

“SIN SHALL NOT HAVE DOMINION OVER YOU”

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Pastor Jack Jones

The Scripture I'd like to consider this morning is **Romans 6:14**. **Romans 6** is a wonderful chapter, and if this were the only Scriptures we had, it would be enough to know that we can and must have victory over the temptation to sin if we would be saved in God's kingdom, but how can it be accomplished?

Romans 6:14 says, “For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.” In other words, we are not saved by law keeping, but by God's grace, “lest any man should boast” as it says in **Ephesians 2:9**.

God's grace is how we are justified or pardoned, but in order to be sanctified after we're justified, heart obedience to the Ten Commandments becomes necessary if we would remain pardoned and develop a character fit for heaven, and this too is a growth in grace. God's grace cannot be taken out of the equation from the beginning to the end of our salvation. Where people get messed up is when they forget this and try to save themselves through their own efforts, which only leads to frustration, because that method will always fail. I know, because I've tried it, and if you've tried it you also know that salvation by works brings you to a dead end.

The part I want to focus on is just the first part of **Romans 6:14** that says, “Sin shall not have dominion over you.” “Shall not” is a positive command or statement. It doesn't say “sin might not” or “sin should not”, but it “shall not.” In Hebrew it means “not at all”, or “never” or “in no case.” And the word “dominion” means “to rule” or “to have lordship over.” In other words, as a Christian, God has made provision that sin is never to be our master. When God gives a command, there's always power to achieve it. More than once in the Bible Jesus said to various individuals, “go and sin no more,” didn't He? and He will never ask us to do something that's impossible to do. That would make Him a liar, and we know that God cannot lie. That means we don't have to give in to the temptation to sin, and we won't if we love God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength, and God will freely give us that desire if we're willing to receive it and maintain it, and maintenance always has something to with working out our own salvation with fear and trembling.

It's a deception of Satan to think that the death of Christ brought in grace to take the place of obedience to the law. The death of Jesus didn't change, or annul, or lessen the law of ten commandments in the slightest degree. The grace offered to us through Jesus' shed blood establishes the law of God. That's what Paul says in **Romans 3:31**. And so, since the fall of man, God's moral government and His grace are inseparable. They go hand in hand since the time sin entered our world. That's why **Psalms 85:10** says, “Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other.” That's the relation between law and grace, and you can't have one without the other without upsetting the plan of salvation.

Now let me ask you a question: is the devil stronger than God? Does he have more power to rule over you than the one who created you? It's almost a silly question, isn't it? Of course God is stronger than the devil! **Revelation 12:7-9** says there was war in heaven and the devil and his sympathizers were cast out. That means they lost because they were weaker than God and the angels that didn't go along with the rebellion. They're down here now carrying on the same work of deception that got them ousted from heaven in the first place, and the reason for this deception, or this lie, is to trick us into believing that we can go to heaven while doing the same thing they got kicked out for. They were cast out because they refused to do what God said, refused to do His will, plain and simple, and the devil wants you to believe that you can go to heaven even while sin has dominion over you, and nearly the whole

Christian world has chosen to believe this lie. It's quite amazing when you think about it, but such is the work of deception upon the selfish human heart that wants to have its cake and eat it too.

Back in the early 1840s there was a man by the name of Charles Fitch who was a Presbyterian minister that became convinced that Jesus was coming back to this earth as He promised to do. He and thousands of others became known as Adventists, or those who believed in the second advent of Christ. Remember what the angles said in **Acts 1:11** as the disciples watched their Lord ascend into heaven? They said, "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." And in **John 14:1-3** Jesus said to His troubled followers, "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will (what)come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." And so, every Christian ought to be an Adventist, but most don't live like it's ever going to happen.

