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The Cost of Killing Sin and Its Future Joy

Romans 8:13; Romans 6:13

by Tim Conway

Romans 8:13. "...For if you live according to the flesh you will die." Make no mistake about it. You will die. But, if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body you will live."

Every Christian, I'm not telling you guys something right now that you don't know. If you're a child of God in this place, every Christian feels sin. And I use that word specifically, feel, because it is something that, I mean you know there are other words I could have used but I can feel this. I mean there's a certain sense that I get from my fingertips when I touch this. It's the same with sin. In the life of a Christian we feel it. It's got a certain texture to it. You know what I mean by that. Not that it feels good like when we were lost. That's not what I mean by feel it. You feel it in a way that doesn't feel good. Sins like a leach, it won't leave us alone. It sucks on us. It's distinct; you know what I mean by that. It's recognizable. We'd be lying if we said otherwise. And you know as a Christian you don't walk too long as a Christian, I realize that some come into the kingdom with great amounts of joy, great amounts of just exhilaration but we all know it is not long before you groan under sin. You groan. Maybe you've even come to the place where you've even questioned your salvation in the midst of that groaning. Probably most of us have at some time or another. Maybe you've even come to the place where you're ready to resign yourself to its presence. It's there, you know it's there, but you don't know what to do about it.

And then I come along to telling you guys, you know I'm going to be preaching this series on how to kill sin and it strikes a note with you. I mean you look at this and say "Yeah. I'm ready. I'm eager to find out a list of how to's." You're looking for help. You're hoping to hear something profound. Maybe you're hoping to hear something... you know don't we always get to the place where we want to hear; you know we're kind of in expectation; we want to hear something new, something fresh. You know we want the cutting edge formula for victory in our day-to-day run-ins with sin. Well, if that's what you're looking for I've got something to tell you. But guess what? It may not be what you think. I'm not going to tell you that there isn't such a thing. There definitely is a list of things God tells us to consider. There is help to be had and it is profound and to some of you some of the things I'm going to say will no doubt be fresh and no doubt be new. You know what? There may be a formula, there may be. And it may be that this God-given formula for victory... I can take all sorts of principles... you know I'll be preaching to you today, not next week, but beyond that we'll be coming back to this and I may seek to take these principles, these steps, these procedures, these scriptural verses and intertwine them all together and try to knit this thing, this package and to... you know I can do that and I can come here and I can hold it up before you and you guys can see this and the reality is this formula may be full of God-given truth and it may be helpful and it may be useful and it may be profitable and it may be good, but I want you guys to hear me out. Don't ever, ever get the idea that it will be easy. We've got slick

preachers all over the place that want to sell us on an easy Christianity. You know you hear it, all you've got to do is just turn on TBN for about two seconds and you've got this garbage thrown right in your face, flowery beds of ease, health-wealth prosperity, you come to Jesus, he sweeps all your problems away, that's basically what we're confronted with. I'll tell you right now up front, they're liars and false teachers.

