

Message Extras

a little something extra to keep you connected to Jesus this week

Message Extras accompany the [weekly message](#).

God's grace is proactive, not reactive. How can this be?! We know God is perfect in every way, and we know it was our sin that separated us from Him. But, God proactively gave His only Son Jesus to die on a cross to pay the price of our sin. He did this because He made you, He loves you, and He wants to be in relationship with you. When you repent of your sin and receive Jesus (God's perfect gift of love), 2 Corinthians 5 says you are made new in Jesus. And Romans 8 says, as a follower of Jesus, you are a co-heir with Christ. When you believe in and follow Jesus (God the Son), God the Father puts God the Holy Spirit in you and adopts you as His own child. Let that settle in for a moment.

Does this mean you will never sin again ... unfortunately, no. You might sin this week, maybe even later today. The Apostle Paul wrote in Romans 7, "The things I want to do, I do not do, and the things I do not want to do, these things I keep doing. What a wretched man I am. Who will save me from myself... All glory to God, who delivers me through Jesus Christ our Lord!"

As you continue reading, in Romans 8, you read that even though you might struggle with sin, there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. Are you in Christ Jesus? Is Jesus Christ your Lord? If not, what are you waiting for? Today is your day of salvation! Believe in Jesus, that He is the Son of God, that He is God, that He died for your sin and rose again and be delivered from your sin.

Romans 8 closes with a beautiful picture of God's proactive grace in Jesus. The text teaches us that Jesus is in God's presence interceding for His followers. The language here is active language, Jesus is interceding. If you have put your faith in Jesus, right now, He is actively interceding for you. This active intercession is what makes the promise in Deuteronomy 31:6 possible in Christ. The promise here is God never leaves nor forsakes those that belong to Him. At the close of Romans 8, the promise is given that NOTHING will separate you from God's love in Christ Jesus.

The theologian, AB Simpson summed up these promises in simple human terms, "Jesus never says goodbye, He stays."

When I first read this quote by Simpson, it occurred to me, in every conversation I have ever had with the Lord, and in every future conversation I will have with Him, with every 'Amen,' He has never said, nor will He ever say goodbye. In every season of sadness and hardship, He is faithful to encourage me, for He never says goodbye. When the troubling waters of life come rushing in like a flood, and they are so deep that I begin to think I will never touch bottom again, He is there walking on the waters with an outstretched hand to lift me out of them and carry me through them, for He never says goodbye. When I fail and am brokenhearted before Him, He is so close to me to forgive me and restore me, for He never says goodbye. And in every season of celebration, when life is as it should be, He is there at the table laughing with me as we enjoy each other's company, for He never says goodbye.

I am His, and He is mine. In every step I take in this life, He is right there walking with me, leading me, and guiding me. The psalmist wrote "You make known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand." (Psalm 16:11).

In other words, in this life, He gives me knowledge of the way I should go so that while on my journey, He is always leading me to life. But He does not give me knowledge, send me on my way, and say goodbye. No, He never says goodbye. As I go in the way He leads me, He gives me His very presence, and in that place alone, He fills me with joy over and over for all the days of my life. But He never says goodbye. Finally, when this life fades away, and I move on into eternity, He has promised pleasures that are pure and good and happy and fun forever and ever! We will live with Him forever, and He will never say goodbye. So, it is then, in every season of life, both now and forever, He never says goodbye.

Let us consider the greatness of His grace, His faithfulness, and His love. Let us rest in this truth and upon these promises, living every day with all our focus on Jesus so that we rest secure upon the One who always stays with us. The One who proactively loves us. The One who proactively gives us grace. The One who never says goodbye.

- How is the Holy Spirit stirring your heart in this moment as you reflect on and consider God's proactive grace? How will you respond to the Holy Spirit?
- How does the knowledge that Jesus never says goodbye encourage you today?
- Small Group/Bible Study Challenge: Read Romans 6; Galatians 2:20; II Corinthians 5:17
 - We know God's grace is proactive – does this give us the freedom to continue sinning?
 - According to Romans 6, what are the steps you can take to be set free from sin in Christ?

- o What can we learn and apply from Romans 6:11, Galatians 2:20, and II Corinthians 5:17 that will help us obey the command given in Romans 6:12 to no longer let sin reign in our mortal bodies?