So, Charles Fitch and the rest of the Advent believers were right to have a blessed hope that Jesus would come back to this earth and take His people to heaven. Problem is, they were mistaken about when that would happen. According to the time prophecy of **Daniel 8:14**, which began in 457 BC, they thought the cleansing of the sanctuary, which they believed to be the earth, would soon be cleansed by fire at Jesus' return when that prophecy ended on October 22, 1844, but they were mistaken, not about the date, but about what would actually happen. It was the sanctuary in heaven that would begin to be cleansed of all the confessed sins that had accumulated there since the fall of mankind, and not Christ's coming to the earth at all. That was the cleansing Daniel referred to in his prophecy when Jesus moved from the holy to the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary. You can read all about that in **Hebrews chapters 8 and 9**, which also corresponds to the day of atonement described in **Leviticus 16**. And so, as you can imagine, there was a great disappointment when things didn't turn out the way the Adventists believed, and they were mercilessly persecuted and made fun of for it.

Not long before Daniel's time prophecy ended, there was a great religious awakening in the late 1830s and early 1840s, and anyone that's familiar with church history knows that this awakening took place, regardless of what denomination they belonged to, and some from all the various churches joined this Advent movement because of their hope of Jesus soon return. Charles Fitch was one such person, and the reason I refer to him is because, as a minister, he was removed from the Presbyterian church because of this blessed hope and for another belief he had that was out of harmony with the Christian world at that time, and still is by the way, and it's this other belief I'd to discuss this morning.

Just eight days before Jesus was expected to come, Charles Fitch got chilled and died of pneumonia after baptizing three groups of people in the cold waters of Lake Erie. He and another preacher by the name of Apollos Hale were the ones who developed what was called the 1843 chart that was used by most of the Advent preachers during that time to show the fulfillment of how many of the Bible prophecies converged and pointed to the fulfillment of the 2300-day prophecy of Daniel 8:14. Using the day for a year principle, according to **Numbers 14:34** and **Ezekiel 4:6**, they came to the understanding, and rightly so, that this prophecy would end on October 22, 1844. It's this day for a year principle that's always how time prophecy is to be calculated, otherwise you'll come up with the wrong answer, and that's one of the reasons there's so much confusion today within Christianity regarding last day events. In a way I think it was merciful for God to let Charles Fitch die, because he didn't have to suffer the great disappointment like all the other Advent believers did.

And think about this, Charles Fitch might have become so disappointed had he lived, because his whole life was so bound up with this message, that he might have lost faith in God and His word and been lost, because there were many others who experienced this very thing. And you know, sometimes God allows what we think are bad things to happen, but in the end it was a good thing. God sees what we can't see, because He knows the end from the beginning, and it would be much better to have one's life cut short by a few years and be saved for eternity, rather than having their lives extended when God knows they would be lost by so doing. Some day when we have the opportunity in heaven to see

the results of these kinds of things, we will agree, that yes, it was best that we may have lost that loved one and had to grieve so because of it, but we have the promise that all tears are going to be wiped away one day soon, and God will relink the family chain of all who were faithful and we'll be eternally happy.

Now, I don't want to get too far into the weeds talking about the great religious awakening and the great disappointment that followed, but I want you to know what kind of man Charles Fitch was and what role he played during that time. He saw the absolute necessity of personal preparation for the soon coming of Christ and did what he could to magnify the power of Christ to empower people to have victory over the temptation to sin. In other words, he preached that "sin shall not have dominion over you" and that the Holy Spirit will be given to all who have a desire to have victory in their lives.

You see, victory over something, whatever it may be, means that you stop doing whatever it is that has dominion over you. And so, as Christians, sin is not our only option! If it was, then the Holy Spirit would not have inspired the apostle Paul to say that we're not to allow sin to be our master; that there's a way out of this merry-go-round of sinning and repenting, sinning and repenting. And the reason not having victory over sin is so dangerous, is because human probation is going to close someday soon, and if we don't have victory over sin and temptation, then we will sin one too many times and find that there is no more sacrifice for sin when Jesus' work in the Most Holy place of the heavenly sanctuary is finished.

Charles Fitch, because he believed in victory over the temptation to sin and perfection of character, was accused by his fellow ministers in the Presbyterian church of teaching what they termed, "a new doctrine," and wanted him to answer nine questions in support of what he believed the Bible taught about these things. And so, I'm going to read those nine questions to you this morning for you to think about and for how you might answer these questions yourself were you asked.

