

# **LIFE SENTENCE OF ETERNAL LIFE**

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Greetings! It's a great blessing for me to come to you today. This is our first Service of 2020. I am excited to bring the Gospel of God's grace to you. I trust that you will just have a heart that is flooded with the knowledge that God is the same all the time. I trust that you will have a heart that understands that God doesn't change His mind according to the calendar. So many times, we think that 2019 is different than 2020 or 2021. We have already seen a lot of messages where people think and say that and think it was a positive thing to say that this year will be the year of perfect vision where we will see, clearly, what the Gospel is about. But I want to say to you that it is as clear every year and the clearest time we could ever have seen what God has done for us is in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. That is where clarity comes.

I just want to say to you that this year is going to be a year where the God that raised Jesus from the dead continues to be your God and that He is going to bless you. Glory to God.

Thank you for allowing me to serve you with the Good News of the Gospel, a radical message of God's grace where we go to the root of what it is all about and from where we have our expectation for what is to come. We are in the message of God's life and under the power of His Holy Spirit bringing forth His life in us.

Let us pray together and then we are going to get right into the word for this week. Father, thank You so much that we can be together. Thank You that I can sit here in this studio again and start in a new year knowing that this year has one objective to just continue to believe the simple Gospel, the message of Your grace, the message of Your life, where it is all a gift. Thank You that You have come and You have brought us into 2020 when we can continually expect Your goodness to manifest towards us.

Thank You that You speak powerfully through me today and encourage Your people as always. Amen

As I was preparing for this message this week, I was thinking on the faithfulness of God and the great power that we are under. You know, when you are under the rule of a king, it doesn't matter how well it goes with you. At the end of the day, the rulership of the king and his power will manifest in your life. If you are under a king who is corrupt, you will find that you might not be corrupt in your heart but the corruption of the king, in the end, will influence your life. That is how it works.

We see that in normal governments. If we are under the government of a president and his cabinet that are corrupt, you can run your business as well as what you like but in the end of the day the economy of the country will be influenced by what that president does and it is indirectly going to then have an influence on you. That is why we vote and why we want certain presidents to have power and certain presidents not to have power because of that principle wherein we know that we are under the power of the one that stands as commander-in-chief or the one that is the king or the ruler.

The beautiful thing about the gospel and what I want to say in today's message is that we are under the rulership of a good King. We are under the power of a good King. That is what we stand under. Sometimes we might be going through a bad time when we are under the power of this King. But as much as what a person that's under the power of an evil king might have good times but eventually, he is going to find the dominion and the power and the corruption of that king get to him or get to his business. In the very same way, we who are believers in Jesus and who have submitted ourselves to the rulership of our King Jesus, it doesn't matter what we go through today. At the end of the time, we are going to find His goodness get to us bringing us His life. We've had this old story that was said this way: "We might lose some battles but we are winning the war." I think that is something that can encourage us as long as we know we are not in a war but we are in a rest. The only war we are in is to stay in the rest that He has given us and not to try and make things work by or own power.

To summarize what I am going to say today is this: We are under the life sentence of life. That is what we are under. God has come in Jesus Christ and He has given a sentence over those that believe and trust and rely upon Jesus as their King. The sentence that God has announced is a life sentence. This life sentence is where we have been sentenced for life with life. That is what He has come to give us. So many times, we would say, when somebody else maybe committed a crime and he got a life sentence in prison. Now, we don't have a life sentence in prison. We have a life sentence under the good rulership of God, in Jesus Christ. That is what we have and that is what we can rest upon and what we can rely upon. It doesn't matter where we are or what we are in as we rely upon this truth and we've submitted ourselves to His rulership, we will find His goodness getting to us... His goodness reaching us and bringing forth the fruit and the life of God in us. Glory to God.

I want to say this also in the light of what I've experienced last year. I'm not going to go into any detail, but last year was not the easiest of years for me. I went through some difficult times and the thing that kept me going in that time was the knowledge of this truth. The knowledge wherein I could reckon myself dead unto my own efforts to make something work and alive unto the resurrection power of God. And I can promise you that that has brought me peace. That has brought me joy and even in difficult times when you would find emotions want to play games, I found that, deep in my heart, there was a rest in the integrity of God. Because if I looked at the full power of God applied to a person that has entered utter death, which was Jesus upon the cross and then put in the tomb, I found that at the end of that put on display the clarity, the 20/20 vision, if you want to call it like that.

