

## Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

### Free from Sin, Part 2

Scripture: Romans 6:19-23

Code: 45-49

Romans chapter 6, and let's turn in our Bibles back to that chapter and see if we can't finish our study of this great chapter, at least for this series. And hopefully we'll pursue a personal study for many years yet to come. Now, we're looking at Romans 6:15-23. Let me read it to you.

"What then? Shall we sin because we are not under the law but under grace? God forbid. Know ye not that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? But God be thanked, that whereas you were the servants of sin, ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness. I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness.

"For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness. What fruit had ye then in those things of which ye are now ashamed? For the end of those things *is* death. But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. For the wages of sin *is* death; but the gift of God *is* eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

In the first three chapters of Paul's epistle to the Romans, he presented the utter sinfulness of sin. He painted a picture that's horrifying, to put it mildly. And men must understand their sin. They must understand the sinfulness of sin, else they will never be able to understand God's forgiving grace.

Now, when one becomes a Christian, the power of sin is broken. Sin's tyranny is ended. And we've been seeing that here in the 6th chapter of Romans. When Paul presents the great doctrine of justification by faith in chapters 3 and 4, he then launches into an explanation of its results in chapters 5, 6, 7 and 8.

One of those results is the breaking of the power of sin, the breaking of the tyranny of sin, the breaking of the bondage of sin. When you become a Christian, sin's bondage is broken. And that's why we see twice in this passage the statement "free from sin." Free from sin. The good news there in verse 18 and there in verse 22 is that we've been made free from sin.

Now, the only way that has any meaning to us is to know what it was to be a slave to sin, which he spoke of in verse 17 and again in verse 20. Let me just remind you. Sin, of course, is the most devastating, the most debilitating, the most degenerating power that ever entered into the human stream. It kills everyone and ultimately, except by the intervening grace of God, would send everyone to an eternal hell.

The Bible calls it “the accursed thing,” Joshua 7:13. It is compared in Scripture to the venom of snakes and the stench of death. It is defined for us in 1 John 3:4 as “transgression of God’s law.” Now, the Scripture characterizes sin in many ways. And I don’t want to go back over some of the ground we’ve covered, but just as a reminder, let me state a few of the ways in which the Bible describes sin.

First of all, it says sin is defiling. It is a pollution of the soul. You might see it as this: It is to the soul what rust is to gold. It is to the soul what scars are to a beautiful face. It is to the soul what a stain is to silk, what smog is to an azure sky. It is a pollution. It makes the soul black with guilt. It is a bloody cloth in Isaiah 30. It is sores from a deadly plague in 1 Kings chapter 8. It is filthy garments in Zechariah chapter 3. And even God, according to Zechariah 11:8, loathes the sinner. Paul calls it in 2 Corinthians 7:1 “filthiness of the flesh and spirit.” So, sin is defiling.

Secondly, the Bible tells us that sin is rebellion. It tramples God’s Word. It rebels against God’s law. Sin is, as one man said, “God’s would-be murderer.” If sin had its way, it would eliminate God. God would cease to be if the sinner had his choice.

Thirdly, sin is ingratitude. Romans 1 says, “Neither were they thankful.” Like Absalom, who as the son of David, his father the king had kissed him and taken him to his heart, then went out and plotted treason against his own father. Having been the recipient of all of his father’s treasures he then turned to be a traitor. So the sinner indulges in God’s goodness, indulges in God’s treasures, indulges in God’s blessings in the world around him, and then betrays God by serving Satan, God’s archenemy. The sinner then lives in abuse of all God’s gifts.

Fourthly, the Bible says that sin is incurable. Jeremiah 13:23 says, “Can the Ethiopian change his skin? Can the leopard change his spots? *Then* may ye also do good that are accustomed to evil.” In other words, you have no more chance of changing your nature than a leopard does his spots or an Ethiopian his skin.

Paul wrote to Titus in chapter 1:15 and says, “Their conscience - ” that is the inward part of them, even that which triggers their right behavior “ - is defiled.” John Flavel said years ago, “All the tears of a penitent sinner should be shed as many as there have fallen drops of rain since the creation cannot wash away sin. The everlasting burnings in hell cannot purify the flaming conscience from the least

sin.” Sin is so utterly devastating, it is so utterly destroying, it is so incurable that even the eternity in hell cannot take it away.

