

Take Back the Keys

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[0:00] Welcome to this week's message from Faith Bible Church of Lake Charles.! We're excited to share a practical Bible-based teaching!

Maybe it was your 16-year-old who just got that shiny new driver's license. Or maybe it's a friend who you know tends to drive like they're auditioning for a Fast and Furious movie.

And the moment they drive out of the driveway, you're wondering, what are they going to do to my car? Now, here's the thing. The car is yours. You've made the payments, and you've got the title. You carry the insurance, but the moment you hand the keys to somebody else, they're in control. And they're the ones who decide where the car goes, how fast the car goes, will it end up in the ditch, or even worse.

Now, here's what I want you to think about. A lot of us are living the Christian life exactly like that. We belong to God.

[1:27] We've been redeemed. We've been bought with a price. We've been raised to new life in Christ. But somewhere along the way, we've handed the keys of our life back to sin.

And that's what the Apostle Paul has been talking about. And once we do that, once we hand the keys back to sin, it is going to be driving us to places that we never wanted to go.

That's exactly what the Apostle Paul is talking about in our text this morning in Romans chapter 6. And if you were here last week, you know that Paul has already said, we've died with Christ.

And we were raised to walk in you-ness of life. And we were raised to walk in you-ness of Christ. Baptism is what Paul used to paint that picture of that we died with Christ on the cross.

We were buried with Him at baptism. And we were raised to walk in you-ness of Christ. And we were raised to walk in you-ness of Christ. Our old life, the old you who has been crucified, buried, and left in the tomb.

[2:34] And we were raised to a brand new life. That's our identity. And that's our position. We belong to Christ.

But now in verses 12 through 14, Paul is going to shift gears. No pun intended. What he's going to do is he's going to move from the truth about you and who you belong to and what are you going to do about it.

What is the practical aspect of us belonging to Jesus Christ and how does it affect our life?

Because knowing who you are is really, really important.

But you have to live like it. We have to live like we belong to God. And here's the main idea I want us to hold on to this morning. And it's this. Because sin is no longer your master.

Stop surrendering to it and start offering yourself to God. You still have a choice to make. Every single day. Am I going to take the keys back from sin and hand them over to God to control my life?

[3:43] Or am I going to continue letting sin decide where I go today? And Paul is going to tell us exactly what to do with that choice.

Let's read our section, just three verses this morning. Verses 12 through 14. Then we'll come back and we'll unpack them verse by verse. Starting with verse 12.

Isn't that awesome?

Those are shouting words. God's grace. We thank God for the grace that is operating in our lives every single day. In these three verses Paul gives us three direct commands about what to do with our life and who to surrender to.

Three decisions that we need to make if we're going to stop handing the keys back to sin and start living the life that we were designed to live. So we're going to look at those three commands this morning.

[5:07] Something changed in you the moment that you trusted Jesus Christ. If you have trusted Christ as your Savior. And now Paul is going to tell us how to live like it.

Let's go back to verse 12. He says, Therefore, do not let sin reign in your mortal body that you should obey its lust. In other words, stop letting sin call the shots.

Stop letting sin have control over you. You see that word, therefore? We've seen it before. We've seen it quite a few times in Paul's writings, especially in the book of Romans.

What it does is it connects everything that Paul has just said about our new identity with the way that we're supposed to live. And the first command is pretty blunt.

It's this. Do not let sin reign in your mortal body. So don't let sin reign. Reign is a royal word.

[6:08] It's a word that pictures a king sitting on a throne, issuing commands and expecting obedience. Because that's what a king does. A king is a royal.

He sits on a throne and he gives commands. And when he gives commands, it's to be obeyed. The idea of reigning is total authority, demanding obedience.

A king doesn't suggest. A king commands. And that's what sin tends to do when we hand the keys of our life back to it. So when Paul says, do not let sin reign, he's saying stop letting sin sit on the throne of your life.

Stop letting sin be in control of your life. Stop letting it give the order. Stop letting it call the shots.

And when he says, don't let sin reign, but do this.

Excuse me. This is a present imperative with the negative. Paul's not warning about something that might happen.

[7:16] He's talking about something that is already happening. He's saying you're letting sin reign. Stop it. That's the construction of the words Paul used.

That's convicting, isn't it? Because most of us would never say, sin is my king. I mean, we'd never brag about that, would we? But what would Paul do? Paul would look at the pattern of your life and say, who's giving the orders?

Who's calling the shots? Is it God or is it the body of sin that was mentioned a few verses before? And if the honest answer is your anger, your lust, your bitterness, your addiction, or your fear is driving your daily decisions, then sin's reigning in your life.

