Testament days.

We have access to your grace through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We pray that these things will be a motivation and an encouragement to us. We pray that God, the Holy Spirit, will make these things a part of the resources in our soul to strengthen us, to transform us, to critique our thoughts and our intentions, to lay open the very center of our soul, to make us aware of when we are yielding to sin and allowing it to make headway and produce its fruit of death in our lives and that instead we will be yielding our members as weapons of righteousness and furthering your plan and your purpose.

We thank you for the blessing that comes to us through what you have provided that in addition to reflecting your glory and manifesting your righteousness, we receive great blessing and great

peace and joy through these things. We thank you for this through our Savior, Jesus Christ.
Amen.