Listen to me; if you're sitting here today and you're not a Christian, I'm going to tell you right of front something, Christianity is not easy. And Jesus Christ never said it was, never. But Christian have you forgotten? Have you forgotten this? I know sometimes it can get really tough. But have you forgotten that there was indeed a cost to this whole deal? And I'm afraid that sometimes we do. We forget that Jesus Christ said, Luke 14, he told us, look there is a place for sitting down and counting the cost of whether you can make it to the end. Christian, if you are following Christ you did that. There was a day when you sat down and you counted some cost. Every Christian comes there. Every person that God's working on that ultimately comes to Jesus Christ, they come to that point. There is always a point where we are face to face with Jesus Christ has requirements of me, he has demands of me, he says follow me. And I have to come there and I have to look, I remember being there. For two and a half months I struggled with that. I came under conviction of my sin but I was not saved. You know why, because there wasn't repentance yet. And the repentance God was working in me. I was faced with this, you are going to have to give up your old life to follow me. You are going to have to give up those idols. You're going to have to give up your sin. You're going to have to give up your ways, your agendas, your plans, and you're going to have to come and get on my plan book, follow my steps, do my thing, and there is a cost. It's going to cost you everything you were. I knew that. And for two and a half months I struggled with it. Over here I'm hearing in this ear, "Look, your life is made up of motorcycles, and fast cars, and hunting, and friends, and sports and all this." And I had about thirty friends that I ran around with and we played sports and hunted and I knew Christ was going to tell me I had to leave that life! And I struggled back and forth, and back and forth. And in the end, the point at which God saved me was the point at which the cost of keeping all that versus letting it go and having eternal life became clear in my mind. And every child, every person, every woman, every man has to come to that place with Christ. There is a cost. But you see when we came folks, those of you that are Christians, when we came we knew it was going to cost us our idols! We knew it was going to cost us our sin. But what happens? You know I've heard and some of you have heard this said publicly in here, I've heard some say lately, "well, I just can't beat that sin. I guess that's just me. That's my lot in life. That's just how it is. And I don't think I'm ever going to be able to change. My marriage is bad, yes that's true. That's just how it's going to be. I know I'm not the best father, or mother, and that's just how I am. I struggle with pride, lust or materialism or worldliness, or gluttony or anxiety, or unbelief. And I guess I will just have to wait until I die to be rid of those things." I'll tell you what. That's the attitude of a quitter. And the attitude of the one who has forgotten that there was a cost to the Christian life. And that is the attitude of one who is looking for the easy road. But the Christian road is not easy. And only those with a God-given, Christ-trusting, Spirit-empowered determination will ever make it.

Listen to me, in Acts 14:22 Paul and Barnabas are exhorting some brethren in places like Lystra, Iconium, Antioch, and listen to what they say. They say right up front

we want to tell you this. “Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God.” Now, I want you to notice that word, through, it doesn’t say around them, under them, over them. It doesn’t say anything like that; it doesn’t say you are going to escape them, it says through them! And it doesn’t say there are one or two, it says there are many. Do you know what the word tribulation means? It comes from the very root that means “to press” or “to squeeze.” Christian, there are lots of squeezings in the life of a child of God. That’s a reality. Were going to go that way, there are times you are going to be put in that vice and you are going to get squeezed, not just once or twice. Sin will squeeze us. It really will. Rooting it up and tearing it out will require effort and force and determination and squeezing, but listen! Jesus Christ said, “The violent take the kingdom of heaven by force.” There is violence and there is force if you’ll take the kingdom. Does that sound easy? That’s not easy, but that’s what Christ said. This is no casual stroll on the beach. You just don’t play at Christianity.

Paul told the Ephesians this, “having done all, stand firm.” Did you hear that? Having done all! Have you guys done all to resist sin? What was is the writer of Hebrews said? You haven’t shed blood yet, you haven’t! And Paul’s saying, having done all. He’s saying with every fiber of your being. You need to give yourself to standing firm. To the Corinthians he said it this way, “stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong.” I’ll tell you this. Finding excuses for your sin is not acting like a man. Brethren act like men. Women take that in the way it’s meant to you. Act like men, excuses, procrastination is acting like a coward, not like a man. You knew this wasn’t going to be all sunshine and clear sailing. You knew there was a cost. You knew there was difficulty and hardship and trouble when you picked up your cross and began following the Lord. Listen, you’re not at the end yet, you haven’t gotten there. Your day isn’t over. This is still your time to run. It’s the day to fight; this is the day to carry your cross. And Jesus Christ said this, “only the one that endures to the end will be saved.”

My brothers and sisters, we need to think about this. Why? We know it is tough to fight sin, to eradicate sin, but have you ever thought about why it is? I know that you know it is. But why is it? Why? And we have Romans 8:13 before us, we looked at the first part last week. What does the second part say? “If you by the Spirit put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.” So here’s the exhortation for those who will live, those who are in the path of life they have put to death the deeds of the body. That’s what 8:13 says, why it is so difficult. Let’s look at that. Let’s look at putting to death the deeds of the body. Let’s see what makes this such a grueling task. You guys ready to dive into this?

