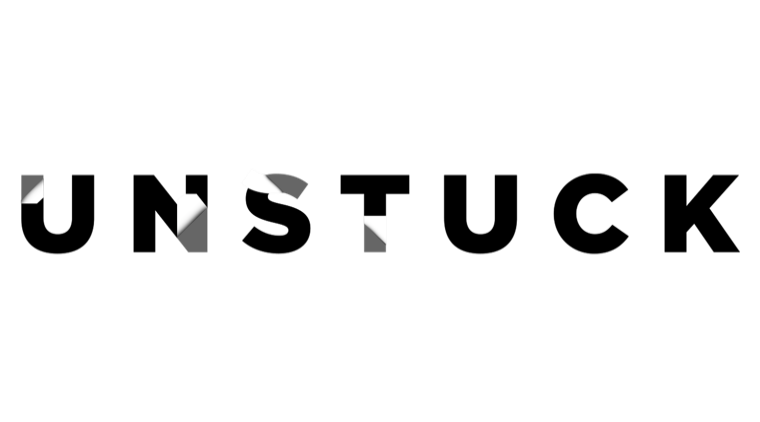
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**Part 1 (2)**

**Jesus Unsticks the Stuck**

**Colossians 3:3 “For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God.”**

Listen to a paraphrase from the Greek: “Your union with Christ’s death broke the association with the world; see yourself located in a fortress where your life is now hidden with Christ in God.”

Everyone says the first step toward recovery is admission, so before today’s talk I need to admit four things to you.

This will help you know a little bit more about who I am, where I’m coming from, and what my goal is for you during this series.

Here goes:

* **Confession number 1- I was an addict.**

I admit it. I spent many years as a ministry workaholic and approval addict. These behaviors almost destroyed my life, ruined many of my relationships, and kept me from my potential. Honestly, at times I still feel the residue those addictions left behind.

I understand how vices, addictions, hurts and bad habits can get us stuck and pull us away from our destiny.

* **Confession number 2- I’m a believer.**

I admit it. I believe that Jesus and His grace is the ONLY way people can truly be unstuck and experience freedom. I’ve had two encounters with Christ. Once as a little boy, when I first received the life of Christ, and again in my late thirties, when I finally began to comprehend the grace of God. When I got a revelation of His amazing grace, it was like being born again, *again*.

* **Confession number 3- I’m a pastor.**

I admit it. I’ve been in full-time pastoral ministry for over 20 years. You might be tempted to think that this must make me super-spiritual. You might think that I have it all together. You might think that I’m perfect. And this couldn’t be further from the truth!

It’s funny, many people have an unspoken belief that pastors should be perfect. That they should have:

* Perfect manners
* Perfect speech
* Perfect dress
* Perfect marriages
* Perfect spouses
* Perfect children
* Perfect homes
* Perfect people skills
* Perfect leadership skills
* Perfect communication skills
* Perfect decision-making skills
* Perfect scriptural interpretation and delivery
* Perfect timing
* Perfect strength
* Perfect availability
* Perfect energy
* Perfect discernment
* Perfect sensitivity
* Perfect clarity
* Perfect solutions
* Perfect administrative know-how
* Perfect financial know-how
* Perfect marketing know-how
* Perfect faith
* Perfect wisdom
* Perfect joy
* Perfect peace
* Perfect emotional habits
* Perfect sexual habits
* Perfect eating habits
* Perfect recreational habits

I hate to disappoint you. Pastors aren’t perfect. We’re real people who still fight temptation. We battle vices, addictions, hurts and bad habits every day. In fact, we fight the same battles that you fight and many times on a more intense level because we’re on the frontline and the enemy knows that if he can strike the shepherd the sheep will scatter.

Like you, we’re on a grace journey. We’re ahead of you in some areas, and behind you in others. At times you stumble and fall along the way. At times we stumble and fall along the way. A key difference though is that your grace journey is more private and ours is more public. When you stumble and fall, you have the option to “drop the curtain” and walk off stage to hide and heal, but when we stumble and fall, our role demands that we stay on stage, in the spot light, and lead while we bleed…this isn’t easy.