The Bible also says that sin is hated by God. In Jeremiah 44, God says, “O do not this abominable thing which I hate.” Sin is also overpowering. It hangs like blackness hangs to night. It dominates the mind, it says in Romans 1:21. It dominates the will, it says in Jeremiah 44:15-17. It dominates the affection it says in John 3:19-21.

And then sin brings Satanic control. Ephesians 2 says that one who is a sinner walks “according to the prince of the power of the air.” He is a child of disobedience. Jesus said in John 8:44, a child of the devil himself.

And then sin brings misery to life. In Job 5:7 it says, “Man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward.” In Romans 8 it says the creature is subject to emptiness, uselessness. It takes away man’s honor, it takes away his peace, it takes away the meaning of his life.

Then finally, sin damns the soul to hell. Revelation 20 talks about all those who know not God and Christ being cast into the lake of fire.

Now all of that is just to remind you of what it means to be a slave to sin, a horrible existence. And yet true of every creature that comes into the world because of the curse, as we saw in the fourth chapter - or rather in the third chapter - in Adam. Now when you understand sin and its sinfulness, then you have an appreciation for what it means to be free from sin. And what a glorious deliverance that is.

And that’s Paul’s message in verses 15 to 23. And I don’t want to go back and review all that we’ve seen in chapter 6, but you need to know the whole chapter. So, if you haven’t been here, get those tapes and study the Word of God through this marvelous chapter.

Just remember this, that Paul’s discussion is triggered by an antagonistic question in verse 15 and we said that this was the question of the antagonist. Paul has heard this question before. He’s preaching grace so somebody inevitably comes along and says, “Oh, grace. In other words, we should sin because we’re not under the law but under grace. Is that right? We’re free now. We’re under grace. God forgives our sin so we can just go out and sin all we want.”

And this is always the antagonist’s criticism of the message of grace, that grace leads to lawlessness, grace leads to antinomianism, grace leads to unbounded liberty, grace leads to abuse. And so people say, “You can’t just preach grace. You can’t turn people loose. You’ve got to preach the law and the rules,” and so forth. And so, the question comes shall we sin because we’re not under the law, but under grace? Do people who are under grace just go wild on their sin? The answer is, “God forbid. No, no, no.” And that’s the second point, the answer. And Paul’s answer is no, absolutely not. Grace

is not an excuse for sin. Grace never transforms someone into a free-wheeling sinner. Quite the contrary.

And that leads us to the axiom of verse 16. And here is a self-evident principle. It's just a very basic principle. "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are whom ye obey." And you can stop there for a moment. All he's saying is that look, if you've yielded yourself as a servant to God in Christ, then the very definition of that servitude is that you have come to obey Him, not disobey Him. You didn't willingly yield yourself to Christ to disobedience, you willingly yielded yourself to Him to obedience.

So, we have a new master and it is self-evident in that axiom, in that obvious principle, that when you yielded yourself to Christ, you became obedient unto righteousness, verse 16 says. Now, whether you yielded yourself to sin as in your former life, which resulted in death, or whether you yield yourself to obedience which results in righteousness, it is a self-evident fact when you yield yourself as a slave to someone, you commit yourself to obey. So, when you become a Christian, you're not committing yourself to a life of disobedience, you're committing yourself to a life of obedience. That's basic to the very definition of terms.

And no longer, then, according to verse 16, is our master sin. Our new master is obedience. And we are subject to the Lord who produces in us obedience unto righteousness.

Now, listen again to something I said last week and I want to reemphasize it. Not only is this an ethical bond, it is a creative miracle. In other words, when you become a Christian, you are not only ethically bound to obedience, you are creatively made into an obedient person. So, it is not only an ought that is an imperative, it is a fact. A Christian is characterized by obedience. Jesus said it, "If you love Me, you will - " what? " - keep My commandments." And the question comes up in the New Testament, if you don't do that then no matter what you say you don't know Him, because when you come to Christ you are affirming your identification with the new master and you are creatively transformed into one who obeys. So, it is not only an ethical bond, it is a creative miracle. You not only are supposed to obey, you will obey. It is a state.

Now, if we were under the bondage to sin before we came to Christ, we are now under the bondage to obedience. Grace, then, gives us a new master. Now, in order to help us understand this, we move to the axiom of verse 16 to the argument of verses 17-22. We got into this a little last time, let's see if we can't run through it.

