

Killing Sins
Colossians 3:5-9
April 15, 2012

Introduction

In **chapter 3, verses 1-4**, Paul talks about setting our hearts and minds on things above because we have died with Christ. Our old selves have died. We then have been buried with Christ, raised together with Him and seated with Him in the heavenlies. Right now, God sees us in Christ in the heavenlies. He sees us perfect in Christ Jesus. Thus Paul urges us to live a heavenly life, a victorious life over sin. Paul says that we are complete in Christ, we are seated with Christ in the heavenlies, and God sees us perfect in Christ Jesus.

Paul then anticipates such questions: How do I live the heavenly life? How do I take the truth of Christ, the reality that He is all I need, that I am complete in Him? How do I get it here on earth? Why do I struggle with sin? And Paul experienced such struggles with sin until he died.

***Romans 7:14-20** We know that the law is spiritual; but I am unspiritual, sold as a slave to sin. ¹⁵I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. ¹⁶And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good. ¹⁷As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me. ¹⁸I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. ¹⁹For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do-this I keep on doing. ²⁰Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it.*

Paul moaned about sin's control over his life. He is perplexed as to why this is. Unfortunately, this is the reality of every Christian. Furthermore, Paul says that there is a war between the new man and the flesh (**Roman 8:22-23**). The new man loves the law of God and delights in following Him, yet the flesh wants sin. Who can save us from this body of death? We are saved only through Jesus Christ and in Him there is no condemnation for us (as Paul summarizes Romans **chapter 3 to 7 in 8:1**).

But Paul does not end here: he continues in 8:2 that the reason we have no condemnation is that the Holy Spirit set us free from the law of sin and death. Now we have the Holy Spirit to help us—we draw on His power in our victory over sin. He has transformed our lives, but we have to battle our flesh on a daily basis.

Here Paul gives us a practical way of living the risen life—how we can live in the heavenlies...how we can set our heart and mind on the things above. The Holy Spirit empowers us for a day-to day victory over the flesh.

***Romans 8:13** For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.*

The key to living the risen life and fighting the sins in your flesh is “by the Spirit.” Flesh cannot overcome flesh. If we try to battle our fleshly desires on our own, there can be no victory. John Owen sums this phrase quite nicely: Be killing sin or it will be killing you.

***Colossians 3:5-9** Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. ⁶Because of these, the wrath of God is coming. ⁷You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. ⁸But now you must rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. ⁹Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices.*

I. Killing Sins (5, 8-9a)

Note: utterly slaying with urgency.

- What killing sin is not
 - Utter destruction and death of sin
 - This is to be the goal of our life

- But it will not be accomplished in this life (in our flesh)

Philippians 3:12 *Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me.*

- Diverting sin
 - Giving up one sin but holding on to others (**Acts 8:9-23**—Simon Magus, was astonished in finding out the power of the Holy Spirit and wanted to buy that.)

Acts 8:20-23 *Peter answered: "May your money perish with you, because you thought you could buy the gift of God with money! ²¹You have no part or share in this ministry, because your heart is not right before God. ²²Repent of this wickedness and pray to the Lord. Perhaps he will forgive you for having such a thought in your heart. ²³For I see that you are full of bitterness and captive to sin."*

- Occasional conquest of sin

Note: Sin can appear to die and then come back full force. Sometimes we will be successful for a season or two, then we relax our guard.

- What killing sin is
 - Habitual weakening of sin
 - Crucifying the body of sin

Luke 9:23 *Then He said to them all: "If anyone would come after Me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow Me."*

Galatians 5:24 *Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires.*

Note: This is a graphic imagery of the warfare that we are engaged in with battling our flesh. This is a long and painful process. The picture is placing our sinful deeds on the cross and leaving it there to starve and die.

- Constant fighting against sin
- Frequent success over sin
 - Sin is weakened at its roots
- What kind of sins do we kill?

Note: Not an exhaustive list but a general principle.

Note: Paul creates two lists—verse 6 and verse 8. It is fascinating how Paul puts together the list because he places two different type of scenarios: personal and social. The first list is more personal...something that happens within. The second list is social...it happens out of the mouth. The first list goes from the deeds to the root of sin; whereas, in the second list, Paul lists the root of the sin to the deeds.

- Sins of perverted love
 - Sexual immorality
 - All sexual activities that are not allowed in the Bible
 - Fornication (sex before marriage), adultery, homosexuality, incest (sex between close relatives)
 - Impurity (evil thoughts)
 - Thoughts and intent

Matthew 15:19 For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander.

- Lust / evil desires
 - Source of evil thoughts

1 Thessalonians 4:5 not in passionate lust like the heathen, who do not know God.

- Greed (covetousness)—Paul says this is idolatry
 - Root of sin
 - Self-seeking (worship of self)
- Sins of wicked hate
 - Anger
 - Underlying attitude against the world
 - Rage
 - Explosion of anger (outward show)
 - Malice
 - Wanting to cause harm to someone
 - Slander / shameful language / lying
 - All the evil that comes from the heart out of your mouth
 - Slander—to injure someone’s reputation
 - Shameful language—abusive talk (bullying)
 - Lying—not telling the truth (opposite of God)

James 3:10 Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers, this should not be.

II. Why are We to Kill Sin? (6-7, 9b)

- All those sins are under God’s wrath
 - Paul is saying “Why do you want to do the sins that God will destroy?”

Romans 1:18 The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness,

Romans 2:5 But because of your stubbornness and your unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath against yourself for the day of God’s wrath, when His righteous judgment will be revealed.

John 3:36 Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God’s wrath remains on him.

- Remember Christians are no longer under wrath

1 Thessalonians 5:9 For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.

- However we are subject to His discipline

Hebrews 12:6 because the Lord disciplines those He loves, and He punishes everyone He accepts as a son.

- If you pursue those sins, you will suffer the consequences

Proverbs 6:27-28 Can a man scoop fire into his lap without his clothes being burned? ²⁸Can a man walk on hot coals without his feet being scorched?

- We were a part of those sins in the past
 - Why do you want to go back to death when you are alive?

Romans 6:1-2 *What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase?
²By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer?*

III. How Do We Kill Sin?

Note: Paul address this in **Colossians 3:9b-4:6**.

- Recognize the presence of sin in your life

Psalms 139:23-24 *Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts.
²⁴See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.*

- Have your heart fixed on Christ
 - Through the Word
 - Through prayer
- Stop doing sin

1 Peter 2:11 *Dear friends, I urge you, as aliens and strangers in the world, to abstain from sinful desires, which war against your soul.*

Ephesians 4:28a *He who has been stealing must steal no longer*

- Starve sin
 - Don't feed your sins and build on it
 - Feed it with God's gracious gifts (that is next week).

Ephesians 4:28b *but must work, doing something useful with his own hands, that he may have something to share with those in need.*