Like you, we get tired and frustrated, don’t always exercise sufficient self-control, wonder if God’s hearing our prayers, battle insecurity, are overcome by a sense of failure, have dry seasons, make poor parenting decisions, neglect our spouses, make poor health choices, mismanage our finances, succumb to temptation, and at times, because of the weight and pressure of the responsibility of leading and caring for God’s people, we just want to quit and walk away from it all…but grace!

Now that I’ve encountered grace, I recognize that I have a power I didn’t possess before. I have the supernatural power of Jesus and his grace.

* **Confession number 4- I love life.** (On most days!)

I admit it. I believe God has a great destiny for me. Now that Jesus has unstuck me from addictions and vices, I get to live the life I always dreamed of. And I’m believing this for you, too.

My goal for you during this series over the next few weeks is simple – that you’ll enjoy living again. I want you to live the unstuck life. I want you to be free. I want you to pursue your dreams. Free people dream (Ps 126:1). I want you to be who God created you to be and do what He created you to do. I want you to reign in life. I want you to experience grace. I want you to truly know what Jesus promised in John 10:10, “…life to the full.”

Get ready! Jesus unsticks the stuck! I prophecy: You’re going to get unstuck over the next few weeks of this series.

So, what are the cravings that tend to get you stuck, hurt you, and pull you away from the life God designed you to live? What cravings have you saying, “Help, I’m stuck and I can’t seem to get unstuck?”

* Illegal drugs
* Alcohol
* Prescription drugs
* Cutting
* Sexual misconduct
* Overeating
* Overspending
* Porn
* Anger
* Gambling
* Swearing
* Smoking
* Shopping
* Fantasy
* Overworking
* Approval of others
* And worst of all…Religion

Let me encourage you today! Stop beating yourself up over your cravings. You’re immersed in a sinful, fallen, temptation-filled world! You’re trying to survive in a hostile environment filled with things that can easily get you stuck and pull you away from God’s divine destiny.

**1 John 2:16 “For the world offers only a craving for physical pleasure, a craving for everything we see, and pride in our achievements and possessions. These are not from the Father, but are from this world.”**

The reason many of you are stuck and in the situation you’re in is partially because you live in a world that’s filled with temptation. Your environment is hostile to you. It’s actually quite a miracle you’re doing as well as you are! I’ve said it before, and I’ll say it again—**the most powerful thing about you is that you’re still here!**

I say this because many people I talk to believe they must be really messed up to have the struggles they’re dealing with. They believe they’re worse than other people, and that they aren’t normal – but that isn’t the case! You’re totally normal, you just live in a world that’s hostile to you. It’s got you stuck and hurt you and trained you to crave, think, and act the way you do.

Let me give you an example in my own life. Here’s how I got stuck.

I grew up in a very conservative, authoritarian church culture that was driven by approval. As long as I did the right thing, never messed up, followed all the rules, and always achieved, approval was given. Thank God that in the middle of all of that, I had parents who understood the tight grip that toxic church culture had on all of us. They were grace on display in my life. Thank God!

Teachers, pastors, and church leaders would give all kinds of accolades to those who produced their version of good behavior. However, the second you slacked off, “backslid,” or sinned in any way, you were attacked or even kicked out. People looked down on you, talked bad about you behind your back, and made you feel guilty, condemned, and embarrassed. As a child I watched my parents kicked out of our church fellowship because they’d experienced the Holy Spirit in a way they never had before.

Because of this environment, I developed all sorts of coping mechanisms. I developed all kinds of destructive cravings, behaviors, attitudes, and crooked thinking to survive in a pressure-filled church culture.

* I worked crazy hours just so people would approve of me.
* I was afraid of disappointing people.
* I’d go into massive depression if I got criticized.
* I’d freak out at the smallest mistake, because I feared failure and condemnation from others.
* I sacrificed family relationships on the altar of accomplishment.
* I put on a front of spirituality so people would respect me and say nice things about me and post positive things about me.
* Because I’d been a victim of a very legalistic church culture, I adopted a victim mentality that lasted well beyond the years I was victimized.
* I started believing I had no control over life. I started believing in the worst – always. I played the blame-game, was passive-aggressive, and was stuck in self-pity mode. I was always defensive and constantly put myself down in my own mind, setting myself up for failure.
* I felt stuck in a life I didn’t want to be in.

