

**Kill Your Sin!**  
**Romans 8:12-13**

**Intro**

Thank God for modern science and medical advancement

For centuries a 6th century medical theory popularized by a Greek philosopher named Galen dominated the world of medicine.

The theory was that the body was ruled by four “humors” - four kinds of liquids in the body - blood, phlegm, black bile and yellow bile

Blood - heat youthfulness and passion

Black bile - cold sluggishness

Phlegm was the source of melancholy and sadness - and so forth

Illness was considered an imbalance of the humors and so primitive treatments included blood-letting - allowing the release of excess humors.

George Washington himself at the end of his life, struggling with an inability to breathe because of inflammation in his airways had 80 ounces - 40 percent of his total blood volume removed in an attempt to heal him which certainly did him no favors and he died shortly after

While “humoral” medicine is no longer a part of any serious medical practice the residue remains with lingering ideas for instance that colds and the flu are connected with the weather.

Also, the world of psychology was connected to this misinformed pseudo-science as it was taught and believed that a person’s temperament was rooted in how these humors changed the temperature of the body

Cold-blooded - dispassionate and sluggish

Hot blooded - energetic and passionate

Shakespeare in his play King John took this predominant way of thinking beyond it’s literal meaning and coined the phrase “cold-blooded” as a metaphor to describe someone who is cold and calculating - where we get the phrase “cold-blooded killer” rooted in this ancient medical theory.

The dictum: **The mind’s inclination follows the body’s temperature. (Galen)**

While the science of humors is not understood as bunk - we might co-opt and redeem this idea by putting it this way: **The mind’s inclination follows the soul’s temperature.**

How we think about our lives entirely flows out of what is happening in the innermost part of who we are.

If we are cool toward God, we will find a disinterest in the things of God - a distaste for that which God loves and an attraction toward that which God hates

If our hearts are warm toward God we find ourselves attracted to what he loves and a holy-hatred for all he disdains

The key to this internal heat is the indwelling of the Holy Spirit as we cling to the risen Christ of the cross and God makes his home within us.

Does God hate sin? Does God hate every thought and action that runs contrary to his good and perfect will? Then, indwelt by the Spirit, so do we. And if we find ourselves nonchalant about sin there is great reason to be concerned about the condition and health of our souls.

### **The mind's inclination follows the soul's temperature**

Our text Pau continues to teach us about live in the Spirit - the only kind of life that is truly Christian and this morning we find specific realities about how we think about sin

SPOILER ALERT - we are not good with sin. We oppose our sin. We resist our sin. We kill our sin. We are cold-blooded killers

Christians are gentle with others and fierce with their own sin. We are "cold-blooded" killers when it comes to sin. Aware of the danger, engaging our wills, ruthlessly cutting away that which is opposed to God within ourselves.

When it comes to killing sin there is an obligation and an activity to be considered:

#### **I. Obligation**

- A. v. 12 "so then brothers (sisters) we are debtors not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh."
  - so then - directing our attention to what has preceded in chapter 8 - the description of the gifts of God's grace bestowed upon the Christian through the Gospel.
  - 1. The declaration of now, no condemnation in Christ Jesus for God has done what we were completely unable to do - rescue ourselves - free ourselves from our enslavement to sin and death.
  - 2. God has stepped into our helpless plight by sending his willing Son to bear the penalty for our sin as our substitute - in our place condemned he stood.
  - 3. As we receive him by faith the Holy Spirit has been sent to dwell in us - God makes his home in us - the Spirit communicates the presence of the risen Christ to our souls and all the benefits that are ours in Christ
    - a) Forgiveness of sins
    - b) Adoption into the family of God
    - c) Freedom from the enslaving tyranny of sin - power broken though presence remains
    - d) Spiritual life now
    - e) Eternal life that transcends our physical death - resurrection that is coming by the Spirit who dwells in us now
  - (1) ALL BY HIS GRACE - ALL UNEARNED AND UNDESERVED & ONLY RECEIVED BY FAITH
- B. "So then" - we are debtors not to the flesh - what is inferred is that we are indebted yes but not to the flesh - indebted to God for the infinitely great riches of his grace poured out to us and in us

1. Apart from Christ we are debtors to the flesh - in our fallenness we have an obligation to live according to the flesh and we know no other way
  - a) The flesh here meaning the realm of existence in which the heart is enthralled and enchanted by this world - in which our desires and passions rule us - the realm each of us is intimately familiar with
    - (1) In the flesh - desire comes calling and we respond eagerly - we feel there is an obligation to do according to our fallen desires if we will find happiness
      - (a) Not that desire and passion are in and of themselves sinful - Christians can and should have the greatest desires and passions - it is that in the flesh - in our fallenness - our desires are turned inward and we live fundamentally self-centered lives - we live for that which we find gratifying regardless of whether it is the will of God or no
        - i) God's Word tells us that this is the way of death
- C. This runs contrary to the false promises of the flesh for in the flesh we encounter temptation and we are wooed by its promises of fulfillment and gratification

**Illustration:** The addict finds pleasure - I loved doing drugs - but there are diminishing returns and ultimately death and destruction. Your precious idols kill you.

