

MINISTRY BY MAIL
Lutheran Conference of Confessional Fellowship
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Fifteenth Sunday After Trinity, September 13, 2026

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(Hymns found in The Lutheran Hymnal, CPH, 1941)

Hymns: 394, 238:1, 396, 398, 412.

Lessons: Psalm 119:1-8, Ephesians 4:1-32, Matthew 5:13-16

Sermon Text: Romans 6: 12-14.

Sermon by Pastor M. H. Eibs

Fellow Redeemed in Christ:

Christians are different from other people in this world. The reason for this is that they have been born again. Jesus told Nicodemus: ***“I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again.”*** (John 3:3) This establishes the fact that there must be a spiritual rebirth, a conversion, or a person cannot go to heaven. Peter tells us how this spiritual rebirth takes place: ***“You have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God.”*** I Pet. 1:23

When this spiritual rebirth has taken place, believers in Christ are no longer like other people in the world. People who are not converted live only according to their sinful flesh. They are governed by their sinful flesh and are inclined only to do that which is evil, contrary to God’s will. But believers in Christ as a result of their spiritual rebirth have a new nature. According to the new nature in them, believers in Christ know what pleases the Lord and want to do according to His Word.

Since the believers, however, also retain the old sinful flesh, they need exhortations such as this: ***“You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.”*** Eph. 4:22-24

We need such exhortations continually, for there will be no perfect sanctification until we get to heaven. Such an exhortation we have our text today. It is most fitting that our text coincides with our going to the Sacrament of the Altar when we confess our sins and look to the Sacrament for reassurance that our sins are truly forgiven for Jesus’ sake.

Let us hear, then, this exhortation:

“DO NOT LET SIN REIGN IN YOUR MORTAL BODY.”

1. **“You are not under law, but under grace;”**
2. **Therefore, do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness; but,**
3. **Offer yourselves and the parts of your body to God as instruments of righteousness.**

We shall consider the last verse of our text first: ***“Sin shall not be your master, because you are not under law, but under grace.”*** The exhortation of our text is: ***“Do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires.”*** This tells believers in Jesus what they should not do. But the last words of our text are not an admonition, but simply a statement of fact. ***“Sin shall not be your master, because you are not under law, but under grace.”***

Let us consider the difference between being under law and under grace. The Law of God is the statement of the immutable will of God as given in the Bible. It is in the form of commandments, telling us what we are to do and what we are not to do. Paul says: ***“Through the law we become conscious of sin.”*** Rom. 3:20 And John tells us: ***“Sin is lawlessness.”*** I John 3:4. It is a breaking of God’s commandments. Paul tells us also: ***“Law brings wrath.”*** Rom. 4:15 The Law contains God’s condemnation of our sinful thoughts, words and deeds, and tells us

that God is angry with us. It condemns us to this extent that we are told: ***“The wages of sin is death,”*** Rom. 6:23, both temporal and eternal death. The Law gives us to know that’s what we deserve. Now, to be under Law means that we are ever subject to its exacting demands (do this, don’t do that) and at the same time the Law cannot give us the strength to do what it demands. It also cannot deliver us from the domination of sin and Satan over us.

But Paul is addressing believers in Christ in our text. He says of believers: ***“You are not under law, but under grace.”*** To be under grace is the exact opposite of being under law. Grace is God’s undeserved love in Christ Jesus. It’s the divine favor God shows to poor sinners because of Jesus. Grace includes everything that comes to us because God loved us and showed His mercy to us for the sake of Jesus His Son. It begins with God’s election of grace in Christ way back in eternity, and it ends with our glorification in heaven to all eternity. Paul says: ***“Those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.”*** Rom. 8:30 To be under grace is most comforting, for it tells us: ***“There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus,”*** Rom. 8:1, for ***“God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men’s sins against them.”*** 2 Cor. 5:19 To be under grace means to believe this precious truth that we are declared righteous for Jesus’ sake. The Bible says: ***“God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”*** 2 Cor. 5:21

To be under grace not only delivers us from the guilt of sin, but also gives us the ability to withstand sin, to avoid that which is displeasing to God. It fills us with the spiritual power to trample unrighteousness under foot and to work righteousness. To be under grace means to be given the ability to obey this exhortation: ***“Do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires.”*** In accordance with this ability, we as believers in Christ are taught: ***“Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness.”***

2.