These coping mechanisms – and many others – were learned in order to navigate my performance-based environment.

I was programmed to be like this.

I tell you my story because I want you to understand that my addictions, vices, hurts and bad habits come partially from my environment.

You must recognize that you’ve been immersed in a hostile world, and this is why you’ve become the person you never wanted to be.

It isn’t that you’re worse than others, or abnormal from most, you’ve just been living in a world that’s out to destroy you. You’ve learned over time terrible habits as a way to cope with a terrible world.

Now that you know that, are you ready for some good news? I love the gospel – the good news! It’s the best message I’ve ever heard. But to appreciate the positive, sometimes you have to highlight the negative. To help people understand the good news, sometimes you have to tell them what the good news is not. And being stuck in bondage and unable to progress in life isn’t the good news. Here’s the good news…

**1 John 4:4 “You are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.”**

Listen to a paraphrase from the Greek: “My darling children, you have nothing to fear; do not doubt for a moment the legitimacy of your sonship…Christ’s living presence in you is far superior to the futile anti-Christ mindsets present in the world.”

The fact that the world you’re immersed in is hostile doesn’t mean you’re going to lose the battle of addiction. If you’ve received the life of Christ, He’s greater than your hostile environment. And if He lives in you, the greater one will help you conquer what you can’t conquer alone. His living presence in you is far superior to the futile anti-Christ mindsets present in the world.

In other words, Christ in you is greater than your background, your programming, your cravings, and your struggles. He’s greater than your hurts and family upbringing. He’s great than your bad home life and hurtful parents.

**Jesus is greater!**

Right now, you can either see your vice, addiction, hurt or bad habit as greater, or you can see Jesus as greater. **Whatever you believe will determine your ability to conquer whatever’s had you stuck for so long!**

Let me say it another way. When you believe right, you’ll live right. If you want to change your life for the better, then change what you believe! Your behavior is a byproduct of your belief.

Jesus said it this way in **John 8:32: “And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”**

You may be wondering, “What’s the truth?”

The truth here isn’t more principles, programs, rules, or self- discipline and self-control techniques. It isn’t seven more steps or laws to your freedom. No, the truth Jesus is talking about here is the truth of God’s grace. Jesus didn’t come to give us more rules and laws that bind. Moses already did that. Jesus came to give us the liberating truth of God’s abundant grace (John 1:17).

You see, a lot of us, who are stuck, struggling to break free from our bondages and change our lives, think the answer lies in applying more principles, obeying more rules, and exercising more discipline and self-control. Then, when we can’t do what’s required or prescribed, we feel condemned. And when we feel condemned, our problems only worsen. It’s a double whammy that leads to a vicious downward spiral.

Do vices, addictions, and hurts have you stuck right now? Then believe the gospel – that it isn’t about what you have to do to deserve God’s deliverance, but what God’s done for you through Christ’s finished work. Believe He loves you. Believe He’ll empower and deliver you through His unmerited favor when you look to Him, even when you’ve messed up, are still struggling or stuck, and feel least deserving. Believe that He’s given you a new heart and put a new spirit in you. Believe that He’s removed your stubborn heart and given you a tender, responsive heart. That’s God’s amazing grace! That’s the truth that you need to start believing that will truly unstick you! Again, whatever you believe will determine your ability to conquer whatever’s had you stuck for so long!

I’ll tell you up-front that this series – Unstuck – isn’t a 12-step program on how to unstick yourself. The Church – with a capital “C” – has enough programs aimed at fixing people’s behavior. The problem isn’t that we don’t have enough programs for good behavior (we’ve got plenty), but that none of those programs are designed to change our heart and mind, which is where the source of the problem is. This series is focused on heart change, what Jesus called “cleaning the inside of the cup.” It’s through heart change that our actions will change naturally without the burden of force or the stress of trying to fulfill impossible obligations.