Paul what are you saying to us?! Put to death the deeds of the body, I mean think about this. Put to death the deeds of the body, is eating a deed of the body? Is praying a deed of the body? I mean do I do things with my body when I pray? When I preach, I’m preaching to you right now, do I use my body to do that? Is it a deed of the body? So Paul what in the world are you saying to us here? Do we just all of a sudden stop all these deeds of the body? You see folks; this is the one and only path to life. We sure better be clear about what this means. When we understand it, we will see why it’s not easy. It’s not easy but necessary if you’re going to live.

What I want to do is examine this last part, putting to death the deeds of the body. And I want to look at it with three different angles, three different perspectives, and three different vantage points: context, comparison, and counterparts. And I’ll explain all those

when I get to them. But first: context. Let's use the context to help get a better idea here. The best commentary on this, on Paul's meaning, really comes in the broader context of Romans 6. Let's first look at Romans 6:13. Turn there, just back two chapters, exactly two chapters, Romans 6:13. What we want to do right now is find out right now is what does Paul mean by put to death the deeds of the body? What does Paul have in mind. We need some definition here. You know there is no better way to describe scripture than use scripture to define scripture, right? And especially using the same writer because he tends to use words the same way and speaks from the same perspective and the same mindset, especially in the same book because he's dealing with the same topic matter typically.

Okay, Romans 6:13, here we go. Do not present your members, okay members. It says members, plural. So when I take all the members of you and I put them all together what do I have? I have a body. So it's safe to say in Romans 6:13 when I'm speaking about members, really I'm speaking about the body. So in Romans 8:13 when I have deeds of the body, really I come back to Romans 6:13 and I have members but he means members of the body, and collectively if you have the members you have the body.

So, we're on the same page here. "Do not present your members or your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness, but "do, I'm adding that, "present your body as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members," he's saying, "present your members to God as instruments of righteousness." Now, you can all see clearly he is saying here the deeds of the body that we are to put to death are those deeds that we do when our bodies are instruments of righteousness, right? That's what we put to death. Paul does want us to use our bodies as instruments of righteousness. So it's the unrighteous deeds that we put to death. So in [Romans] 8:13 even though Paul is speaking in kind of a generic terminology, with the context we know... You know supposedly the guy that's reading 8:13 has already read 6:13 so this is in his mind. He's going to have some idea what Paul's speaking about here. So, these unrighteous deeds of the body come from somewhere. This is pretty key. Unrighteous deeds of the body that we're supposed to put to death come from somewhere. That's pretty important. Guys, I have weeds growing in my yard. Across from my yard there's a great big field and weeds will grow out there and the seeds come from off that and land in my yard, and they grow up into weeds in my yard. Guess what? I come along with a lawn mower and mow them over and what happens when the rain comes and you look out there two weeks later? The weed is there again. I can go out and mow it over again. But what's the problem? The root is there! And you see deeds of the body come from somewhere. They come from roots. And so the reality is if we're going to kill deeds of the body you need to know about the roots of the deeds of the body, which Paul has been telling us about and right here in the same context you can look with me at Romans 6:12. If you were in 6:13 you just go back up one verse, "Let not sin reign therefore in your mortal bodies." Okay, there we have bodies again. Sin is trying to reign in those bodies and Paul says don't let it. And here's what the sin is trying to make you do, it's trying to make you obey their, that's the body's, passions. This shows us right where unrighteous deeds of the body come from. Do you see it? You have the mortal body, deeds of the body come from your body, and they're in verse twelve you have the body. Sin wants to reign in that body. It seeks to reign by doing what? Taking the desires, lots of good desires but it corrupts them. God gave desires for food and drink. God gave the desires for friends and sexual desires. I mean these are things that God gave but what sin does when it comes along is it corrupts