If you're letting anger or fear or whatever addiction there is, if you are letting it call the shots, then sin's the king of your life.

Sin is in control. It may not be sitting on a literal throne, but it's functioning as the king in your life. Now notice the phrase, we go back to verse 12.

[8:39] Notice the phrase, in your mortal body. This is subtle, but it's really powerful because your body is temporary and it's decaying. One day we're going to leave these earthly bodies, this flesh of ours, we're going to leave it here.

We're going to leave it in the grave, or we're going to leave it here when Jesus comes back for us, if we're still alive. Excuse me. Excuse me.

So he's saying, don't surrender your choices to something that's going to decay and just go to the grave. And then Paul adds that you should obey it in its lust.

Now lust, as used here in connection to sin, refers to those deep internal cravings that would pull us away from God.

Those inner cravings, those inner desires. They aren't just sexual desires, although they can be.

This is the full range of longing that has gone out of control, if you will.

[9:45] It's the desire for control, it's the desire for approval, it's the desire for revenge. It could be the desire for comfort at any cost, or for more of something that will never satisfy.

Those are those lusts that Paul is talking about, those fleshly cravings, those fleshly yearnings, for something that is not God and something that will never satisfy.

What Paul is saying is, when sin reigns, it doesn't just sit on the throne quietly. It produces desires, and it produces cravings, and it takes control of our impulses.

So when we're not actively surrendering ourselves to God, yielding ourselves to God, presenting ourselves to God, as Romans chapter 12 verse 1 says, as we read a little bit earlier, if we're not doing that actively, then we've just handed the keys back to sin, and we're letting sin reign in our mortal bodies.

And those desires are the commands that we obey. We feel the pull, we follow it, we hear the craving, and we cave to it. So that's what it looks like when sin is reigning.

[10:59] So stop letting sin call the shots, is what the Apostle Paul is saying. Now this is a decision. It's an act of the will. It's something that we actively decide to do.

Paul doesn't say pray about it. Paul doesn't say, well, you can begin stopping letting sin. No, that's not at all what he's saying.

He's not saying, well, gradually let sin stop reigning in your life. He says stop it. Stop it right now. See, we live in a culture that says follow your heart, right?

Now that sounds really nice. Follow your heart. Do what makes you happy. You know, it sounds beautiful.

It sounds like a Hallmark movie, right? That is until your heart leads you off a cliff. Jeremiah 17, 9 says, the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked.

[12:08] Who can know it? Who can understand it? So when someone says, just follow your heart, you can say, well, the heart's wicked and it's deceitful. It will lie to me and it will lead me to where I don't want to go.

My heart might lead me off a cliff. So following our desires without submitting them to Christ is just like handing the keys back to sin.

So don't follow your heart. Make sure that your heart is submitted to the Holy One. Make sure your heart is submitted to Jesus Christ. So we lean not on our own understanding, but in all our ways, acknowledge Him.

And then He will guide, He will direct your path. So this week what I want you to do, I want us to do is identify one area of our life where sin may be actively giving the orders in your life.

Maybe it's in your thought life. Maybe it's your temper. Maybe it's a habit that you've excused for years.

[13:16] Whatever it is, look at it honestly and say, you're not my king. Jesus is my king and I'm done taking orders from you.

You say, well, that sounds kind of silly. No, it's not. Just say it. Say, you're not my master. You're not in control.

You're not my king. Jesus is my king. Stop giving the orders. I'm not taking orders from you anymore. And then we've got to fill that void with something that is positive.

And the Apostle Paul is going to go there in just a minute. So stop letting sin call the shots. Now let's look at verse 13. And he goes on with a negative.

And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.

[14:16] Now this verse really is the heart of the passage. In it we see two commands. The first is negative. Stop presenting or stop yielding your members, the members of your body to sin.

The second is positive. Start presenting yourself to God. So let's take these one at a time. That word present or that word yield really is a rich word.

It means to place at someone's disposal. It means to offer, to make available. So we're making ourselves available. So he said stop presenting yourself.

Stop making yourself available to sin. Stop making, stop putting the members of your body at sin's disposal, but rather give it over to God.

It carries the idea of worship and sacrifice. So don't present, don't yield. Paul will use that word again in Romans chapter 12 verse 1. Present your bodies.

[15:16] Same word here as in verse 13. Don't, he says don't yield or don't present your members of your body. Same word as in Romans chapter 12 verse number 1.

Where he writes present your bodies, we said before, like as a living sacrifice. The word also shows up in Matthew 26, 53.

Remember when Jesus was on the cross or when Jesus was with the leaders, the religious leaders and someone, they were jeering at him and saying, why don't you call the angels to get you off the cross?