Again, I grew up in church. I’ve been in full-time-ministry mode since I was 19-years old. I’ve been around a lot of Christians throughout my life. I know the secret misery expressed behind closed doors. I know the sly Sunday smile that hides the tears and frustration we have Monday through Saturday dealing with vices, addictions and hurts. I know how it is to talk about the “joy of the Lord” but be stuck in sorrow beyond words. I know how it is to say things like “Jesus is my life,” while spending many nights fantasizing about never waking up the next morning. I know how it is to spiritualize all of these things with out of context Bible verses to make them easier to cope with.

Listen! I’m doing this series, not because I have a desire to force my opinion or present myself as an expert theologian, but because I’ve found the answer, and it isn’t some-thing, it’s some-One – Jesus and His grace!

I’m doing this series because I love the Church and every individual in it. I love Calvary Church and I want to see you living up to your full potential in Christ. I want you to know that you were made to move “from glory to glory” not from sin to sin, or vice to vice, or hurt to hurt.

You were made to live the unstuck life! Are you ready?

So every week during this series I’m going to give you gospel truths to believe that will unstick you from what’s had you stuck. Also, this month, Wednesday nights, in our MDWK+, we’ve prepared a variety of topics that’ll help you get unstuck – unstuck in your money, unstuck in your marriage, unstuck in your identity and unstuck from your vices, addictions, hurts and bad habits.

Next week, I want to talk to you about the gospel of your death.

Why do so many believers stay stuck to vices, addictions, hurts and bad habits? Why do so many struggle to receive Jesus and his grace? Why don’t a majority of believers live free and full lives – the unstuck life? There are two reasons.

* First, they don’t properly value what Jesus accomplished on the cross.
* Second, they don’t know what happened to them on the cross.

Every believer knows that Jesus died on the cross for their sins, but not every believer knows they died too. The apostle Paul says so, again and again. To the Christians in Colossae, Paul said, **“*You* died with Christ” (Colossians 3:3).** To the believers in Rome, Paul said, **“*We* died with Christ” (Romans 6:8).** To the Corinthians, Paul said, **“*We* all died” (1 Corinthians 15:22).**

You may be thinking, “How’d this happen? I don’t remember the nails!” Well, when you were included in Christ you were baptized into his death. His death became your death and this is really good news! He didn’t just come *for* you, he came *as* you. He was your substitute.

When you got saved you were probably told a lot of wonderful things about your future. *“God has a wonderful plan for your life.”* You may have been told some wonderful things about your present. *“You’re living in the kingdom now.”*  But you probably didn’t hear many wonderful things about your past. *“It doesn’t matter where you’ve come from or what you’ve come out of.”*

The truth is, your past matters a great deal. If you think you only “CAME OUT” of Egypt then you may be tempted to “GO BACK” to Egypt. *“I was born and bred in Egypt and that’s where I belong.”* But when you see your old life as crucified with Christ, that tie is severed, cut off, removed. In other words, the old Egyptian no longer lives and Egypt no longer appeals. You didn’t just come out. The old was CUT OFF (circumcised) and you were brought in so far that you couldn’t go back even if you wanted to. There’s nothing to go back to.

Here’s the good news (and it’s today’s confession): God isn’t only the Lord of your present and future, he’s also the Lord of your past. When you were born again, he gave you a brand-new life complete with a brand-new past. You have a new history and it began at the cross where you died with Christ. You have a glorious new present and future…and you also have a glorious new past. We’ll dive into this gospel truth next week…

**Galatians 2:20 “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 the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.”**

Your baptism into his death is just about the most important thing that ever happened to you, yet many Christians are ignorant of it. Ask most Christians about their past, and you’ll hear all the bad things that happened to them and all the stupid choices they made in their old life. Although their intent is to glorify Christ, the reality is they’re living in the shadow of someone else’s past. Their present is haunted by the ghost of who they used to be. Their shadow boxing an imaginary opponent.

Just once I’d like to hear a testimony like Paul’s: “I was born, I did some stuff, then I died. I was crucified with Christ, and the person I used to be no longer lives.”

Do you know how many Christians Paul had killed or locked up before he was born again? Neither do I. He never tells us. We know he got mixed up with some pretty bad stuff because he refers to himself as the chief of sinners, and we know he persecuted the church because other people tell us. But aside from one passing mention in Galatians, Paul says nothing – absolutely nothing – about the sins of his past. It’s like he doesn’t identify with them. It’s like he said, “I forget the past.”