these and turns these desires of the mortal body against God and against us. Sin seeks to do this by making us obedient to the corrupted desires. And how does it do that? It does it by making it seem like a good thing, right? Sin lies to us! “It will be good for you if you do this. Think about all the advantages if you take your eyes and use them to look where you ought not to. See, it feeds us with lies. You know that’s really what’s characteristic of lost people; they believe lies. They’re driven by their lusts because sin lies to them all the time. And tells them, “It will be good for you to fulfill these passions of your body, you know, you need to go get high, it will feel good. And it does for a season but sin is a liar, it never tells us about the pain or sorrow or the suffering and the death that come with all this. We buy into sins lie, we use our eyes for lust or we use the tongue to slander or gossip. Listen; to attack the deeds of the body we must attack those corrupt desires behind those deeds. And to attack that we need to attack the lies that sin would tell us, that encourage us to gratify those very things. This is the very chemistry behind all of this, this is the roots, and this is what’s behind all this. We attack these things folks. These are the things we put to death and we put these deeds to death by putting the passions to death, by putting the lies of sin to death. I’ll guarantee you folks whatever it is, you have gossip, gluttony, materialism, masturbation, divisiveness, drunkenness, immorality, impurity, passion, profanity, dishonesty, deceit, it’s the lies and passions behind these things that must die. You must, we must, be putting to death every illicit, immoral, unrighteous act with our hands and eyes and tongues and sexual organs by attacking the lies, attacking the desires that feed those illicit actions. Lost and without Christ you ran around obeying your lusts, believing the lies but that must stop. Christian, you are now God-driven, truth-driven, faith-driven not lust-driven, not lie-driven. That’s a reality; we’re believers. Faith is so essential to all this folks. It is essential. Because you have to believe right, we’ll develop that a little bit more.

But that’s the first thing I want you to see in the context. Deeds of the body, it’s not all the deeds of the body, it’s the unrighteous ones, and they come from somewhere. They come from the passions and they come from sin trying and seeking to get us to obey those passions. And sin gets us to obey those passions by lying to us. That’s a little bit of the break down there. Let’s look at it from another vantage point, let’s look at it from 8:13 itself. Let’s go back to 8:13. You see, putting to death the deeds of the body is the second part of the verse. Remember we looked at the first part. The first part is “if you live according to the flesh,” now isn’t this interesting? Are life and death opposites? So would the way to both of those ends be opposites? So wouldn’t that logically mean that whatever it means to live according to the flesh the very opposite would be putting to death the deeds of the body. Wouldn’t that be a logical deduction there? Remember that with me, if indeed that’s true, which it is, if one way leads to death and one way leads to life, those are opposite ends. You know, you’re walking in 180 degrees in different directions folks. You’re going to life or you’re going to death. That means you’re on a path that’s absolutely contrary and opposite and in the opposite direction to the way that goes to death. So if I’m going to life and I’m putting to death the deeds of the body, it must be just contrary just totally opposite to live according to the flesh. Well, what did we say fundamentally characterized living according to the flesh? I wanted you to remember all the time, never to skip a beat and always be able to say that major fundamental, foundational characteristic of those living according to the flesh as we connect it back to Romans 8: 7 is not subject to God’s law. That is the chief

characterization. I told you these are people who basically go around and do not care what God says, they live their life the way they want to. They may create a God of their own imagination, but that God is only a god that smiles upon them when they live the way they want to live. Because the God of this bible, is very distinct in how He tells men to live. But most people walk around and they don't want anything to do with that. They don't want the will of God to bear upon their life. They don't really care about Christ's commandments and it's seen by the very fact that they don't keep them. They don't do the will of the Father; they're not interested in that.