Here's his argument. Here's how he explains the thing he explained in verse 16. It is an extended contrast between the two slaveries. You're either a slave to sin or a slave to God. You're either disobedient to God, or obedient. You either do what sin tells you, or you do what God tells you. And we'll expand on that as we go.

But let's look first of all at the position. The contrast flows from position, to practice, to promise. Look at the position of the two people, that is their state. Verse 17, "But God be thanked, that whereas you were the slaves of sin, ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered, being then made free from sin, you became the slaves of righteousness."

Now, what he's saying here is there are basically two positions. You can either be a slave to sin or a slave to righteousness. That's the position. There are only two families. Every person is in one of these two families. It is either the mark of your life that you obey sin or it is the mark of your life that you obey righteousness. This is identity.

Now notice again, verse 17, what we saw last time. You have been poured into a mold, that form of teaching, form being the idea of a mold. When you became a Christian, your old self was melted down and you were repoured into a new mold, the mold that is constituted by the doctrines of the gospel. And so you were poured into a gospel mold and you were popped out as a new creation. And your lifestyle now will manifest that created miracle and you will then respond no longer as one who is under the lordship of Satan but you will respond as one who is under the lordship of God. That's what it means in Ephesians 2:10 when it says you were created unto good works. You've been poured into a new mold. The old thing is melted down. It's gone. And you've been redone.

Now, it doesn't mean that we admire righteousness. It doesn't mean that we desire righteousness. It doesn't mean that we're attempting to be righteous. It doesn't mean that we're trying to practice righteousness in our daily life. It means that we've come under the power, and control, and influence of righteousness. We've been transformed. And you have to understand this. People get very confused in this passage if they don't. Once you were tyrannized by, you were ruled by, you were governed by sin. And now you are tyrannized by, and governed by, and ruled by righteousness. God plants in us the incorruptible seed of righteousness. It becomes our master. And 1 John 3:9-10 says we can't go on any longer sinning the way we did so that the question is silly.

Shall we continue in sin because we're under grace? Of course not. The fact that we're under grace precludes that as even a possibility. There's going to have to be a break in our sin. Bless God for our family, because when we came into the family of obedience and righteousness, the family of the Lord, we were made free from sin's tyranny. That's very important because what it means practically is that you don't have to sin. That's what it means. Sin no longer is your master. Did you get that? You don't have to sin anymore. And that's what makes it so stupid when we do. We don't have to do that.

Now, before you were a Christian you had to sin because sin was your master and you had no other option. And so, all you did, even your best, was filthy rags. You just sin, sin, sin, sin. And even when you did a good deed, you had a bad motive because it wasn't to glorify God, it was probably to feel better about yourself, or to conform to some ethical standard. And anything short of the glory of God

is a sin. So it was sin, sin, sin, sin. When you became a Christian, no longer did sin have the tyranny over you, as we've been seeing. Great thought.

Now we are slaves of God. Now we are servants of righteousness. Now we are called to obedience. Are we going to continue in sin and lawlessness? Ridiculous. Listen to this. Before you were a Christian you weren't free. People say, "Oh, I don't want to give up my freedom. Boy, I'm not going to become a Christian and get constricted and all that." You weren't free. You know what your – you are an absolute bond-slave to sin. It's all you ever do. People think they're free. They're not free. That isn't freedom.

When you became a Christian you became free. You're free for the first time in your life. Not free to do wrong. But free to do what? Right, for the first time. Get that? Write that one down somewhere. That's very important, very basic. When you become a Christian you say, "Oh, I have liberty in Christ. Now I can do whatever I want." No, no. No, you're not free to sin now, you're just free for the first time in your life to do what's right. And that's a nice freedom.

What it means is that before you were saved you had no choice, now you have a choice. And because sin is not your master, you can choose what is right. Isn't that great? So, Christians aren't people who are free to do wrong, they're people who are free for the first time to do right. Now does that give you a different perspective on Christian liberty?

People say, "Boy, you know, now you're a Christian, you're under grace. We don't have to worry about this, and we don't have to worry about that, we can do what - " That isn't the point. In fact, if you live like that, I question whether you're under grace at all. The great freedom of being a Christian is the freedom to do right for the first time.