**Philippians 3:13 “But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead…”**

Don’t you find it interesting? If Paul came to speak in our churches today we’d introduce him as a Very Bad Guy who got turned around by Jesus. But Paul has no time for that. The good stuff of his past he considered as dung and the bad stuff he barely mentions. Instead he simply says, “I died.”

Paul understood that the foundation of our new identity with Christ is a revelation that we died with him.

**2 Timothy 2:11 “*This is* a faithful saying: For if we died with *Him,* we shall also live with *Him.”***

Paul hammered this point in his letters because **if you don’t know that you’ve died, then you won’t ever really live.** Instead, you’ll spend your life trying to die; dying to self, dying daily, and crucifying the flesh.

I can hear it now. “Pastor, but isn’t following Jesus a matter of dying daily to ourselves and our desires?” Nope. The phrase “die to self” isn’t even in the Bible. When Jesus said in **Matthew 16:24, “If anyone would come after me he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me,”** he was showing us the way to salvation—it’s through the cross. If you’d follow Jesus, then follow Jesus. Jesus died once and he’ll never die again. It’s the same with us. We were crucified once; we need never be crucified again. You don’t need to die daily. Once will do the trick. Thank God!

Have you heard the term “I die daily?” I know you have. It’s a very common Christian cliché. People even know to attribute the phrase to the Apostle Paul. How many of you have heard the term? Where’s it found in the Bible? It’s 1 Corinthians 15:31. When you read the Bible, you realize that Paul was absolutely not talking about a daily crucifixion of his old sinful, stuck self. He was talking about facing the dangers of persecution on a constant basis because of the gospel he preached. What did Paul mean when he said I day daily? He meant that his life was in jeopardy every day and every hour. He wasn’t talking about an introverted, masochistic killing of his own inward self. Paul’s former self wasn’t merely crippled, paralyzed or maimed. His old self nature wasn’t merely left dormant, suppressed or pacified. Nor was his sinful, stuck self left half-dead. His old self was killed. Dead to sin and alive to God. It was this revelation – the gospel of your death – that stirred up so much trouble for him. So much so that he felt like he was dying daily.

The problem with any message on self—even a noble sounding message on self-denial—is that it promotes *self*. It fuels self-centeredness which lies at the root of all that’s wrong with humanity. In the church self-denial is usually packaged as part of the spiritual disciplines. Don’t touch, don’t taste, don’t handle. But in truth it’s nothing more than the belief that we can attain spiritual goals by abstaining form physical pleasures. That’s called religion. I’m not denying the benefits of abstinence; I’m just saying that skipping cheeseburgers won’t make you holy and righteous.

The truth is that you can do nothing to save yourself or make yourself pleasing to God. Jesus does it all! He unsticks the stuck. True gospel churches understand this, which is why they’ll never seek to distract you by preaching messages that glorify self or self-effort. They echo Paul who said in **2 Corinthians 4:5, “For we do not preach ourselves, but Jesus Christ our Lord.”**

Christians who don’t know they’ve died with Christ end up living two lives. That’s called schizophrenic Christianity and I lived it for many years. I talked about it last week. On the one hand they’re trying to walk in the new life they’ve received in Christ, but on the other they’re trying to reform the old life they inherited from Adam. They’re trying to unstick themselves. This is a recipe for misery. No one wants to be one person on Sunday and another on Monday. Live like this and it’ll tear you apart.

The cure for schizophrenic Christianity isn’t to “try harder” or “run faster” or “get stronger” or “step your game up” or “re-dedicate” or “re-commit” or “follow these twelve steps to a new you.” It’s a revelation that your old self was crucified with Christ.

So what’s your old self?

It’s the person you used to be before you met Jesus. It’s who you were in Adam before you were put into Christ. Paul wrote in **Romans 6:6** that **“we know that our old self was crucified with him.”**  Look at his choice of words; *was* crucified. Past tense. Done and dusted. Dead and buried.

