

Joke: I woke up this morning with one of those songs stuck in my head. Ever have that happen to you? Well the song I had stuck in my head Scientists have proven that there is an uncontrollable urge to start singing it. They say that "The Lion Sleeps Tonight" is always just a whim away.

A whim away a whim away a whim away. . .in the jungle the mighty jungle the lion sleeps tonight.

We talked a little last week about the Old and New Covenant. Old being the era of the law and New being the era of grace that we are in now.

And I missed something last week so let me just start with that. . .

Hebrews 8:6–13 (NLT): But now Jesus, our High Priest, has been given a ministry that is far superior to the old priesthood, for he is the one who mediates for us a far better covenant with God, based on better promises. 7 If

the first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no need for a second covenant to replace it. 8 But when God found fault with the people, he said: "The day is coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and Judah. 9 This covenant will not be like the one I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand and led them out of the land of Egypt. They did not remain faithful to my covenant, so I turned my back on them, says the Lord. 10 But this is the new covenant I will make with the people of Israel on that day, says the Lord: I will put my laws in their minds, and I will write them on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. 11 And they will not need to teach their neighbors, nor will they need to teach their relatives, saying, 'You should know the Lord.' For everyone, from the least to the greatest, will know me already. 12 And I will forgive their wickedness, and I will never again remember their sins." 13 When God speaks of a "new" covenant, it means he has made the first one obsolete. It is now out of date and will soon disappear.

And this new Covenant God didn't make with man. God made it with Himself because He changes not, and he cannot lie. So, even when we are found faithless He remains faithful.

With that being said, here's a question I didn't ask last week but I want to address today.

Here's the question. Shouldn't we use the Ten Commandments as a guide to show us how to live morally? They help us to live upright and godly lives after all, right?

Romans 7:4 (NIV): So, my brothers and sisters, you also died to the law through the body of Christ, that you might belong to another, to him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit for God.

Paul is telling us that we are dead to the law and because of that we can bear fruit for God. Last I checked the ten were part of the law. And we are told we are dead to the law.

And then he says as far as the law helping us live upright. . .

Romans 7:7–8 (NIV): What shall we say, then? Is the law sinful? Certainly not! Nevertheless, I would not have known what sin was had it not been for the law. For I would not have known what coveting really was if the law had not said, “You shall not covet.” 8 But sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, produced in me every kind of coveting. For apart from the law, sin was dead.

First of all he says the law is not sinful. Let me say this, the law is perfect. But there is just no one that can perfectly keep the law nor is anyone made perfect by the law on the contrary this is what Scripture tells us:

2 Corinthians 5:21 (NIV): God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

We are made right with God when we come to know Jesus. Not by the laws we keep. Not because of what you do, but rather because of what Jesus did.

And look what else Paul said: I would not have known what sin was had it not been for the law.

So he is saying the law pointed out my sin. But look what he says after that. . .But sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, produced in me every kind of coveting.

He says, the law produced in me every kind of coveting. He had a hard time keeping the command not to covet.

And just in case you don't remember thou shall not covet is one of the Big Ten.

So look at Paul's solution in the latter part of verse 8: He says, For apart from the law, sin was dead.

In other words, as New Covenant believers we need to live apart from the law to really have any victory over sin.

Wait pastor your telling me that I can live upright without looking to the law as my moral compass?

Let me ask you this. . .do you truly believe that God's Spirit which lives inside of the believer is going to lead you to lie, cheat, covet, commit adultery, or murder someone? I don't think so. The Spirit and the Word always agree. So, if you have a thought to do something that is contrary to what the word says it's not from God. And I will deal with that in a little bit.

See here's the thing knowing Christ is the goal. The natural byproduct of knowing Him is that we will bear fruit. As a matter of fact the law actually brings death.

Watch this. . .