Whatever you want to say, the clear vision on what happens to those who have put their trust in God and His rulership, was manifested in the resurrection of Jesus and that brought forth, by the power of God in me, thoughts and feelings and emotions that made me share in the life of God. Glory to God!

So, I want to say that when I talk about this, I don't talk about this from the perspective of a theory that I read in the Bible. I talk about what I am preaching today from first hand experiential knowledge. I can say this, and I remember saying this last year, "Friends, the Gospel works! The Gospel, the Good News of Jesus, has the power to save us. The Bible says, "The gospel, the good news that Jesus was raised from the dead and the fact that He was raised from the dead, is the power of God bringing salvation to us.

I actually want to talk from Romans chapter 6 but I want to go into chapter 8, verses 1-8 and then jump into romans chapter 6, verses 15 to 23. As all of you know, we are in our series where we are going through Romans verse by verse.

#### **Romans 8:**

***1 There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.***

***2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.***

***3 For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:***

***4 That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.***

***5 For they that are after the flesh mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit.***

Now I'm getting into the crux of the verses I want to get into:

***6 For to be carnally minded is death*** (This is God's sentence. This is what the Apostle Paul wrote as how things work. To be carnally minded is death.) ***but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.***

***7 Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.***

***8 So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.***

This passage starts out seemingly very positively and then ends, looking as if it is negative but the whole thing is very, very positive. What Paul is saying in this passage is that there is a law. It is called the law of the Spirit of life. That means that God has pronounced that whosoever lives by the Spirit shall live. He also pronounced that if you want to live by the flesh, it would mean your death. So, God has come and He has given His verdict and His sentence over those who have put their trust in Jesus. In other words, He can find you guilty or not guilty and if you believe upon Jesus you are guilty of trusting in Him.

Then if somebody says, "Is this person guilty of trusting in Jesus?" Yes, he is guilty. He has renounced his own ability to produce life and he is found guilty in trusting in Jesus." So, what is his sentence? This is his sentence: He is set free from the law of sin and death which brings corruption and decay and he is placed under the jurisdiction and under the rule and the power of God bringing forth life in them. This person, therefore, is set free from the whole system and its fruit which is called death, the system of death, the system of righteousness by your own works. He is set free from that. That is what this passage says. It says here, "For to be carnally minded...."

Let me just stand still there for a moment. Carnally minded doesn't mean to have a bad thought about somebody. Carnally minded doesn't mean that you see a president making a wrong decision according to you and now you feel a bit of fear or when you have a bad thought about somebody. That is not what Paul had in mind when he talked about carnally minded. What Paul has in mind, when he talks about carnally minded, in the context of Romans, is to think that you have your righteousness before God in the flesh. That means that you think that you have to be a Jew, an Israelite, and from there obey the law. That is carnally minded where your mind finds your righteousness or your identity, in your flesh.

The Gentiles, the people that he was writing to in Rome, were finding their identity in their flesh as well. They were saying, "We are the blessed because in the flesh, we are not Jews. They started to believe that if you are a Jew, God has turned His back upon you, that He cannot save you anymore, and that salvation is now for Gentiles in the flesh. So, these people had their identity in their flesh... "Am I a Jew or am I a Gentile?" Paul comes and tries to say, "Let us look at the Jews. They put their identity in the flesh and then they try to obey the law. I can give myself as an example. The more I try to do it, the more I found that the flesh, which is mortal, is manifesting its mortality in my emotions, in my feelings, in my business, in whatever I am doing."

What I am saying is this: What does it mean to put your trust in Jesus? Those who have put their trust in Jesus have put their trust in Jesus as the King and the Lord over the world, over the whole cosmos. We believe that He, by His Spirit and His government and His rulership, shall bring forth the full manifestation of the kingdom of God into our lives. That is what it means to trust Him. We trust that Jesus, through the power of the Spirit, will bring forth the fulness of God's life into manifestation into our flesh and into everything we do... and that He does it by HIS doing. That's what it means to trust Jesus.

He who has trusted Jesus are now saying that the life of Jesus will bring forth life in us. We, then, are those who walk by the Spirit. What does it mean that we walk by the Spirit? We are saying that we will not have life and access to our inheritance in God by the fact that we obey the commandments of the law, or the Mosaic Covenant or any of those things. We find our identity in the fact that Jesus died for humans. We are human and He has dominion over humans and therefore we are under His power and we submit to this power. We don't resist that power. We don't make ourselves enemies of that power. We embrace that power. When we embrace that power, the life of Jesus, or we can say, the Spirit of life, then works in us. These are then those who walk by the Spirit.