Matthew 26, 53. Jesus said the Father would at once put at my disposal more than 12 legions of angels. Same word that's used here. The idea of standing alongside someone, offering what you've got to someone else for its purposes.

Now here's what makes this verse so powerful grammatically, I believe. The first command, do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness, is the present tense in the Greek.

[16:25] It means to stop continually presenting. Stop making yourself available to sin or stop the ongoing habit of presenting the members of your body to sin, to let it call the shots.

Paul's addressing a pattern. What he's saying is, you've been doing this. Stop it. But the second command, present yourselves to God. So he says, stop presenting yourselves to sin, but present, that word there, same word, it's in the aorist tense, it means a once for all action.

Just surrender yourself to God. Paul isn't saying gradually start offering yourself to God. Offer God one thing today and then two things tomorrow and three.

No, he says, present your body, present yourself, every part of you presented to God right now, once for all. Place yourself at God's disposal.

You see the contrast? Don't go on yielding to sin, but present yourselves to God. Now how do we surrender to sin? You say, well, that's kind of nebulous.

[17:36] What does that mean? When he says members, he's referring to the parts of our body. So, he's not talking about your life in the abstract.

He's talking specifically about your physical body. What are you doing with your hands? What are you doing? What are you looking at with your eyes? What are you saying with your mouth?

What are you listening to with your ears? Where are your feet taking you? That's exactly what the apostle Paul is talking about when he talks about the members of our body. What are you allowing into your mind?

Every part of you is either being presented to sin or is presented to God. There's no neutral ground. Your tongue is either used to tear people down or to build people up.

Your mind is either being filled with what dishonors God or just junk, or our mind is being filled with what glorifies God.

[18:37] Our hands are either serving ourselves or they're serving others. Every member of our body is an instrument. The question is, who's using it?

And your body is not neutral territory. The word Paul used for instruments is often used for the word weapons. Have you ever heard the term instruments of war?

So, he says, don't give the members of your body, don't give your hands, don't give your feet over as weapons that sin can use.

Give them over to God for what He can use. Our bodies are a battlefield. We're either deploying them for unrighteousness or we're deploying them for righteousness.

Every day, you and I pick up our weapons. And we either hand it over for sin to use or we hand it over to God. Whose army are we fighting for?

[19:35] And then what Paul does is he reminds us that we're not dead in sin anymore. He says, as being alive from the dead or literally as being alive from dead ones.

We're alive to God right now because we have been raised to walk in units of life, Scripture says. So, we're offering a life that's been rescued from the grave.

That's worship. That's motivation for surrendering our bodies, surrendering ourselves to God. We give ourselves to God not because we have to, but we give it because look at what all He's done for us.

Look at the grace that He's given us. What we could have never deserved. So, when we present the members of our body for God to use, it's not just out of compulsion or something that we have to do.

We should be doing it out of love and out of a thank you. All right, let's recap. First of all, Paul says to stop letting sin call the shots.

[20:42] And next, what we can do right now, present yourselves to God as His instrument. As a matter of fact, I'll stop right here, right now.

Everybody close their eyes. Everyone. Everybody close your eyes. No looking around. It's just you and God. Nobody else around you.

If the Holy Spirit has spoken to you this morning and convicted you to stop letting sin reign in your life and to present yourself to Him, you can let God know with something, tell Him something like this this morning.

Lord, I present myself to you right now. I give you my eyes, my hands, my mouth, my mind, my feet. I'm alive because of you and I'm yours. Use me today for your purposes. Amen. Now, I trust, you can open your eyes now. I trust that if the Holy Spirit's been showing to you that, yes, there are some days, there are some moments in the day where we give the keys back to sin.

[21:53] So, we can stop right at that moment and say, sin, you're not my master anymore. I take the keys back and I give them to God. See, the Bible is full of people who let God use the members of their body.

Remember Moses? What did he have in his hand? A rod. God used the rod that was in Moses' hand. He used the sling that was in David's hand.

He used the mouths of the prophet to speak his word. He used the Apostle Paul's feet to take him from city to city to present the gospel, to tell them about Jesus and how their sins can be forgiven and how they can be made right with God.

He used John's eyes to see a vision of what was going to be one day, and he used John's hands to write that vision out so you and I would have it today. But the Bible also talks about other people who gave the members of their body over to sin.

King David used his eyes to look at his neighbor's wife. His mind devised a scheme. And his hand signed a death warrant.

[23:11] Every part of David's body was involved in that sin because he gave sin back the keys. He let sin call the shot.

So this week, let's make a decision. Not a vague resolution, but a definitive once for all. God, I'm yours. I present every part of me to you.