2 Corinthians 3:7–11 (NLT): The old way, with laws etched in stone, led to death, though it began with such glory that

the people of Israel could not bear to look at Moses' face. For his face shone with the glory of God, even though the brightness was already fading away. 8 Shouldn't we expect far greater glory under the new way, now that the Holy Spirit is giving life? 9 If the old way, which brings condemnation, was glorious, how much more glorious is the new way, which makes us right with God! 10 In fact, that first glory was not glorious at all compared with the overwhelming glory of the new way. 11 So if the old way, which has been replaced, was glorious, how much more glorious is the new, which remains forever!

Notice what it says with laws etched in stone, what laws were etched in stone? The Ten.

And as we saw last week James tells us that if we fail on any part of the law we are guilty of the whole.

And then Paul asks a very important question to those in the church in Rome.

Romans 6:1–8 (NLT): Well then, should we keep on sinning so that God can show us more and more of his wonderful grace? 2 Of course not! Since we have died to sin, how can we continue to live in it? 3 Or have you forgotten that when we were joined with Christ Jesus in baptism, we joined him in his death? 4 For we died and were buried with Christ by baptism. And just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glorious power of the Father, now we also may live new lives. 5 Since we have been united with him in his death, we will also be raised to life as he was. 6 We know that our old sinful selves were crucified with Christ so that sin might lose its power in our lives. We are no longer slaves to sin. 7 For when we died with Christ we were set free from the power of sin. 8 And since we died with Christ, we know we will also live with him.

Paul is saying you are not made for sin. It's not in your new DNA. You now because of your faith in Christ and what Jesus did in us and is doing through us want what He wants.

So, if you think you need the law to tell you what sin is in your life. Then which part of the law are you going to adhere to because sending out those late night Friday work emails according to the 613 laws that were actually established would be a sin. Mowing your grass on Saturday would be a sin.

So, what is sin in the New covenant?

Romans 14:23 (NIV): But whoever has doubts is condemned if they eat, because their eating is not from faith; and everything that does not come from faith is sin.

How's that for clarity. Anything that does not come from faith is sin. But so you get the context of the food thing let me give you the Readers Digest condensed version. Paul was talking to the church because some were being judged by others by what they ate. And he needed to address the issue saying it isn't what you eat that is a sin and at the same time don't judge others by what they eat. Do whatever you do from faith.

So, here's the thing God's Spirit which lives inside us will guide us into all truth. And because of that we can walk by faith and not by sight.

The Law as holy as it is, as pure as it is, could never help us as believers bear fruit.

Romans 6:14 (NIV): For sin shall no longer be your master, because you are not under the law, but under grace.

The law is no longer written on tablets of stone.

Hebrews 10:16 (NIV): 16 "This is the covenant I will make with them after that time, says the Lord. I will put my laws in their hearts, and I will write them on their minds."

The laws are put on our hearts and written on our mind. Maybe that's why we read in Ecclesiastes chapter 3 that God has set eternity in our hearts.

The Scripture in Hebrews 10 is a quote from Jeremiah 31:33 with a slight alteration the writer of Hebrews adds an

s to law. Why? Because when we think of the law our minds would go straight to the 613. So what laws is it that the author is referring to? You guys are awesome to ask that.

1 John 3:23 (NIV): And this is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us.

And then in the Gospel of John Jesus says this:

John 13:34 (NIV): 34 "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.

So the laws written our our hearts as New Covenant believers are believe and love.

And hear this church when you come to know Jesus you were given a new heart. And that new heart gives you the desire to walk in His ways, think like He thinks, love what He loves.

How many of you know that God is love, it's not what He does it's who He is. They had commands in the old way to love but there's a difference. Jesus was asked what is the greatest commandment and he said love your neighbor as yourself and love God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength.

Notice that command still involved you trying your hardest to love God and others with all your strength. Love is what's most important in God's eyes. That's why we read in 1 Corinthians 13 that if you have not love your like a clanging symbol. Everything we do needs to be from love.