- D. BUT God's grace comes to us in Christ and we find a new and happy obligation and we don't see that we owe our old lives a blessed penny! We have come under a new master the Lord Jesus Christ
  1. Everyone who has experienced sovereign, saving grace has experienced this transfer and resonates with Paul in Galatians 2:20:

**I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. (Galatians 2:20)**

2. In light of what God has done for me I owe him everything - I can sing with integrity JESUS COMMANDS MY DESTINY not the reality of the flesh - of the indwelling sin that remains in me

**The flesh, with its expectations and requirements, demands our cooperation and threatens us with misery if we do not comply. But to meet the demands of that idol, we have to turn our backs on the goodness of God so generously poured into our lives through his Spirit. (Ray Ortlund, *Supernatural Living for Natural People*, p. 59)**

- E. Application
  1. We have an obligation but not to the flesh - we are indebted to God for his grace and have an obligation to him
  2. Do you live with an awareness and appreciation of God's grace that keeps your heart open to the will of God?
    - a) Living in the good of the staggering salvation and liberation that God has provided for us produces an abiding, earnest conviction that I belong to him, my obligation is to him and not to the flesh to obey its desires when they are opposed to God's will

**Illustration:** Languishing in prison on death row, emaciated and starving to death in the dark, what's that sound? Moments from the electric chair - a sound is heard - a key in the lock - the door swings wide - light floods the cell - a man of immense glory stands before you - binding up your bloody wounds - tearing off the filthy rags of your imprisonment and clothing you with soft and brilliant robes. How will you feel about that man? You will live the rest of your life in gratitude with a sense of obligation for what he has done for you - without reluctance.

- b) We are not debtors to the flesh to live according to the flesh - no we live with an earnest and eager sense of obligation to God because of his grace and we are called into action - a way of life - the activity of earnestly and persistently putting that which is still sinful in us to death - consider the activity

## II. Activity

- A. v. 13 "if you live according to the flesh you will die" - not physical death - he established in v. 10-11 that Christians die - eternal spiritual death in view - stark dichotomy - no wiggle room. Not different kinds of Christians - only 2 kinds of people
  - 1. People who live according to the flesh w/ fleshly mindset - don't worry much about sin before a holy God
  - 2. People who live according to the Spirit and therefore have a spiritual mindset which finds God's will in our lives pre-eminent
    - a) The first is given over to the flesh and sin and dies
    - b) The second is given over to God and puts sin to death and has life
- B. There is no neutrality in this whatever you "feel." For the Christian born of the Spirit - YOU put to death the deeds of the body and will live - self-denial is wrapped up in following Jesus

**And calling the crowd to him with his disciples, he said to them, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. (Mark 8:34)**

- 1. Self-denial is essential piece of what it means to follow Jesus - not popular to the natural man or woman
- 2. Not an indictment on bodily pleasure - Christians are not stoic kill-joys - God has given us many pleasures to experience and enjoy and delight in but in their God-ordained place - for instance
  - a) Sexuality is a most pleasurable experience to be celebrated and energetically enjoyed in the context of marriage between one man and one woman
  - b) Good food is delicious, alcohol makes the heart glad - when food and drink become our means of release and security then we have taken them out of their God-ordained place and we are paying homage to the flesh
- C. It is at the level of our bodily impulses and desires that sin and temptation make the connection - and where sin is at work in us - we must put it to death - we must kill sin or we don't have life
  - 1. Hmm...smuggle in a wee bit of legalism Paul - a pastor years ago "a little bit of legalism is a good thing to keep you track"
    - a) No, No - note that we put sin to death "by the Spirit" already received by God's grace - it is through the work of the Holy Spirit already given by God's grace that we kill sin - if

you have the Spirit you will live with this mindset - engaged in the activity of killing and cutting away sin so that we have life.