Sin is not to reign over us in our mortal body. We are not to give in to the sinful desires that Satan plants in our hearts. Paul explains before our text: ***“We know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin.”*** v. 6 So now, as newborn creatures, we are to be ***“dead to sin.”*** v. 11 The temptation to sin will always be there. We are, after all, still in this sinful world with all the examples of wickedness all around us. And Satan, our scheming adversary, is always devising new ways to try to get us to forget God’s Word and do that which is sinful. But through the power of the Gospel in word and sacrament we have the ability to resist the temptations and not yield to sin.

So, Paul specifically directs us as Christians: ***“Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness.”*** We are not to use our mouth to speak lies. The Bible says: ***“Each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to his neighbor, for we are all members of one body.”*** Eph. 4:25 The Bible also warns against filthy speech, and says: ***“Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths.”*** Eph. 4:29 We are not to use our mouth to speak evil and slanderous words against our fellowman. The Bible says: ***“Brothers, do not slander one another.”*** James 4:11 Do not use your ears to listen to music which is directed toward sexual immorality. Turn away from the one who wants to tell a dirty joke, and don’t listen to slanderous words which ruin someone’s reputation. Do not use your hands to commit evil deeds. Do not use your feet to follow in the paths of wickedness or to go to such places where you would not want Jesus to be your Companion. Do not use your eyes to view sinful pictures which will tempt you to sin. Do not use your mouth to consume too much intoxicating drink. The Bible says: ***“Wine is a mocker and beer a brawler; whoever is led astray by them is not wise.”*** Prov. 20:1 In this day and age especially it is necessary to warn: Do not subject your body to mind-altering drugs such as marijuana and cocaine. Do not use your sex organs to practice immorality. The Bible says: ***“Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a man commits are outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body. Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.”*** I Cor. 6:18-20

3.

Paul writes: ***“Offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life.”*** We have been brought from death to life. Paul says: We ***“were dead in your transgressions and sins,”*** Eph. 2:1, but Paul also says before our text: ***“We died to sin.”*** v. 2. He also writes: ***“We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.”*** v. 4 Therefore now, as such who have been brought from death to life, we should devote ourselves in our whole life, in all that we do, to the Lord. Another way of saying it is that we should place ourselves at God’s disposal to do whatever pleases Him.

Specifically, Paul says: ***“Offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness.”*** We should use all the parts of our body to serve and please the Lord. We should use our feet to walk in the paths ordered by God’s commandments. The psalmist says: ***“Blessed are they whose ways are blameless, who walk according to the law of the LORD.”*** Ps. 119:1 We should use our hands to do what is right, to earn our living, and to help others. Paul says: ***“Make it your ambition to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business and to work with your hands, just as we told you, so that your daily life may win the respect of outsiders and so that you will not be dependent on anybody.”*** I Thess. 4:11-12 There are many fine ways we can use our tongues and our mouths as ***“instruments of righteousness.”*** We can pray and sing God’s praises, and speak those things that will edify our fellowman. As Christians, Paul says: ***“Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.”*** Eph. 5:19-20 Paul also says: ***“Be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.”*** Eph. 6:18 We can use our eyes to read God’s Word and our ears to hear it preached. It is God’s Holy Word; it instructs us in all that is God-pleasing, warns us against that which is wicked, and, above all, the Gospel of Jesus Christ is ***“The power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes.”*** Rom. 1:16 We ought to use our mouths to spread that Word to other people, and be eager to give them a reason for the hope that is in us. Paul covers all the possible uses of our body when he exhorts: ***“So whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.”*** I Cor. 10:31

Having heard what the Lord teaches in our text, may this be an expression of our attitude:

*“Savior, I long to walk Closer with Thee;
Led by Thy guiding hand, Ever to be
Constantly near Thy side, Quickened and purified,
Living for Him who died Freely for me.” Amen.*
(The Lutheran Hymnal 422:4)

Reprinted from the Ministry By Mail for July 14, 1985.