So, wouldn't putting to death the deeds of the body be putting all that to death? Not living my own way. Not using my eyes any old way I want to anymore, but the way God wants me to. God's will becomes the factor. The way you use you're sexual organs, and eyes and hands and your feet and your body overall, and that tongue in your mouth when you speak, not the way you want to use it anymore. You don't just walk out here in the streets and out here with family and wherever and just do it how you want to do it, right? You put to death that old un-subjective, un-submissive, rebellious self. That's what's being put to death here folks. And you know, Peter hits this just right on the head. I want you to look at a text in 1 Peter chapter 4. He just hits this beautifully, 1 Peter chapter 4, verse 2. Peter exhorting children of God there, exhorting us, and he says this, "So as to live for the rest of the time in the flesh," Now here what he means when he says flesh. He doesn't mean that in an evil way, he just means in the body. He means look, Christians, live the rest of the time while you walk on this earth, in this body, this way. How? No longer living for human passions but for the will of God. Do you see the comparison there? No longer driven by passion, by lust, by desire now what controls your life is the will of God. Do you see? Are you guys getting this? When we looked at this last week, it's really summarized in just living how I want to live. Now, when we come into this reality of the Christian life it's now the will of God trumps passion. The will of God trumps desire. I am thinking and I believing and I am knowing what the will of God is. My faith goes to the will of God. I now realize this as a Christian; I know God has told me that the kind of things I delighted in doing when I was lost and the things that I did when I was passion driven, I know now by the truth of God's word, I believe that. I can see that God's will is for me not to do that. And I know, I believe now, when I'm in God's will its good for me, its safe for me, that's the place of blessing, that's the place for safety, that's the place I want to be and when I venture out of that then I'm headed for trouble. So I know it's going to go well with me when I obey God not when I obey my passions because some of those passions you know very well still rear up. That's why it's not so easy; that's why it is so difficult and that's why sometimes this chafes on you, like a leech it's sucking on you all the time because those passions, that flesh is still there folks. It's not totally eradicated. Crucified, yes; but not dead yet. And the reality is the old man, now we're not the old man anymore we're a new creation in Christ old things are passed away, but the remnants of what we used to be are still in there. This is the flesh, though crucified, you still have those passions and sin is still seeking to reign in your mortal bodies folks, by leading you to obey those same old passions. But now like Peter says, it's not the passions that dictate, my faith and what God has said and his promises will trump. I know folks that if I bow to those passions it means trouble, it means sorrow, it means devastation, it means chastening, it means difficulty. I know that! And my faith will lead me away from there. That's not to say there isn't a reality that God by that

indwelling Spirit quenches many of those desires so that they don't have the fuel and the heat and the flame and the intensity that they had before. God is good in doing that. He breaks the desires, he breaks those things but you know folks practically speaking there are ways that we can walk in our life where we can stir those things back up. There are ways you can expose yourself to things where it's not profitable and you'll encourage those illicit passions and desires to take control again, that's where you have got to be killing. We're going to look at that a lot more. I just want you to get a basic essential idea of what this has to do with today.