Are you ready? Question number:

1. "Do you believe that the Bible teaches men are perfect in holiness in this life? (I ask no more than yes or no.)" By the way, the way these questions are formed tells me that these ministers really didn't want to know, or they would have given him room to explain his position, but he did anyway.
2. "What cases or characters were without sin in Bible history, except Christ? (Merely name them)" Here again, don't explain, just name them.
3. "Of all among the Martyrs, whose memoirs have come down to us, how many do you find perfect?"
4. "In modern times, have not the best of men evidently been sinful more or less, and have these not thought themselves to be so?"
5. "In the circle of your acquaintance, have those who claim perfection, generally turned out as well as those who feared always?"
6. "Are those around you who claim this more meek and heavenly than others?"
7. "Do not perfection people very frequently run into some palpable inconsistencies?"
8. "Do you avow the belief, that you are generally without sin, in thought, desire, word, deed, or defect?"
9. "And have you made up your mind, publicly to teach, and defend the position, that there are men among us who are without sin?"

Now, if you believe, like Charles Fitch, that one can and must stop sinning and have victory over the temptation to sin, and that perfection of character is required of those who expect to go to heaven, could you defend that belief from God's word? And where would you even start?

Well, I'll tell you before we go any further, that his fellow ministers had already made up their minds that however he answered their questions they weren't going to accept them, and they didn't, but he gave them many Scripture proofs of his position nonetheless and afterward was no longer welcome to preach in their churches. This all took place in 1840, and it was three years later that Pastor Fitch had a sermon titled "Come Out of Her, My People", and the second angel's message of **Revelation 14:8** began to go out to the Presbyterian church as well as every other church that decided to reject the teaching

of Christ's soon return and to continue to teach the salvation in sin message that they had been accustomed to.

In response to these nine questions, Charles Fitch took about 30 pages to explain his position to his minister brethren about sanctification, which is holiness, and holiness is wholeness for God, or has to do with holy living, and as you probably already guessed, I'm not going to have the time today to cover all of what he said, so I may have to make this a two or three part series, we'll see how it goes, but I will at least try to give you the gist of what he said about sanctification.

First of all, he told his brethren that he did not think himself to be any better than anyone else who was born with a sinful human nature, and that except for the sacrifice of Christ, he was deserving of eternal destruction in the fires of hell, but at the same time he acknowledged that the Bible indicates that men must have a "holiness, without which no man can see the Lord," as **Hebrews 12:14** says. And so, he says, there must be a way to have this holiness or God wouldn't have given mankind an ultimatum like that. He also mentions **1 Peter 1:16** where God says, "be ye holy, for I am holy." And he asks, "how shall I come to possess such a character when every feeling of my heart in its fallen state is in entire opposition to God?" Have you ever felt that way? He says, "How shall I have a nature fit for heaven? What I need then is a Saviour from sin, because I'm eternally damned unless I can find" such a Saviour. "Help! Help! Oh, help! Is the cry that comes up from my inmost soul. Is there, in the universe of God, any way to save a poor, lost sinner from his own love of sin? Any way to cleanse his polluted heart, and fill it with holiness without which such an one never can be received into heaven?"

Brother Fitch continues by saying, "I've been told that yes, I can be saved from sin at death; that death is the means and the time of sanctification, but I can find nothing in the Bible to support that idea. But it does teach that this life is my only time of probation, and that if a man leaves this world in his sins, he remains a sinner forever. I believe therefore, that my everlasting interests are pending on the question, whether God has made provision to save me from sin, before I leave this world. If there is no salvation from sin before death, I expect to be lost."

Then in his response to his ministering brethren he makes three inquiries for them to consider:

1. Has God, in the economy of His grace, made provision to save His people from their sins?
2. If such provision has been made, can Christians avail themselves of it in this life?
3. In what way may the provisions of God's grace become available, to save His people from their sins?

And then Brother Fitch proceeds to answer his own three questions, which we will not have time to go over today. But I will say this, because I don't want to leave anyone hanging as to what we must do and what we must become if we would be prepared for Christ's soon return.