Here I am. I'm alive from the dead because of you. I belong to you. So we present ourselves to God as His instruments. And lastly, verse number 14.

For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under the law, but under grace. So we stop letting sin reign in our life.

We present ourselves to God. And then we live under grace, not under the power of sin. We let grace rule in our lives.

[24:08] This verse is both a promise and a declaration. It's what we see here in verse 14. It answers the question. Possibly every believer has asked at some point, can I actually do this?

Can I actually say no to sin? Can I have victory over sin in my life? And Paul's answer is yes. And here's why. The word dominion means to rule as Lord, to exercise authority over, and to be the master of.

Paul's making a direct contrast. He says sin, and the word he says is sin shall not have dominion over you.

It comes from the root word kurios, or the word for Lord. So what Paul is saying, sin is not your kurios. Sin is not your Lord.

Jesus is your kurios. Jesus is your Lord. And so he's making this direct contrast. Sin doesn't have lordship over you.

[25:15] Jesus does. Because sin's reign is broken. It was broken at the cross. Its authority's been revoked. It can't lord over us anymore.

Not because we're strong enough to resist it, but because Christ defeated it at the cross of Calvary. And because of our standing in Christ. And then here's the key.

He says, for you are not under law, but under grace. That's a very, very important point right there. We're not under the law. We're under grace. And why does that matter?

Because law and grace operate differently when it comes to sin. The law tells you what's right, but it gives you no power to do it.

It's like a mirror. It shows you the dirt on your face, but it doesn't wash it off for you. And it doesn't give you the power to wash it off. You just walk into wherever you are, and you look at a mirror, and it says, yep, you got dirt.

[26:14] Yep, you got stuff on your face. Your hair's not combed. And you have a choice. As Scripture says, you either walk away from it doing nothing, or you do something about it.

But the mirror doesn't give you the power to do it. Neither does the law. Paul said in 1 Corinthians 15, 56, The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law.

The law actually empowers sin because it provokes the very desires that the law prohibits. Think about it. It provokes the desires that are within us, not providing us the ability to overcome them. When you see a sign that says, do not touch wet paint, what's your very first thought? I wonder if it's wet.

It's probably dry by now. I'll just barely touch it. Oh, yeah, it's wet. I mean, come on, who's not done that? Or who at least hasn't thought about doing it?

[27:30] Keep off grass. People go walk on the grass. Why? Because they told us what not to do, and there's something in us that urge to just do it anyway.

That's what the law does. That's what the Bible says the law does. Now, but grace is different. Grace doesn't just tell you what to do.

Grace empowers you to do it or not to do it, as the case may be. Titus chapter 2, verses 11 and 12 tell us, For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age.

Grace teaches us, grace empowers us, and grace enables us. F.F. Bruce wrote this, excuse me, and summed it up, I think, very, very well.

He says, Did you catch that?

[28:57] He breaks the power of canceled sin. We can stop letting sin call the shots, because grace is now our master.

Grace is now empowering us to say no and to say yes to what's right, to say yes to what's good, and to say yes to God. Grace is the engine that powers the Christian life.

His Holy Spirit is there, and He provides what is necessary to accomplish what He wants us to do. When we simply try harder not to sin, what we're doing is we're living under the law.

But Paul says we need, we're under grace. Grace says your standing has been secured by Christ. Your failure doesn't change your identity. Get up, come back, present yourself to God.

His grace is sufficient for you. So this week, as we wind down to a close, this week, ask yourself, Am I trying to fight sin through willpower?

[30:03] Am I just trying to say no to that temptation or that desire by my willpower? Or am I saying no by the grace of God and the power that Jesus Christ and His Holy Spirit provides in my life?

You don't have to hand the keys back over to sin. You don't have to live under its control. You can stop obeying sin as your master by presenting yourself as alive, as dead to sin, and as alive unto God.

Take back the keys, present yourself to God, and walk in the power of the grace that has already set you free. Because the one who broke the power of sin at the cross is the same one who will break the power of sin in your life today, if we'll let Him.

Let's pray. Father, today we are so thankful that we're not under the law, but we're under grace. And grace is what you provide for us, is what you give to us.

We could never deserve it. We could never earn it. And it's not our power, but it's yours. Father, I pray this morning that we would take back the keys from sin and present them to you.

[31:25] And allow you to be in control of our lives. And Father, we thank you for what you're going to do. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

Thanks for joining us today. We hope this message encouraged you and gave you something to apply to your life this week. If you'd like to learn more about Faith Bible Church or connect with us, visit our website at meetfaith.org.

We'd love to hear from you. Have a great week, and we'll see you next time.