The third way I want to look at this we looked at it from the broader context from Romans 6, we looked at the comparison in 8:13, now I want to look at it by way of its counterparts. What do I mean by counterpart? I mean this, this text before us, 8:13, is a life and death text. Do you see that? There is a way of life and there is a way to death. Well, the beauty of it being a life and death text is that it's not the only one. It has counterparts throughout the scriptures. I'm talking about other verses that give us or present us with life and death. John 3:36, good example, listen to me say it, "Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life," there you have your life part of the passage, "whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life," which is another way of saying they shall see death. Here's the significance, if I take John 3:36 and lay it along Romans 8:13 guess what I can do? I can find greater descriptions that I already have in Romans 8:13, right? Because whatever the way of life is in John 3:36 is the same person that has the way of life in Romans 8:13, right? And so I can begin gleaning. Now, look how all this works out. What is the characteristic in 3:36 of John of the person that's headed to death? They don't obey the Son. Isn't that quiet interesting. What is the characteristic in 8:13 of Romans of the person who lives according to the flesh? They're disobedient! And you see folks it works out really nice, but now if we go over to the other side and we look at the side of life, well, those who put to death the deeds of the body are headed for life and in John 3:36 notice what it says there, "Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life." Wow. What does that tell us? That tells us that ever single person that is able to put to death deeds of the body is also a person who does what? Believes in the Son of God. You see how when we use these counterparts we can actually begin to enlarge on our definition here. Now I realize folks this is a really simple concept, but it can be very helpful. Let's do the same thing with another verse. Let's do it this time with Matthew 16:25. Now listen carefully as I read it, "Whoever would save His life will loose it." That means your going to die. So there's our death part. If you would save your life, and this is talking about the way you always live, the way you had it, the way you live, the way... remember, I mean... again, doesn't this just work out beautifully when you compare this right along side 8:13, aren't we describing the same person again? Here it is, you'll keep your life, you'll live the way you want to, you're not interested in God's will, you're not interested in Christ's commandments, you're interested in your way, you're will, you're plan, your life, that's the way you want to live and I'll tell you this, Christ said you live that way you're going to die. But let's go over to the life side of the passage, "Whoever looses his life for my sake will find it." Hum... you know what's interesting about this? Putting to death the deeds of the body have to do with loosing your life. What you live for, life as you knew it must be pulled up by the very roots, there is within each of us an enemy and an enemy that we tolerate at our own peril. Jesus called it our life. He's talking about our very self. Listen! God made man to worship Him. He designed us to

love Him and praise Him and find out total fulfillment in Him. He gave us a world around us; to live in, full of a bunch of things to enjoy and to be able to serve Him with, but what happened? Man fell into sin. He fell into sin and something happened, something that was not originally designed in man. Man began to take all the things and all the stuff and he began to set them up on the throne of his heart in a place they never were meant to be. Man began to set up there his own glory, his self, and all the things and all the stuff in this creation. And God was displaced by stuff, by things, but I'll tell you this, Christian, you know this; those things, those ways, those agendas, those idols, those things you loved, those ways you were, I know you had a reputation! You were this way, you had a reputation, you were a certain way, you lived a certain life and that life consisted of all sorts of self set up on the throne of your heart, taking the key place, it wasn't God it was other things, it was stuff, it was you, it was your reputation it was your self and all these things get put there and I'll tell you what, those things are deeply ingrained within us. I'm telling you folks, those things have roots that go down so far in us that when you tear them out, and you're tearing out part of yourself. I mean you tear out flesh when you tear these thing up you die! This is the reality. You must die, you must tear out part of yourself but this is nothing other than what Jesus Christ said, he said it is better for you to cut off, to actually cut off, to actually sever this hand, and to cut a foot and tear out an eye and cast it from you lest you perish. It is better to go into life. There's a way of life folks and it is a painful way, and it is tearing up things. You know why it's not easy. You know why it's difficult to live this life? Because the very things you have to die to are part of you. It's not just like, you know, there is no doubt in the scripture, and we may look at this and Charles mentioned it today but there is a place, you know like putting of clothes but I'll tell you this it's not that easy.

Some of you may be familiar with the Chronicles of Narnia. You know there's one of them where there's a young man name Eustis, and if you know the story he gets turned into a dragon and he actually sees his reflection and there's some, CS Lewis had some amazing symbolism. He sees Himself as a dragon and you know what he tries to do, he tries to start peeling the scales and the skin off. I mean, he's peeling and he's taking it off and he can't get it off and you know what Aslan who's a figure of Christ comes along and he tears it off for him. And you know what it says there it felt like it was tearing deep and it was tearing now part of himself. This is the idea folks. You see why, one thing we've largely not emphasized today is "By the Spirit". Oh we will get into that big time, in the future. But I'm telling you this takes a supernatural element because we are reaching in and we are tearing out chunks of ourselves. This is who we are. You realize what you are; look at yourself in the mirror. Your reputation, what you are, that sinful part of you, you've got to tear it out and it's got to happen if your going to go to life. This idea that it's easy, folks, this idea that we just sit down and we just, we just kick back and we do the flowery, rosy bed deal, and we're going to get through this thing easy and I've tried but I just can't do it. Well, you need to, like the old King James says you need to quit yourself like a man. You need to get up and take this to task, I'll tell you it's not in your own strength, you have to do it by the Spirit and we'll look at more like I was saying in the future of what's involved in that. But what I wanted to aim at today is the fact that this is difficult because it's deep work. You have got to tear out self. You have got to die to self. Christ words are graphic. If your hand or your foot causes you to sin cut it off, throw it away, it is better for you to enter life crippled or lame than for two hands