So, two slaveries. And we saw their position. One begins at birth and one begins at new birth and you're either under the bondage to sin or under the bondage to righteousness. And if you're a Christian, you've been freed from sin, you no longer belong to that old master, righteousness is your master, obedience is your master, the Lord is your master and you've been creatively made to obey, and are also ethically bound to obey. You can obey and you should.

Now, let's look from the position to the practice, verse 19. And this is kind of an interesting beginning. He says, "I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh." That's a most interesting statement. He says I want you to realize that I'm using an analogy here about masters and slaves as an accommodation to your humanness. In other words, folks, it's hard to put supernatural eternal incomprehensible miraculous data into these little puny heads. And Paul says, "I'm trying to accommodate you the best I can. So I'm speaking after the manner of men." In other words, "I'm bringing it down to a human analogy of a slave and a master so that I can accommodate the infirmity of your humanness."

And I think it's important that Paul says that, because in any analogy that you ever find, there always is a breakdown in a human analogy, isn't there? And some people will be listening to this slave/master deal and they'd be trying to follow that analogy all the way out and they'd get kind of confused. And so he says, "Look, this is an accommodation made necessary by our fallenness. We're just trying to understand it the best way we can."

Just as a note, he says, "I speak in this manner because of the infirmity of your 'flesh.'" Now that is a very important word. We're going to see it again as we go through Romans, very key word. It means "our mortality." It is a parallel term to the term we saw over in verse 12, "your mortal body." Your mortal body. And that's where sin finds its bridgehead. And so he says it's because of your mortality, your body of sin, your humanness, where sin resides. Not the new you, the sanctified you that we talked about, not the new resurrected you walking in newness of life, not the new creation fit for eternity, but sin that's in your mortal body, that's in your humanness, that's in your flesh. The flesh is the faculty of man influenced by sin.

And even though we're Christians, as long as we possess humanness, as long as we are wrapped in these bodies that are fallen, we are going to have a struggle with sin. Not sin in the new creation, but sin in the flesh, which encases the new creation until we are glorified. And we saw that earlier in our study. And we're weak in our understanding. We are weak because of our fallenness. And so Paul is accommodating us with a human analogy.

Now, he moves on in verse 19. "For as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness." This is a great, great truth. Now he's not talking about our position anymore, he's talking about our practice. He has stated already that we have a new master, verse 18, we've been freed from sin and become the servants of righteousness. That's our position. We are the servants of righteousness, we do respond to righteousness, we do respond to obedience, we do respond to God, and now most interestingly he says in verse 19, "As you yielded your members servants to uncleanness in the past, even so now yield your members servants to righteousness."

In other words, he says, "This is who you are," in verse 18, and now in verse 19 he says, "Now act like it." Now act like it. Get your practice lined up with your position. He's not talking about nature, the nature of an individual in verse 19. He was talking about that in verses 17 and 18. You're either by nature a servant of sin or by the new nature a servant of God. But he's now talking about your lifestyle and he is saying your lifestyle must accommodate your nature. Now that you don't have to be a slave to sin, now that you are a servant of righteousness, act like it. And, of course, the flesh wants to get in the way and we'll find out when we get to chapter 8 how you deal with the flesh. Paul basically says "kill it." And we'll find out how to kill the flesh when we get to chapter 8.

But he is saying here since you don't have to sin, don't sin. And the picture is very clear. First of all, "as you yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity;" In the past, that describes the first family, the family of those who are in sin positionally. Their practice is to continually yield their members - again having to do with your physical faculties, your humanness - to sin. That was their life style. That's all they can do. They yield their members slaves to uncleanness. That's basic. That's life for them.

The word "members" again, remember it means "bodily parts, the flesh, the mortal body." You see, the person in the state of sin has no choice. He has to yield, and that word means "to present" or "offer." He gives his body to sin. It even uses the word "uncleanness." That's the word of inward pollution. And then he uses the word "iniquity." That's the word of outward lawlessness.

So, he says that before you became a Christian, when you were in the family of sin, you were polluted on the inside and you were evil on the outside. You just continually yielded yourself to that, internally and externally. There's no choice involved, absolutely no choice. The body of sin in an unregenerate person - listen now - is in complete harmony with the nature of man. The nature of man is sin. And the body of man is sinful. So his nature and his body are in total harmony. His soul and his body are in agreement on sin as his master, and so he just sins, doing evil continually - continually.