But look at this as New Covenant believers and here's the difference:

Romans 5:3–5 (NIV): Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; 4 perseverance, character; and character, hope. 5 And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the

Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.

So, you bear fruit like perseverance and character which produces hope why? Because God's love has been poured out into our hearts. It's not something we need to muster up but rather God's love has already been given to us. It's no longer us having to strive to love we now have a heart to do so.

But just because you already have love poured into our hearts doesn't mean that we won't have the opportunity to get offended, or annoyed by someone it just means that since we came to know Christ we don't have an instinctive hate for the body of Christ. We love because He loves.

Now let me say this as well having love written on our hearts doesn't mean that we are always perfectly behaving.

Remember what Jesus said, love others as I have loved you. So, here's a thought, what if the only way to really love as we should is more about receiving than achieving?

What if it starts with us asking God how much He loves us?

Let's be honest for a minute to love others as God loves us we need to be willing to learn how much He really does.

1 John 4:19 (NIV): 19 We love because he first loved us.

Think about this, if we're busy loving others we won't be lying to them, we won't cheat on them, and we won't steal from them, and we certainly won't kill them. Hey, aren't those part of the Ten? See how that works? Love covers a multitude of sins.

This new command involves grasping how much God loves us and transmitting that same love to others. Jesus's command is greater than any love command his audience encountered in the writings of Moses. It's one thing to love others the way that you love yourself. It's a wholly different thing to love others with the very same love with which God loves you!

Ephesians 3:16–19 (NIV): I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, 17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, 18 may have power, together with all the Lord’s holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, 19 and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

So what exactly was the purpose of the law? You guys are having awesome questions.

Galatians 3:24–25 (NASB): Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith. 25 But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.

In other words before faith came the law had a purpose and that purpose was to show us our need for Christ.

Romans 3:19–20 (NIV): Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world held accountable to God. 20 Therefore no one will be declared righteous in God's sight by the works of the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of our sin.

Truth is church the law actually breeds sin. Let me show you how. How many have every received a speeding ticket? **(Talk about it)**

The law was perfect but could not make anyone perfect.

Let me try to wrap up today by addressing one of the questions from last week which was, we sin because we are sinners. True or false? That too is false.

Wait a second pastor, I have heard so many times we are just a sinner saved by grace. And church I have heard that as well, probably even used the term myself a few times, but here's the truth, you are a new creation, everything has become new.

I told you already when you came to know Jesus you were given a new heart. And with that new heart, a new way of thinking. There may be thoughts that are not good or right. That's why we need to bring them captive. But the fact is you are a new creation.

And many of the negative thoughts they are thrown your way did not originate with you to begin with.

Romans 12:2 (NIV): Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

So, here's the thing your mind just needs to be renewed to match up with who you have become.

So, if I'm no longer a sinner then why do I sin. Now your asking the better question.

And let me answer that but I need to say this first. Image is everything.

If you recall Adam was created in the image of God. Look at it Genesis 1. . .

Genesis 1:27 (NIV): 27 So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.

How was Adam created? In the image of God

And listen church this is important we have been told that we all are created in the image of God, that were all God's children but that simply isn't true.

After the fall something happened. Adam and Eve lost their right standing with God and so God had to sacrifice an animal to cover their nakedness. The same way God sent His Son Jesus to cover ours up as well?

The first Adam brought sin into the world the second Adam came and took away the sins of the world.

Watch what happened after the fall. . .

Genesis 5:1–3 (NIV): This is the written account of Adam’s family line. When God created mankind, he made them in the likeness of God. 2 He created them male and female and blessed them. And he named them “Mankind” when they were created. **(Pause and talk about those two verses. . .)** 3 When Adam had lived 130 years, he had a son in his own likeness, in his own image; and he named him Seth.

Adam was indeed created in God’s image. That was what God designed but after the fall when Adam had kids they were created in his image not God’s.