**Illustration:** AP story - In 1993 a man named Donald Wyman was collecting wood to build a house in Punxsutawney, PA when a huge log rolled onto his leg in a secluded area crushing his leg beneath it. After spending some time yelling for help with no avail 37 year Donald Wyman was faced with a decision: "I have so much to live for that I did the only thing I could - chose life" which meant that Mr. Wyman took out his pocket knife and cut off his leg just below the knee, crawled 30 yards uphill to a bulldozer and drove the bulldozer to his truck where he maneuvered his standard transmission with his good leg until he reached help. He chose to live by removing his own leg (They reattached it) His desire to live provoked a ruthless cutting away from his entrapment

**[8] And if your hand or your foot causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life crippled or lame than with two hands or two feet to be thrown into the eternal fire. [9] And if your eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into the hell of fire. (Matthew 18:7-9)**

- D. Hebrews - resist to the point of shedding blood - we are Spirit-filled warriors - we are at war - not with other people but with our own sin
- E. The Gospel of "life-change" - Jesus does wonderfully change our lives - I'm concerned that in many contexts the idea is that if you add some Jesus into your life your mood will improve, life will have more purpose, and so forth
  - 1. YOU CAN GET THAT AT A MOSQUE, YOU CAN GET THAT FROM A SECULAR SELF-HELP BOOK
  - 2. The life-change is real - a whole new realm of existence - in which we rejoice in God's grace and we take sin SERIOUSLY AND KILL IT!
- F. Application
  - 1. Spirit-filled people - all true Christians - are sin-killers - old puritan divines - engaged in the "mortification" of sin - mortify - KILL

John Owen's book on the mortification of sin much of which is rooted in v. 13:

**Do you mortify? Do you make it your daily work? Be always at it whilst you live; cease not a day from this work; be killing sin or it will be killing you. (John Owen)**

- 2. How do we do it? Steps
  - a) **FIRST** We read the revelation of God's will in his Word and submit to his definition of right and wrong

**[5] Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. [6] On account of these the wrath of God is coming. [7] In these you too once walked, when you were living in them. [8] But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth. [9] Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices (Colossians 3:5-9)**

- (1) Own your sin - don't minimize or make excuses
  - (a) I'm not having impure thoughts - I just appreciate beauty
  - (b) I'm not covetousness - I just enjoy nice things

- (c) I'm not being harsh or angry - my spouse needs to understand how frustrating they are
- (d) I'm not participating in gossip or slander - I'm just informing others about problems they should be aware of
- (e) I'm not self-righteous or overly critical - I'm standing on the side of truth - the truth hurts buddy
- (f) I'm not letting fear of man rule my life - It just wouldn't be prudent to tell my friend about Jesus at this time
  - i) If sin remains simply a short-coming or a mistake we will not see it as the deadly foe it truly is and we won't make war against it
- b) **SECOND** We flee from the guilt of our sin and to Christ receiving forgiveness and grace
  - (1) Forgiven sin is the only kind of sin that can be put to death.
- c) **THIRD** We arm ourselves with a Word-Driven, Gospel mentality

**[1] Since therefore Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves with the same way of thinking, for whoever has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, [2] so as to live for the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for human passions but for the will of God. (1 Peter 4:1-2)**

- (1) Gospel Culture - Godliness
- d) HOW? We take up Ephesians 6 - the sword of the Spirit the Word of God and go to war in the power of the Spirit
  - (1) Those seemingly ordinary devos? The weapons of this war against sin that is trying to take you out.
  - (2) Take hold of the promises of God

**For the LORD God is a sun and shield; the LORD bestows favor and honor. No good thing does he withhold from those who walk uprightly. (Psalm 84:11)**

**Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. (Matthew 5:8)**

- (3) Take up the sword and wage war!
- e) **FOURTH** Get the help of others - live in the light - accountability yes but loud celebration of victories!
- 3. Make a break - KILL - don't coddle, don't wean yourself off - RISE UP IN THE POWER OF THE SPIRIT - DECIDE IT TODAY!
  - a) Oh, that this would be a church of blood-earnest, humble, happy warriors who are daily killing sin!
  - b) All by the Spirit - therefore all glory to him for his energy working powerfully in us.

**Close**

**The mind's inclination follows the soul's temperature.**

The soul that is set ablaze with love for God by the Spirit of God informs a mindset that loves godliness - hates sin and kills it.

How's your soul? How you doing with killing sin lately? When's the last time you put a sin to death?

Oh, receive anew the riches of the grace of Christ and the gift of his Spirit and feel the earnest and happy obligation we have toward God - to serve this King of all glory and grace.

Oh, rise up anew this day, in the power of the Spirit, killing your sin, glorifying God with your life.

All because of his grace from first to last.

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