

Union United Methodist Church

Sermon Outline: **Victorious Living in Christ 6: Dominion Over Sin**

November 6th, 2022. Pastor Michael Larbi

Readings: **1 John 3:1-10; Romans 6:1-14**

This sermon is a continuation of our series on living a victorious Christian life. Starting from October 9th we have been covering the authority we have been given to exercise over spiritual forces of evil, sickness, fear, sin, and circumstances and situations in life. Today's focus is exercising dominion over sin. To fully benefit from today's sermon, it would help to review what we have covered over the past month - all outlines and sermon recordings are available on our website: <https://unionumcnc.com>.

1. Recall: What Is Sin?

Sin is breaking God's moral laws.

4Everyone who sins breaks the law; in fact, sin is lawlessness. 1 John 3:4 NIV

The law referred to in 1 John 3:4 is divine moral law, what is morally right in God's eyes. God is a righteous and holy and expects the same of us as children of God.

When we become Christians, we are gifted with righteousness. God sees us as morally good because of our faith in Christ. Beyond that God expects us to strive to live holy lives - lives that are not steeped in sin.

The 10 commandments, for instance, are part of God's moral laws - Deuteronomy 5 (NKJV) says:

7'You shall have no other gods before Me.

11'You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, for the Lord will not hold *him* guiltless who takes His name in vain.

12'Observe the Sabbath day, to keep it holy, as the Lord your God

commanded you. 13 Six days you shall labor and do all your work, 14 but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God.

16 Honor your father and your mother, as the Lord your God has commanded you, that your days may be long, and that it may be well with you

17 You shall not murder.

18 You shall not commit adultery.

19 You shall not steal.

20 You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

21 You shall not covet your neighbor's wife; and you shall not desire your neighbor's house, his field, his male servant, his female servant, his ox, his donkey, or anything that is your neighbor's.'

There are many of God's moral laws in the Old Testament, but Jesus summed it all up with this:

"A lawyer asked him [Jesus] a question to test him.

36 "Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?"

37 He said to him, " '**You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.**' 38 This is the greatest and first commandment. 39 And a second is like it: '**You shall love your neighbor as yourself.**' 40 On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."

Matthew 22:35-40 NRSV

2. Saved to Live Holy Lives

As Christians we are not to keep on sinning.

Jesus died for us and redeemed us from the grip of sin and guilt. We are to leave the life of sin behind and move forward with God.

5 But you know that **he appeared so that he might take away our sins. And in him is no sin. 6 No one who lives in him keeps on sinning. No one who continues to sin has either seen him or known him.** 1 John 3:5-6 NIV

In other words, as Christians we are not supposed to be habitual sinners. If we fall short at any point, the Lord makes provision for us to repent and be restored to fellowship with God. But our default should be holy living.

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness." 1 John 1:9 NIV

3. Are We Helpless or Can We Overcome Sin?

Many Christians refer to Paul's argument in Romans 7 about a person who is a slave to sin and conclude that we are helpless and have to yield to a life of sin. **Not so.**

Paul was making the point that a person living by the dictates of their natural senses only ("of the flesh"), without the grace that is in Christ, is a slave to sin, and cannot resist sin. He describes what happens to such a person:

14We know that the law is spiritual; but I am unspiritual, sold as a slave to sin. 15I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. 16And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good. 17As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me. **18For I know that good itself does not dwell in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out.**

Romans 7:14-18 NIV

The whole of Romans 7 describes this state of being.

What is Paul's conclusion to this explanation?

24What a wretched man I am! **Who will rescue me from this body that is subject to death? 25Thanks be to God, who delivers me through Jesus Christ our Lord!**

Romans 7:24-25 NIV

In other words, in Christ and by his grace, the power of sin over our lives is broken. We are rescued from sinful living and given the power to live right.

As Paul puts it in Romans 5:

19For just as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous. 20But **law came in, with the result that the trespass multiplied; but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more, 21so that, just as sin exercised dominion in death, so grace might also exercise dominion through justification leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.** Romans 5:19-21 NRSV

4. Baptism: Death to Sin, Resurrection to Life in Christ

Clearly, we have grace in our lives which empowers us to live lives free from sin. It is the grace that does it, giving us inner strength and all that we need to live holy lives.

But Paul asks a reasonable question:

"Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase?" Romans 6:1 NIV

He answers his own question:

"By no means! We are those who have died to sin; how can we live in it any longer?"

Romans 6:2 NIV

- **Dead to Sin, New Life in Christ**

Paul says here that we have "died to sin." Really? How?

Through our baptism!

"Don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? 4We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life." Romans 6:3-4 NIV

As he puts it elsewhere

"You have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God."

Colossians 3:3 NRSV

- **Dominion Over Sin**

Because, through baptism, we have died and been raised to life with Christ, we have the ability to dominate sin. In fact, sin cannot exercise dominion over us unless we let it.

9For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him. **10The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God.**

11In the same way, **count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus.** 12**Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires.** 13**Do not offer any part of yourself to sin as an instrument of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer every part of yourself to him as an instrument of righteousness.** 14**For sin shall no longer be your master, because you are not under the law, but under grace.** Romans 6:11-14 NIV

"For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace." Romans 6:14 NRSV

5. Growth In Grace; Means of Grace

Since the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ is what empowers us to have mastery over sin, we must do all we can to live in grace and continue to grow in that grace. As Peter puts it,

"Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ"
2 Peter 3:18 NIV

How do we grow in grace? God has given us channels through which we can grow in grace. These include:

- The sacraments - baptism, holy communion, etc.
- The scriptures
- Prayer
- Fellowship