And in the same way, it’s only after we come to know Christ that we are reborn into the image of God. Adopted into the family of God. Made righteous because of the grace of God. That’s what salvation does. It changes you. Transforms you. It gives you a new heart, a new nature, and a new identity.

Colossians 3:1–4 (NIV): Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ

is, seated at the right hand of God. 2 Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. 3 For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. 4 When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

And then jumping down a few verses we read. . .

Colossians 3:9–10 (NIV): Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices 10 and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.

That's your new identity. Your old self has died you have a new self found in Christ.

Hear this church, it's about birth not behavior. It took zero sins to become a sinner we were born that way because we originally bore the image of Adam. But now as saints of the living God who has come to live inside of us because we called on Him we are reborn into His image. No longer under Adam but in Christ.

We have been given a new DNA and our Father is God.
We have been given a new nature.

And if you don't remember anything else from today please remember this because this is vitally important.

Proverbs 23:7 tells us as a man thinks in his heart so is he.

So if you have the idea that your just a sinner then you are going to think so what if I sin. On the other hand if you can grasp the idea that because of what Jesus did and your response to what he did you are new it will cause you to think and act differently.

Think about it's easy to go from I have a sinful nature to I am a sinner by nature to ultimately concluding that the most natural thing for me to do is sin.

But when you really understand that your nature has changed, sin doesn't satisfy like it once did.

If we see ourselves as an old, dilapidated shack, we'll be driven to constantly make structural changes. But the truth is God has already redecorated.

We have been given a new heart. God's spirit is within us. We are truly new at the core. That's why you feel what you feel when you sin because it goes against who you really are. It goes against your new nature.

With all that said let's go back to answering the question of why then do we continue to sin.

And here's the thing church. . .our spirit was made new but we still have this thing called the flesh that wages war against what we truly want to do.

One thing we need to recognize about the flesh is that it sometimes can serve as a resource from which we gain a sense, notice I said a sense, not that we actually do gain anything, but a sense that we gain wisdom, strength, and even status.

1 Corinthians 1:26 (NASB): For consider your calling, brethren, that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble;

One thing the flesh wants to do is provide a sense of identity rooted in your social status, intellect, or your physical characteristics.

That's why Scripture tells us God doesn't look at outward appearances but at the heart.

Look how Paul explained it. . .

Philippians 3:3–6 (NIV): For it is we who are the circumcision, we who serve God by his Spirit, who boast in Christ Jesus, and who put no confidence in the flesh—4 though I myself have reasons for such confidence. If someone else thinks they have reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more: 5 circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee; 6 as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for righteousness

based on the law, faultless.

But he made the choice and we too can make the same choice not to have confidence in the flesh he continued. . .

Philippians 3:8–9 (NIV): What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ 9 and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith.

He says I just want to know Christ. And not have a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ

The whole point Paul is making is that even through the flesh is with him it's not him. His whole goal is to know nothing but Christ. And depending on the flesh goes against our nature.

In essence, the flesh is the policies of the previous administration.

We're deigned for something different, we are designed to walk after the Spirit. Not after the flesh. We will never be content with an identity outside of Christ. You are free to walk by the flesh, but you will never be fulfilled in that walk. Why?

Because as a Christian with a new heart and a new identity wanting what God wants, being yourself and expressing yourself are the same thing. Your new self wants what God wants. So church just go be yourself.

But we still struggle with old attitudes, old ways of coping, old programming. That's the flesh. If we walk according to the flesh, it doesn't change the fact that our nature is new.

It doesn't change our new source for life. It just means we're acting like someone we're not.

There's one more thing that causes us to make choices contrary to our new identity and that is sin itself.

And I know I started this message saying we are dead to sin and we are but the truth is sin is not dead. We died it didn't.

Here's the first reference to sin we find in the Scriptures:

Genesis 4:7 (NIV): If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must rule over it."

God warned Cain and we need to understand the lesson today as well. There's a power called sin, and it desires to overtake us.

And even the apostle Paul struggled with its desire. . .watch this.