Now, notice the progression. You yield your bodily parts servants to sin, to uncleanness and iniquity. And then it says, "unto iniquity," most interesting. Guess what sin leads to? What? Sin. More sin. Sin begets sin. It is cancer, folks. It is cancer. It reproduces itself. It is a cruel master.

Oscar Wilde, great writer, brilliant mind, very esteemed man, secretly was involved in homosexual relationships and other deviant behavior, and was discovered. And he wrote, "I forgot that what a man is in secret, he will some day shout aloud from the housetop." Sin begets sin. It's discovered. There's no way to stop it.

I always think about Sinclair Lewis, who was the toast of the literary world, and he wanted to mock Christianity so he wrote *Elmer Gantry*. And *Elmer Gantry* was a blast at Christian preachers and evangelism, making the featured character a Bible-pounding, Jesus-preaching, alcoholic, fornicator, and thief, everything bad. The literary world toasted Sinclair Lewis and few people know that he died an alcoholic in a third-rate clinic somewhere outside the city of Rome, totally devastated.

You don't get away with sin, it just begets itself. And that's what he's saying. You used to be under sin, and as your position was under the bondage of sin, your practice was there as well and sin begat sin, begat sin, begat sin, begat sin, begat sin, begat sin and as we'll see in a moment, there's an ultimate end to all of that.



But he says this, "Now you've been translated to a new master." As you did that in the past - look back at verse 19 - even so now, present, offer, yield your bodily parts servants to righteousness which produces what? Holiness. As your members were 100 percent yielded to sin before Christ, so they should now be 100 percent yielded to righteousness since Christ. Now remember, the new creation soul is sinless, it's not I, it's sin that's in me, in my humanness. The bodily parts, our mortality, our fallenness, our corruptible humanness must be yielded. And as I said earlier, for the first time we have a choice. That's our freedom.

And so, we come to chapter 12 of Romans as a preview and we hear these familiar words, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God that ye present your - " what? " - bodies." Where is the problem? It's the body, isn't it? And that's why he doesn't say "present your soul." Your soul is a new creation. He doesn't say "present your inner man." That's been transformed. Present your what? Your body. Because that's where the battleground lies, in your fallenness, in your humanness. And that's why Paul says also to the Corinthians, "I beat my body to bring it into subjection." You have to really control it. Read 1 Thessalonians chapter 4 and see how the body tends to drag us into evil.

And so, he says you did yield yourselves that way, "O now yield your bodily parts as slaves to righteousness." You will do this because you're new, but do it always because you can. You understand that? You will do it, but do it all the time. You will do it sometime. You will do it because you're new, but do it all the time. In other words - listen now carefully - when you came into salvation in Jesus Christ, God's grace was not given to you to allow you to do sin and get away with it, but to make it so you would never have to sin. You understand that? Big difference. I don't think very many people understand that.

So, the whole idea of being a Christian isn't impunity from sin, the whole idea of being a Christian is that you just don't sin. You say, "Now wait a minute. Can we do that?" Technically, yes. Practically, no. Because our fallenness gets in the way. But we want to do it more and more. And look at the progression here. "Yield your members servants to righteousness unto - " what? " - holiness." "Righteousness" means "do right." Righteousness is doing right. Holiness is a state of perfection. As iniquity leads to iniquity, doing right leads to spiritual perfection, spiritual completion, to being utterly separated from sin. That's what holiness means.

Martyn Lloyd Jones, who so often captures thoughts in such a graphic way, says this, "As you go on living the righteous life and practicing it with all your might and energy, and all your time and everything else, you will find that the process that went on before in which you went from bad to worse and became viler and viler is entirely reversed. You will become cleaner and cleaner, and purer and purer, and holier and holier, and more and more conformed to the image of the Son of God."

Now, see, that's the difference, isn't it? That's the difference of the outworking of that new nature as over against the outworking of the old nature. That's the difference in the second half of Romans 6 in being under the Master, the Lord, under the master, sin. So we progress to greater and greater purity, greater and greater holiness as sinners go down, down, down, down.

Let me add a footnote. Nobody stands still. And Christians who allow themselves sin under the wrong understanding of grace or because they give into the flesh will find it work in them the same principle that's at work in an unbeliever, sin will lead to sin, to sin, to sin, to sin. So each slavery is a developing slavery. Neither stand still.