and two feet to be thrown into the eternal fire. This is talking about sin; it's not talking about Christian mutilating their bodies. This is talking about things that are as precious to you as hands and feet, that are as connected to you as hands and feet, that are as part of your flesh and blood as hands and feet, that are as valuable to you as hands and feet. You see that's one of the things that make this thing so difficult dying to, is the value we once put on them and it's still there, it's sunk down, we treasured these things. You say, "Oh we treasure Christ more greatly than we treasure all these things." The reality that makes it so difficult to tear it away is because of how much you still really do treasure it, how much it still really is part of you. They don't call these things flesh for no reason, they call it flesh because it's part of you, it's part of this. I mean you literally have to tear away a piece of your living self to eradicate and put these things to death. No, it isn't easy but I'll ask you this. Do you want to enter life? If you want to enter life you better do it violently; you better do it radically, tear out that eye if it will keep you from stumbling. This is a picture of the most radical kind of assault on our own sin. No it's not easy, but listen to me, going to the cross was not easy either. Jesus didn't do it because he thought being tortured on a Roman cross was fun and exciting! He did not suffer three hours of the almighty wrath of God because He thought it would be an interesting experience. He did it for the joy that would come after that. And I say that to you guys as well. I'm not telling you to tear out parts and chunks of your own flesh and self and blood and to rip your own life out and to cut off hands and tear out eyes and cast them from you because it's joyful, now. I'm telling you do it for the joy that's to come. That's what Paul reasons with us. If you do this you will live. Christ did it for the joy that would come after! We do it for future joy. Anything in Future Grace about that? I never read that but as I started thinking about future joy, I started thinking wow that sounds Piper-ish, that's probably in Future Grace.

But that's the reality! You go through the pain, you go through the difficulty, you go through the groaning, and tearing these things up and you go to the root of the matter. Folks, not because it's going to make living tomorrow fun but because there is such joy out there on the horizons, you will live. People, do you know what that means? You will live. Jesus said this, "I come that they may have life and have it abundantly!" And I just kicked the Lexicon open and I started looking through all the five different ones, and the synonymous uses, the alternate uses of this word abundantly, Jesus is literally promising us a life that is over and above, more than necessary, super-added, I love that word, exceedingly beyond measure, abundantly superior, extraordinary, surpassing, more eminent, more remarkable, more excellent to the fullest, that which exceeds usual expectations and goes way beyond. That's how the Lexicons describe it. Sometimes these words go over our heads; it's described as eternal glory, it's just glory forever. It's called an eternal weight of glory! That is beyond all comparison! It's called the paradise of God. It is the life where the Lord will make known the riches of His glory, the riches of His glory upon His vessels of mercy! This is the life Ephesians 2:17 says, "Where in the coming ages God will show the immeasurable riches of His grace and kindness toward us in Christ Jesus." This is what we need to recognize God isn't seeking glory for himself just in keeping Christians out of hell. The ultimate motivation in God's heart for saving lost souls is so that they might be throughout all eternity, did you catch that? Through ages and ages and ages that we might be trophies on display for all to see the magnificence and surpassing glory of God's grace and kindness to his children all to be