Do you see how freeing this is? The old man was unfixable. He was broken, corrupted, and completely screwy. He was stuck—a slave to sin who lived for himself and no amount of reform could unstick him. But the good news is—he’s dead. That incorrigible old so-and-so was nailed to the cross with Jesus and he no longer lives.

What died? Your fallen personality. Your old stuck self. Your old depressed self. Your old sinful self. The old fearful you was buried. The old anxious you took a bullet. Your poverty died with Him. Your sickness died with Him. Every bit of darkness and disease that you once were died with Him. All your road rage took a tumble. Your old religious self was also crucified. The new you us unstuck. The new you is happy, alive and full of life and love. The new you is full of faith. The new, True Self is prosperous, bold and overflowing with hope, peace and fruitfulness. The old critical, introverted you is dead. The new self is completely restored to childlike innocence and trust. Ultimately, the new you is righteous, pure and holy. The old you doesn’t even exist. It was an unseen death. You didn’t feel the nails, because it was a mystical death. But nevertheless, a very really one. You were really present on Calvary. You died.

Watchman Nee called this the gospel of Christians: “The self you loathe is there on the cross in Christ.” It isn’t here. It’s there. Let me say it this way: “The self you loathe – the stuck-self, the addicted-self, the depressed-self, the sick-self, the broke-self, the anxious-self – is there on the cross in Christ.” If the average believer could grasp hold of this truth – I died – half of our church programs would stop immediately. We’d stop trying to reform the old man, because the old man is dead. We’d stop struggling so much to unstick the old man, because at the cross he died and our new life, in Christ, is the unstuck life! We’d finally start living a free and full life. We’d finally start living the life we were meant to live.

I made four confessions last week. I think I’ll make another one this week. I love gangster movies. I admit it. *The Godfather, Good Fellas, Scarface, A Bronx Tale, Black Mass.* Please don’t hate me! If there’s one thing I’ve learned from the movies, it’s that there’s no problem that can’t be solved by faking your own death and running away to a new life. Believe me, as a pastor I’ve felt like doing that a few times. Ok, just go with me. Think of a wise guy who’s part of a crime family. He’s under pressure from his mob boss to risk his life by engaging in criminal activities. At the same time, the law hounds him on account of crimes he’s already done. After a while, the wise guy realizes he isn’t his own man and life’s no fun when you aren’t free. He begins to long for a new life but finds he’s hemmed in on all sides. He’s stuck. If he stays with the family he’ll likely end up prematurely dead. But if he turns himself in, he’ll spend the rest of his life behind bars. Either way, it’s a lose-lose scenario. In his desperation, he begins to make an audacious plan—fake his own death and run away to a new life. “Mexico, here I come.”

He who has ears to hear, let him hear. The lose-lose scenario in the movies illustrates how it was for us when we were part of Adam’s family of sinners. We felt the pressure to conform to the cravings of the world and live as children of disobedience. At the same time our consciences bore witness to the law in our hearts that we were unrighteous and guilty of sin. After a while we realized we weren’t in control of our lives and life’s no fun when you aren’t free. We began to long for a new life but found we were hemmed in on all sides. We were stuck! As members of the family of Adam we were captive to our appetites and enslaved to sin. We wanted to do the right thing but we frequently stumbled. “Just when I thought I was out, they pull me back in.” We looked to religion for help and found it was a prison. All it offered was the prospect of a lifetime running on the treadmill of self-effort. Self-indulgence or self-denial, either way it’s a lose-lose proposition. Thankfully, someone told us about God’s audacious plan – the gospel!

**Galatians 6:14 “Through the cross the world has been crucified to me and I to the world.”**

This was no fake death with flaming car crashes and secretive flights to Mexico, but a real bona fide death on a cross. We really died with Him. Do you realize what this means? It means we’re truly and legitimately unstuck. We’re free!

**Romans 6:6-7 “For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin—because anyone who had died has been freed from sin.”**

Real life is better than the movies. Our fictional wise guy will never enjoy his new life in Mexico because he’ll always be looking over his shoulder waiting for his old life to catch up with him. Not us. Our old life is dead. There was a funeral, a tomb, and everything. The old has gone and we’re now free to walk in newness of life—the unstuck life.

I can hear it now! “But Pastor, if I’m truly unstuck, why do I still feel stuck to vices and addictions?”