When Israel was in Egypt - to borrow an analogy if I might - God gave Pharaoh a command. Most people know the command, "Let My people - " what? " - go." Do you know the rest of it? That wasn't the whole thing. Listen to what God said. "Let My people go that they may serve Me." You don't understand the command if you don't understand that part. "Let My people go that they may serve Me." Nobody was ever delivered from bondage to do what they wanted. When we were delivered from bondage, we were to do what God wants.

He didn't say, "Let My people go so they can roam around the rest of their life." It was not to let them go to wander at their own whim and do as they please. God's plan for them was that they might be delivered from the bondage of their cruel masters in Egypt in order to become committed to a new master and serve Him. By the way, it took a whole generation to learn that. So, we haven't been freed from sin to do what we want, we've been freed from sin to do what He wants. So, the question asked in verse 15 is a ridiculous question.

Now, finally, Paul's contrast goes one more step, and he talks about the promise. Where do these two slaveries end up? Because they definitely end up in two different places. Look at verse 20. First of all, where does sin end up? "For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness. What fruit had ye then in those things of which you're now ashamed? For the end of those things *is* - " what? " - death."

Notice these two verses. They're very simple, and yet they're very profound. He says, "When you were the servants or slaves of sin - " in your former life, in that position, yielded to that life " - you were free from righteousness." You were totally cut loose from righteousness. You had no cause to respond to righteousness. You had no need. Righteousness made no demands on you because you had no capacity. Well, what an incredible statement. You can't respond to the demands of righteousness. They're not bound on you. We're not to go up and down the street and say, "Now all of you people, you need to abide by God's laws." They have no cause for that. They have no need for that. You want to know something else? It won't do them any good either. They're free from righteousness. They have no responsibility to righteousness. They're controlled by, ruled by sin, and

all they can do is sin. They have one master, righteousness has no pressure to apply to them, because they have nothing in their nature that can cause them to respond to it. Do you understand that?

That is a tremendous statement. Because there are people who don't know Christ who think they're good people. The truth is they're slaves to sin and they're totally free from righteousness. Righteousness has no cause to which they must respond. Boy, what a statement. The world is full of people who think they're good people. They think they do right things and good things and honorable things. And on a human level, they do. But when God starts talking about the standards that are His standards, they are totally free from righteousness. They're not bound to obey righteousness, they're not bound to keep the righteous law, there's no need for that because they have no capacity for that.

In fact, you know, Paul has a good word for self-righteousness, for man doing his best apart from God. Do you know what he called it? Dung. Interesting, isn't it? If you wonder where that is, it's Philippians 3:7-8. And so, to me, that verse 20 is just a shocking, shocking statement. People without Jesus Christ have no obligation to righteousness at all because they couldn't fulfill it. Whew. So, when I say you're either a slave of sin or a slave of righteousness, boy, that is exactly what Paul is saying here. And nobody's in the middle.

And look what he says in verse 21. "And when you were a slave to sin and totally free from righteousness, what fruit did you have of the things of which you are now ashamed?" What fruit did you have? Well, the answer to that is none. The only fruit you had when you were unregenerate was fruit that you're now what? Ashamed of. Oh, you know, you see a guy who is without Christ and, boy, he's talking up a big game. "Boy, you should have heard what I did, man, I did this deal." He talks about all of his sin and boasts about all the things. "Boy, I conned so-and-so. I got this little deal here. And I did this to this person." And he boasts in his sin and, boy, when he comes to Jesus Christ, all of the results and the product of his sin is cause for what? For shame.

So, Paul says, "Look, don't ask such a stupid question as, 'Now that we're under grace, do we continue in sin?' We look back to that period of time and we look at all the fruit of our sin and the only thing it brings to us is - what? - shame."

I always appreciate when somebody's going to give their testimony and they've come to Jesus Christ and they may have come out of some sinful, horrible, sordid background, and when someone really comes to Jesus Christ, that's the last thing in the world they want to talk about. Oh, they may want to tell you how the Lord delivered them from drugs, or from crime, or from some evil sin and so forth, but they don't relish in that sin anymore. It's a shame to them. So, if that's true, why would we want to come to Christ and then go on sinning when the only fruit of that is something we were utterly ashamed of?