Romans 7:15–17 (NIV): 15 I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. 16 And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good. 17 As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me.

I need you to see this. Paul is putting blame on something that was not him. Those sinful thoughts, and actions that he was struggling with were served up by this power called sin but it was not who he is.

Remember earlier I mentioned many of your thoughts did not originate with you. They are at war with who you have become.

That doesn't mean we don't take responsibility for our actions or failures.

Romans 6:12 (NIV): Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires.

Don't let sin reign. But notice where evil desires belong too, with sin.

So don't buy into the lie that when you give into sin, it was because you want to sin. **(Give example)**

Colossians 3:7–10 (NIV): You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. 8 But now you must also rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. 9 Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices 10 and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.

Hear this church it is more normal, more fitting, more like us to display the fruit of the Spirit love, joy, peace, all those mentioned in Galatians than it is for us to display sin.

Titus 2:11–14 (NIV): For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people. 12 It teaches us to say “No” to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age,

13 while we wait for the blessed hope—the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, 14 who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.

Did you hear that it says the grace of God teaches us to say no to sin. Not the former tutor of the law, but grace.

Here's another truth for today, sin is totally incompatible with who we are, and it's the last thing we want to do as believers in Christ since the Spirit of God is living in us.

Galatians 5:17–18 (NLT): The sinful nature wants to do evil, which is just the opposite of what the Spirit wants. And the Spirit gives us desires that are the opposite of what the sinful nature desires. These two forces are constantly fighting each other, so you are not free to carry out your good intentions. 18 But when you are directed by the Spirit, you are not under obligation to the law of Moses.

And then in Romans we hear this. . .

Romans 6:6–10 (NIV): For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body ruled by sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin—7 because anyone who has died has been set free from sin. 8 Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. 9 For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him. 10 The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God.

There's so much more that I could share but let me try and wrap up with this. Will you give me 5 more minutes?

We think the law will help us live morally but it's actually the Spirit of God that lives in us and the new nature given to us that gives us the power to do so.

It seems pretty profound to me that we believe that God created the world by simply speaking it into existence, that a flood came and engulfed the earth, that a dude was stuck in the belly of a fish for three days, and that Jesus died and then rose again. That is pretty radical faith. Yet we

have such a hard time believing that we have a new nature that will empower us to live differently. That God's grace is sufficient, and that when we read we are new that's exactly what he meant. And that we have truly become the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus.

And hear this church, it's not that God didn't get angry at sin. He did. And it's not as if there was no punishment for sin. There was. . .and punishment for sin is always death.

What I'm sharing isn't just some cheap grace talk. It was costly. But here's the Good News every ounce of God's anger and every gram of the punishment for those sins was put on his Son.

Jesus became sin for us and absorbed all the punishment we deserved.

You are not a sinner saved by grace, you are a saint, a royal priesthood, righteous because of what Christ did, not by what you think you have to do.

The prophet Ezekiel prophesied about this transition from the old way to the new

Look at it. . .

Ezekiel 36:26–27 (NIV): I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. 27 And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.

I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees

We'll never be satisfied with sinning. We're made for something greater. We're designed to express God's life and love to those around you.

So what are we to do when we sin? We agree with God about our wrong choice. We thank God that this sin is one among the many that were already taken away by Jesus's blood.

We turn 180 degrees away from our sin. That's repentance. And then we depend on, look to, God's Spirit for genuine change.

Listen closely you need to hear this. We are invited to be obsessed with the cross, not our sins.

That's good preaching let me repeat that: We are invited to be obsessed with the cross, not our sins.

God says He remembers our sins no more, more on that next week.

Let me close with this. . .

Religion would have us look at our sins. But God is saying, "Look at my Son." Here you go Judee. . .Jesus plus nothing. You don't need the law plus Jesus. You don't to do plus Jesus. Jesus is enough. What Jesus did was enough. It's Jesus plus nothing.