had in Christ Jesus, through all the myriads and myriads of the coming ages God will bear unceasing witness to his mercy and kindness upon redeemed sinners BY pouring mercy and kindness upon redeemed sinners! This isn't only grace it's the immeasurable riches of His grace, all to be had by faith in the Son of God. We're talking about a life where we will see God face to face. You just think of that. The most utterly transcendent scene that will in EVERY WAY conceivable outstrip every glory, all majesty, every beauty, it just transcends all the glory than anything in this world that you have ever laid your eyes upon. It will be staggering magnificence, radiant, brilliant, blazing beauty to be in His divine countenance. You just think about this, all this, eternal weight of glory, immeasurable riches of his kindness, face to face, transcendent glory, eternal weights, I mean this is the paradise of God and it is offered to undeserving, hell deserving sinners. Do you have a desire for it?

I said last week and I will say it again, the way to get this life, if you have a desire for it, is spelled out. God gave us eternal life. How did He do it? First John 5:11 says, "And this life is in His Son, whoever has the Son has life, whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life. I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God that you may know that you have eternal life." Maybe that's confusing to you. This says eternal life is found in God's Son, Jesus Christ. But doesn't Romans 8:13 say that if you put to death the deeds of the body, that's how we get life? Isn't there some kind of contradiction here? Which is it? Do I get eternal life by believing in the Son of God or do I get it by putting to death the deeds of the body? Both, here's how it works. You may have noticed that Romans 8:13 doesn't just say you put to death the deeds of the body, it says that you do it by the Spirit. The reality is this: you only have the Spirit if you have Christ. It's only those who trust by faith in Jesus Christ that the Spirit of God is given to, that can even live this life. You see, the essential path to this life is Christ. Christ says, "I am the resurrection and the life." Christ says, "I am the way the truth and the life." When He gives the Spirit of God, He then enables you to live the life that is characteristic of those that receive this life. You see, you have to be there. That's where the merits found, that's where the life is. Then He puts you on a path to live this life. So the reality is if you're not living this life you won't have life, not because you're not living that life because if you're not living that life you are living in a way that gives proof that you're not in Christ. Do you understand that? It isn't actually whether you put it to death or don't put it to death that gets you life or death. It's that if you're in Christ you WILL put them to death because you WILL be given the Spirit, and where the Spirit dwells there will be holiness, folks. That's the reality.

Now, I want to end on this note. You know when we started the church, I have desired that we would be a church that would be given to truth, that would love truth; I have desired that we would be racially diverse and that we would throw away prejudice and love one another and that we would go beyond the boundaries that are set by the world around us where people just can't get along and they're divisive, everybody is against each other, that we would be able to come into a bad part of the city and see God put together a church made up of different ethnicities, different colors, different economic strata, and that we would love each other in the midst of that; that we would be a church given to praying, given to fasting, given to evangelism, given to foreign missions, given to reaching out our own community, given to sacrifice, sacrificial giving, sacrificial uses of our time, sacrificial uses of our possessions, of our materials; that we

would run fast, that we would be diligent in these things; that we would be a light in places like Sutton Homes and places like San Antonio College and places like the airports and prisons, nursing homes; that we would know special manifestations of the presence of Christ in our midst, that we would experience revival, that we would experience salvation; that we would be vessels fit for the Master's use, vessels fit to be begetters of men, be wise and winners of souls, that we would be aggressively those who are pursuing Christ-likeness. Let me tell you something, churches like that come from somewhere. They don't just happen by accident. They come from somewhere. You know where they come from? They come from the path of difficulty. They come from fighting and doing war and doing battle and putting to death the deeds of the body, the passions of the flesh, they come from killing sin, folks, and churches like that come from that path.

No, it isn't easy! But if we are going to be that we have to go have reputations as being pure, upright, honest, holy individuals, churches like that come out of the fires of warfare. They come from some place. It's a hard road; it's a hard path. But I'll tell you this; it's harder to die without Christ. May God help us. You're dismissed.