John Calvin said, "As soon as the godly begin to be enlightened by the Spirit of Christ and the preaching of the gospel, they freely acknowledge that their whole past life, which they lived without Christ, is worthy of condemnation. So far from trying to excuse themselves, they are in fact ashamed of themselves. Indeed, they go farther and continually bear their disgrace in mind so that the shame of it may make them more truly and willingly humble before God."

Well, that's a beautiful statement. The fruit of sin does nothing but fill them with shame. You've had that reaction in your life. You can look back on your life before Jesus Christ and you can see a lot to be ashamed of. You wouldn't want to talk about that. You don't glory in that. But the people who don't know Christ, you see, they glory in the thing you're ashamed of. And where does it all lead? Verse 21, the end of those things is death.

Why in the world would a Christian, justified by grace through faith, brought to Jesus Christ and given the choice to do right, ever choose to sin when sin only begets sin and death and shame, from which he was delivered? You know, Paul was really making a case here, folks. If we sin, we are really stupid. And so the way the devil tries to get us to sin is to get us not to be – what? - thinking. It leads to death.

What death is this? Second death, spiritual death and hell, the death of the soul. That's where sin leads. That's its fruit. Now if all you can produce with sin is fruit that brings shame and spiritual and eternal death, if sin is a shameful killer of the soul, then what reason to ever offer your body to sin? No reason. No reason.

But what about the second master? Look at verse 22. "But now being made free from sin - " I can't tell you how I've grown to love that statement. I've read it many times. I taught Romans - some of you may remember - in 1969 here. We whisked through it at a chapter a whack. Those were the days when I was young and foolish. I exhausted all my knowledge at that speed. But as I've gone over this and over this, "being made free from sin," oh, that just brings joy to my heart. And I was thinking back, look with me at 4:6. And Paul says, "Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness apart from works, *saying*, 'Blessed *are* they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed *is* the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.'" That's the first part.

Oh how blessed that God doesn't hold out sin against us. That's one thing. But here in chapter 6, how doubly blessed that not only does God not hold our sin against us, but He frees us from its tyranny. Just to know that I don't have to sin, I'm no longer a subject, it's so great.

So, verse 22, "But now being made free from sin - " doesn't mean you're free from ever sinning. It just means you're free from its tyranny. You don't have to. And you've "become slaves to God." There's

that bond-slave word again. "Ye have your fruit - " a whole different fruit. "Fruit" means "product." "Fruit" means "result." And what is our fruit? What is it? Holiness.

Now again, that is not only an ought, that is this is what you ought to do, it is a fact. I believe if you're truly saved and the divine life is in you and you're a new creation, holiness is manifest. I believe that. I believe you cannot have a Christian with no fruit at all. Well, you might have to look a long time and find a shriveled grape here and there, but there's got to be some. Got to be some. Your fruit unto holiness.

I don't know how you feel about the word "holiness." It's a beautiful word. I guess I love it because it's God's most glorious attribute. In Isaiah 6 God is said to be holy, holy, holy, and to think that we could be like God - marvelous. We can't be God, but we can be like Him when we walk in holiness.

So, we have been made free from sin. It has no claim on us. And we have become bond-slaves to God and we have a new product, a new end, and that's holiness. And to what does that lead? The end, everlasting life. The end in verse 21, what? The end of these things is what? Death, verse 21. The end in verse 22, everlasting life.

This I call the promises. Start with the position, you're either in slavery to sin or slavery to God. The practice, your life is either progressing viler, viler, and viler; or holier, and holier, and holier. And then the promise, the end over here is death, the end over here is everlasting life.

Now, may I just point out here that everlasting life is not so much a quantity of life as a quality of life? It isn't so much that it means you're just going to live forever, because it wouldn't mean anything to live forever unless the quality of life was worth living forever, right? And so it's a quality of life. We enter into an everlasting kind of life. What it means is a supernatural kind of life, an eternal kind of life that belongs to God. God's life in us, abundant life. And so, that's how Paul draws the contrast.

So, he moves through the antagonist, the answer, then he establishes the axiom in verse 16, then comes the argument in verses 17-22. And finally, the absolute. The absolute. And you know this verse, perhaps from a child. Verse 23. Now listen. This is to say there's a reason why sin as a principle in a person's life mastering him, leads him to be viler, and viler, and viler, and ultimately eternal death.