**Galatians 5:1 “For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.”**

Allow me to close by painting a picture of what Christ-bought freedom looks like and how to walk in freedom. Are you ready!

When you were in Adam, you had no choice but to walk according to the flesh. Trusting in your own abilities and walking by sight is what unbelievers call “normal life” but it’s a faithless life and it isn’t working. Think about it. Normal people are stressed, overwhelmed, and exhausted. Many of their relationships are, at best, strained and, in most cases, just surviving. Even though we live in one of the most prosperous places on earth, normal is living paycheck to paycheck and never getting ahead. It isn’t giving. It’s hording. In our oversexed world, lust, premarital sex, guilt, and shame are far more common than purity, virginity, and a healthy married sex life. And when it comes to God, the majority believe in him, but the Christ life rarely makes it into their everyday lives. Simply put, normal isn’t working. Only Jesus and His grace will help you break free from the norm to lead a radically abnormal (and endlessly more fulfilling) life. It’s the life of faith. It’s the unstuck life.

Since anything that isn’t of faith is sin, your former life was inherently sinful. I don’t mean to say you were a raging criminal. It’s just that you were incapable of pleasing the Lord, no matter what you did. You may have been a good sinner or a bad sinner but you were a sinner nonetheless. You were separated from the life of God through your ignorance and unbelief.

But now you’re a saint and a sinner no more. You have a new identity, a new life, and a new master. You’re no longer stuck—no longer a slave to sin. You now have freedom to choose how you’ll walk, either in the old way of the flesh or in the new way of the spirit. You can choose to eat from the tree of morality or the tree of life. But here’s the important thing: If you choose to walk in the old way your new life will resemble your old one. This is why some Christians are still stuck. They’ve left Egypt but Egypt hasn’t left them. They’re still thinking like slaves and listening to the voice of their old master.

It doesn’t help matters when these precious brothers and sisters are told by pastors and church leaders that their sinful cravings and behaviors prove they still possess a sinful nature or an innate tendency to sin. This is simply not true. Your old self was crucified. Any sinful nature you once had has been cut off, and that circumcision wasn’t done by the hands of men. You’re one with the Lord. You don’t have two natures dueling for control inside you. You’re a partaker of the sinless life and divine nature of Jesus Christ. Start believing it!

So how do we partake? How do we walk in this new way of life and resist the temptation of sin and the cravings of this world? How do we live the unstuck life? The wrong way is the old way. It’s the way you’ve been doing it. It’s trusting in the strength of Adam and striving in the flesh to be an overcomer. It’s telling ourselves, “Don’t do this. Don’t do that.” This kind of approach can’t succeed because it relies on our own resolve and determination rather than Jesus and His grace. It’s flesh-powered Christianity. And that describes how most Christians are living. That’s why they’re stuck. That’s why they’re so sick and tired.

The problem is we’ve been eating from the forbidden tree for so long we don’t even see it. We think the remedy for bad behavior is good behavior. We think the solution for sin is to lay down the law. “Just stop it!” But this is a misuse of the law. It’s like fighting fire with gasoline.

The law is good, but it isn’t your friend. You have a far better friend in Jesus.

**Romans 6:10-11 “The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus.”**

If our co-inclusion with Christ’s death is to mean anything at all, we need to consider the nature of his death. *“He died once and for all.”* Sin has no claim on Jesus therefore sin has no claim on you. Sin’s wage has been paid and all outstanding debts have been cancelled. You don’t need to do anything to earn your freedom; you’re free. Freedom is your starting point. You don’t have to fight for freedom when you already have it! Be free!

So how do we walk in the freedom we already have? I only have two points for you today from Romans 6:11.

1. **“Count yourselves dead to sin.”**
2. **“Reckon yourself alive to God in Christ Jesus.”**

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Scripture References

Romans 10:9, 10, 13 Matthew 18:18, 19 1 Corinthians 6:12 2 Corinthians 10:4, 5 Ephesians 3:16 AMP Romans 12:21 Hebrews 4:14-16 Ephesians 6:10-17 AMP Romans 8:4, 9 1 John 4; 4 Romans 13:14