So, how do we walk by the Spirit? We walk by the Spirit by believing in Jesus and as you believe in Jesus, His life starts to bring life to you. That's what verse 9 says:

***But you are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.***

What he is simply saying here is that if we don't have the doctrine or the teaching or the life that comes from the fact that Jesus is the Messiah, we are none of His. It means everything that comes forth in our lives comes from our own willpower. So, by belief in Jesus, everything that comes forth in us is from Him. All the good that comes forth in us is from Him. Glory to God!

Let me just summarize the first part of this message. What I want to say is this: We who believe in Jesus, have received a life sentence. This life sentence is not a life sentence in prison or a life sentence of hard labor. It's a life sentence of life. That means eternally we will have the life of God as the source of all life in us. That gives us the boldness from where we can expect Him to manage our lives. If there be anything in our life that doesn't line up with His quality of life, we have the assurance in the resurrection of Jesus that God, by His Spirit, will end all forms of death in us and bring forth His fruit in us. And in the end, we will even find in the bodily resurrection.

The other day, before I was going to bed, I was just thinking of my life and I was thinking of the Gospel and where God has brought me. I was thinking of getting older. It was just Helena's birthday. We are the same age and we are all getting older. We're not old... we are just getting older. As you realize you are getting older, you realize that most people get, let's say 80 years of age and you've already had a good amount of those years. In that realization, you realize what it means to have a life that has an end to it in some form or fashion. This is what happened to me as I realized how temporal my life is, the greatness of joy rose in me as I realized, as well, that I've been granted eternal life. Isn't that beautiful!

We all have to deal with the fact that we are all running out of years. But God has come, and in a very simplistic way, He has shown us that He can give us eternal life free from our efforts. How? By raising Jesus Christ from the dead and we see how Jesus received eternal life. That blesses me! That means, in order for God to give me eternal life, He has to conquer all the death in my flesh. He has to be the conqueror of all sin in the flesh. He has to condemn sin in my flesh if He has come to give me, as a complete human, including my flesh, eternal life! That makes Him the King and the Ruler and the Author of life in my flesh where I don't have to rely on the flesh but I rely upon Him and He gives me, as a complete human, a new life from where I become what is called a new creation. There was a creation but the first creation had something about it that was not good. It is temporal. It had time connected to it. It had an expiration date, if you want to call it like that.

Scientists tell us that all heat is eventually going to disappear from the universe and then we will all freeze to nothingness. That is what they are telling us. They are talking about this normal world but we have seen a God that has entered the temporal. He took the dust of the temporal in the form of the human Jesus who also became subject to death and decay. He entered death. The Father then raised Him from the dead and recreated that mortal man into an eternal living human where God became the One that conquered all death in the flesh and gave Him eternal life. That is what God has come to promise us and what He has come to give us.

As a summary of the first part of this message, I want to say to you: We are under the life long sentence of eternal life! That means that it can never stop! We are under that and it is God's job to manifest that. We trust Him. By trusting Him, the Bible, according to Paul, calls that walking in the Spirit. With that in mind, let us go to through **Romans 6:**

**15 What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace (or under the power of the Spirit)? God forbid.**

**16 Know you not, that to whom you yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants you are to whom you obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?**

So, when we obey God by obeying His command, which is, "Trust Me!", we are under the rule of righteousness and we are the servants. If you study this word out, servants actually means the slaves of righteousness when we are enslaved to life! I've seen it so many times in my relationship with God and my family as what I was before I got into the grace message, a slave of sin and death. And it doesn't matter how much good I do, eventually I find the good not working out and death setting in again because I am a slave of that. You can run but you are going to be caught and you are going to be brought back because you are a slave.

In the very same way, I have found now that we are under grace, I have been made a slave of righteousness. I have found that even if I might be drawn into something negative, because I am owned by God and I am a slave of righteousness, righteousness is going to manifest in me again and blessing is going to manifest in me again! I cannot run from it! It is going to happen again because I am under the rulership of God. I'm under the rulership of life and that is what happens. I have seen that in my relationship with my children. I've seen that in relationship with my friends. I've seen that in relationship with my wife. I've seen that in ministry all the time. We are under the rulership of life. Glory to God!

**Romans 6:**

**17 But God be thanked, that we were the servants of sin, but we have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered to you.**

So, how do we obey? We obey a doctrine. How do you obey a doctrine? You believe the doctrine. Some people say that doctrine is not important. Well, I've got news for you. It is through obedience to doctrine that we are delivered from sin.