I think we're all familiar with what the apostle Paul says about putting on the whole armor of God in **Ephesians 6** if we would be able to quench all the fiery darts the devil throws at us, and by the way, he's an expert shot and hits the bullseye every time unless there's a shield to stop them, and that's the shield of faith. And the way we strengthen faith, according to **Romans 10:17**, is by hearing the word of God, or by taking the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, and committing its principles to memory by reading and studying it. And of course, there are other pieces of the armor, which you can study for yourself, but to keep it simple, let me just say this: victory over sin and victory over the temptation to sin are two different things, which I'll explain in a minute. Victory over the temptation to sin and perfection of character come only to those who study to show themselves approved unto God; to those who pray without ceasing, and to those who keep the Commandments of God and have the faith of Jesus.

If we do not do these three things, brothers and sisters, there is no hope of Bible sanctification, and thus no hope of heaven at last, because justification, or pardon, as wonderful as it is, is not enough to fit us for heaven or to empower us to victory over temptation. It's only half a gospel, and we need the whole thing. Unless we have more than forgiveness, we will continue to sin and ask forgiveness without end, and that's exactly what the devil wants. He wants us to continue on this way until life

shall end and we're found to be dead in trespasses and sins when our name comes up in review before God.

We've got to have a vital connection to Jesus Christ in order to be saved, and it's impossible to have and maintain this connection without these three things. Study, pray, and obey. These things cost us nothing except a little quality time with God every day. It's all about getting our priorities straight. These things are free gifts from God that lead to salvation full and free, but far too many professed Christians don't take advantage of them, but instead depend upon their preacher, and as a result they will suffer great loss in the end.

If we remain in transgression and don't strive for self-control and think we're going to end up in heaven, we are ignorant of what God's word teaches. But when we are determined to obtain the victory over temptation by promptly and decisively resisting the attacks of Satan, we'll become rooted and grounded in the truth so that we can't be moved.

It's not necessary that anyone should yield to the temptations of Satan and violate their conscience and grieve the Holy Spirit. Every provision has been made in God's word so we can have divine help in all our struggles with temptation. If we keep Jesus before us we will become changed into His image. That's the way it works! If we have Christ abiding in us, we will have a power in our lives that will make us successful in our battles with the enemy. But no matter how much advancement we may make in our spiritual lives, we will never come to a point this side of heaven where we will not need to diligently search the Scriptures.

Now listen carefully. If you get nothing else out of what I've said so far this morning, please get this. The only person that needs to have victory over sin, is the person who has sinned, and the person who has victory over the temptation to sin, is the person who does not yield to sin, and it's this latter place that we all need to come to if we would have the kind of holiness, without which, no man shall see the Lord.

Now this is key, so again, listen carefully. ***Testimonies for the Church, volume 4, page 36*** , "If we poor mortals reach heaven we must overcome as Christ overcame. We must be assimilated to His image; our characters must be spotless." Now let me ask: did Christ have victory over sin? No, He did not, He didn't need to, because He never sinned. Remember what I said at the beginning? Victory over something, whatever it might be, means that you stop doing whatever it is that has dominion over you. Sin never had dominion over Christ, because He never sinned, and if Jesus never sinned, then He had no sin to overcome. But was He tempted? Yes He was. **Hebrews 4:15** says, "He was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin."

So, if we are to overcome as Christ overcame, we must come to the place where we are not yielding to the temptation to sin, because that's the only way we poor mortals will ever reach heaven; the only way we will ever be assimilated to His image and have spotless characters, and it's never going to happen if we are continually in the revolving door of sinning and repenting, sinning and repenting. If we have sinned, we must confess and receive forgiveness, yes, but once we are forgiven, or justified, we are to have victory over the temptation to sin if we would overcome as Christ overcame. Jesus is not our example in overcome sin, but in overcoming the temptation to sin. Does that make sense?

Temptation is not sin until we yield to it, and an indwelling Christ will not yield to it any more than He yielded to it when He was here. Our sinful nature will be tempted to sin, there's no doubt about it, but once we have received Christ it becomes a choice whether we yield to it or not, because the devil cannot force us to yield, that's one thing that is beyond his control. The reason sanctification is the work of a lifetime, is because we'll have our fallen nature to contend with until our change comes, and that won't be until Jesus comes.