What is the doctrine? What is the teaching?" The doctrine, the teaching, is this: Jesus was raised from the dead and we, therefore, see that God has conquered and condemned sin in the flesh and He has appointed this man, Jesus, as the Lord of all the world. As we submit to Him and His rulership, this is the doctrine, He shall also quicken our mortal bodies by His Spirit and so we will live with Him forever. That is the doctrine. Glory to God! Believe in Jesus. As we believed this doctrine, we have been set free.

**:18 Being then made free from sin** (Being made free from being enslaved through sin and death), **we became the servants** (or the slaves) **of righteousness.**

**Roman 6:**

**10 For in that he** (Jesus) **died, he died unto sin once: but in that he lived, he lived unto God.**

**11 Likewise reckon ye also yourselves indeed to be dead unto sin** (sin, the inability that is inside your flesh), **but alive unto God** (or that we will live because of God) **through Jesus Christ our Lord.**

He says here that when we were under the law, we can reckon this, we can come to this calculation or this bottom-line conclusion, that because of the weakness inside us, we will find that our portion is death. But now, in Jesus, we have this reckoning, or this bottom-line conclusion, which is that we are alive on account of God. God is now our source of life. God is now death's problem! It's like a virus. The son of a good friend of mine got a very bad chickenpox. It is called waterpokkies in Afrikaans. He had this rash all over his body and then it went into his lungs and he was in intensive care. It came up later that the doctors basically feared for his life. Somebody, just before him, died of it. So, he was in intensive care going through a very rough time. He was basically under the power of that virus. That virus was trying to consume life in him. As what we understand a virus trying to end our life, we need to see God as a virus if you want to call it like that. When we have believed in Jesus, we got infected with the God virus which is called life. Death would describe God as a virus that is draining out all of death there is, spreading life. That is what Jesus Christ has come to give us and that is what we believe.

**11 Likewise reckon also yourselves indeed to be dead unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord**

**12 Let not sin therefore** (because of this truth and obeying the doctrine of this truth) **reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in the lusts thereof.**

How are we seeing sin and death die in us? It is not by we trying to stop it. but by getting infected with the God virus... getting infected with the life of God, standing under the sentence of His life. That is what this is all about.

I want to end this off and just get into these verses:

**20 For when you were the servants of sin, you were free from righteousness.** (When you were enslaved under sin, you were delivered from righteousness.) **21 What fruit had you then in those things which you are now ashamed of? for the end of those things is death. 22 But now being made free from sin, you became servants to God, you have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.**

He is saying that as free as what you were from a holy life, when you try to do it by yourself, that's how free we are from bondage since we've believed upon Him.

I am now going to use different words in verse 22:

**22 But now being made free from sin, you became the servants of God, and the fruit or the result of that is holiness and the end, everlasting life.**

What is the end? What have we been sentenced unto? We have been sentenced unto everlasting life!

**23 For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.**

What is this gift of God? The gift of God is to end what destroys us by the power of the Spirit and not our own power. Glory to God!

I trust that this message has blessed you. I would love to pray for you:

Father, I want to thank You that we are under the life sentence. We know what You have given us and we know that You bless us. Thank You that we can be excited and expectant of You bringing forth holiness, and in the end, everlasting life in our lives and we can rest in You. Thank You for loving us so much!

Father, I want to pray for everybody that's hearing this webcast today. There are many people that had a very negative year. The 2019 ended very negatively for them and it just continued into 2020. They've heard messages of, "This is the year of the favor of the Lord", or "The year of clear vision", or "The year of this or whatever...." But they still see nothing has changed. I want to pray for them.

I want to thank You, Father, that You, through Your Spirit and also through this message, has reminded them of the truth. And I thank You that they will have the experience and the enlightened mind of knowing and experiencing and having the reckoning where they can reckon themselves indeed alive unto God because of God.

And as this reckoning starts to take place in their mind, the fruit will start to show. I want to thank You, Father, that it doesn't matter how difficult the time is that they are going through, and as it flows through from the old year into the new and how people can maybe feel discouraged because nothing has changed and this year starts at a very bad way... that they can know that it doesn't matter how negative it sounds! They are under the rule of life. As they obey this form of doctrine which is belief in Jesus, they will see that they are enslaved to life and the fruit of the Spirit and that manifests by You. Thank You for encouraging Your church so that we can have a future flooded with hope. In Jesus' mighty name. Amen and amen!