And so, there is no stopping place this side of heaven when we will be able to relax our vigilance. And remember this, sanctification does not get rid of sin, justification gets rid of sin, and sanctification

keeps us rid of it. And so, sanctification is not a lifetime of trying to get rid of sin; it's a lifetime of holy living after sin has been forgiven, and that's what will develop the kind of character Jesus can take back to heaven when He comes.

Now, is all this Biblical? Yes it is! You've probably read **Revelation 3:21** many times, but now I want you to look at it with fresh eyes. **Revelation 3:21** says, "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne." When Jesus said, "To him that overcometh," was He referring to overcoming sin or the temptation to sin? He was referring to temptation to sin, because He never had to overcome sin in order to sit down with His Father in His throne. Then He says you'll be able to sit down with me in My throne if you overcome "even as I also overcame." You can search the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy all you want to, but you will never find a statement that says Jesus overcame sin, and the reason you won't find it is because He never sinned. And so, the overcoming that we need is the overcoming of temptation, and if we have that, we will develop a character fit for heaven.

And **Revelation 12:11** tells us how it's done, "And they overcome him (**the devil**) by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death." There's a lot in this one verse, but you'll have to study that out for yourself, because I need to close.

I want to tell you a little about my own experience for a minute, and I've thought long and hard about this many times over the past 24 years since my ordination. The reason God called me into the ministry, first and foremost, was to save my own soul, and hopefully a few others will take hold of the everlasting gospel along the way. It does not come naturally for me to study and pray and obey the truth. I have a fallen sinful nature that continually strives for the mastery, and it's a struggle, some days more than others, to take the time that is necessary to maintain a vital living connection to the vine. Being in the ministry has forced me to study and pray and obey in a way that I would not have otherwise done, and God knew that, and He knows just what it will take to prepare your soul for heaven as well. But unless we are taking time every day to study, pray, and obey, how are we ever going to hear that still small voice that says, "this is the way, walk ye in it." If you don't spend time with God now, what makes you think you're going to spend time with Him in heaven? We need to think these things through. God couldn't have made salvation any easier, but it does require some sacrifice on our part to realize that there is a way of escape from sin, and we must find out what it is and take it.

I'm sure you remember what it says in **1 Corinthians 10:13**, "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer (**or permit**) you to be tempted above that ye are able (**able to resist**); but will with the temptation (**with the what?**) with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it," or that you may be able to keep from yielding to that particular sin that so easily besets you. Jesus, dwelling within, through the Holy Spirit, and through the process of sanctification (**or holy living**), is that way of escape; it's the way to become assimilated to Christ's image, but it's up to us to make the right choices.

I want to reach heaven and overcome as Christ overcame, don't you? This is my prayer for you and for myself, because a day of reckoning is coming to this old world very soon. Sin has almost reached its limit. Confusion fills the world today, and according to God's word a great terror is soon to come upon human beings. Bible prophecy tells us that the end is very near, and God's people should be preparing for what is soon break upon this world as an overwhelming surprise.

We have all been given time, haven't we? and it's very precious, but when compared to eternity, we only have a few short days of probation in which to make ready for the future immortal life, and we better take advantage of it while we can, because Jesus will soon step out of that Most Holy place in the heavenly sanctuary and make the solemn announcement, "It is finished", and there will never again be an opportunity to avail ourselves of the salvation Christ so freely offers. It's our privilege to have Christ abiding in our hearts by faith, and if He is, He will overcome sin in us when we cooperate with His efforts.

Jesus left heaven and came to this earth, bringing with Him a power that is sufficient to overcome the temptation to sin. He came to live the law of God in humanity, that by partaking of His divine nature, we also might live that law. Everyone who enters the pearly gates of the holy city will have become holy, and will enter there as a conqueror, and his greatest conquest will have been over, guess what? Self, self. May that be our experience is my prayer. Amen!

Testimonies for the Church, volume 4, page 36

"If we poor mortals reach heaven we must overcome as Christ overcame. We must be assimilated to His image; our characters must be spotless."