And there's a reason why righteousness in a life leads one to be holier, and holier, and holier, and entering into the fullness of everlasting life. And the reason is because there is an absolute law and that law inexorably works. And here it is. "For the wages of sin *is* death; but the gift of God *is* eternal life - " and then the coup de grace of the whole chapter " - through Jesus Christ our Lord." That is the inexorable, divine absolute. There is no possibility of a violation. That is how the thing works. And nobody gets around the absolute law. The reason sin adds to sin, adds to sin, ends in death is

because the wages of sin is death.

Now what does that mean? The word “wages” is a very interesting word. It is just what it appears. It means “something you’ve earned.” In fact, the word is used commonly of the rations that were given to soldiers for their military service in exchange for their duty. It was just compensation for service rendered. Wages, just like you pick up your check. The idea is this. You earn death. That’s right, you earn it. When God brings to bear on a life eternal death, hell forever, it’s because the person earned that. It is just, it is fair, it is proper compensation for their sin because there is an inexorable law in the universe that says the pay for sin is death.

It’s like any other law. The law of gravity. The law of gravity says you jump off something, you go down. That’s a law. That’s the way the universe is made. And if God made laws in a physical dimension, there can be laws as well in the spiritual, and here’s one of them. The wages of sin is death. The payoff for sin is death, eternal death, spiritual death. It’s what you earned.

In fact, let me say it another way. Justice is obligated to pay it or it would be defrauding the worker of his wages. When God gives eternal death to a soul, He is giving him what he’s worked for, what he’s earned, what he deserves, what is the divine compensation for his life.

Let me put it another way. If God didn’t give him eternal hell, it would be unjust. And God can’t be unjust. If you earn death by your sin, you’ll get it. And those who hope for pardon and those who hope for deliverance without Christ are hoping that God would be unjust. And God would not be unjust.

There’s another side to the absolute, bless God. It says this, “But the gift of God is eternal life.” Eternal life is not a wage. Did you notice the change? It is a what? A gift. Can you earn eternal life? No, it’s a gift. In fact, literally it’s a free gift. You could write that there. It says, “The free gift of God.” Just so that nobody gets confused, it is a free gift. You can’t earn it by your works. You can’t earn it by your religiosity. You can’t earn it, period. And that’s right back to Ephesians 2:8-9. “For by grace are you saved through faith, that not of yourselves, it is a - ” what? “ - gift of God, not of works lest any man should boast.” No merit, no earning, no worthiness. It’s a gift.

So, if you want what you deserve, God will give it to you. But if you want what you don’t deserve, God will give that to you as well. You say, “How do I get that?” Boy, what a chapter. I don’t want to be a slave to sin. I don’t want to be free from ever being able to do what’s right. I don’t want to go from sin, to sin, to sin, from being vile to being viler, and viler, ultimately ending in eternal death. I don’t want to do that. I want the gift of eternal life. How do I get it?

Well, how does the chapter end? What does it say? “Through Jesus Christ our Lord.” It’s the great climax to the chapter. I mean, the chapter is so powerful, you know that at the end you just need a reminder of how you get this. “Through Jesus Christ our Lord.” Any other place? No other place.

"Neither is there salvation in any other, for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved," Acts 4:12. No other name. No other name. Jesus said, "I am the door, the only way to enter is through Me." Jesus said, "No man comes unto the Father but by Me." The most narrow-minded statement ever made. It also happens to be true. You can be narrow minded if you're right. Jesus said, "I am the way. I'm the only way." Through Jesus Christ our Lord.

I can't - I just - I wouldn't know what else to say to the world to offer them the gift of salvation than to just tell them what's in this chapter. It's astounding to me, to be made free from sin, to inherit eternal life, to be delivered from the bondage of sin, and guilt, and all those things, and free to do what's right and glorify God. And instead of looking at a life with things to be ashamed of, you look at a life filled with things to be thankful for. Instead of anticipating death, eternal death, you anticipate life, eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

So, the sixth chapter has taught us in the first 14 verses that we are one with Christ because we died with Him, we rose with Him, and as new creations with resurrection life, we walk in newness of life. Therefore, we should yield to that new life principle, yielding our fallenness, our humanness, our mortal bodies to that new life power. And then in the second half, he uses a different analogy to say the same thing. We were slaves to sin, now we have become slaves to righteousness. So, in one sense we've died to walk in newness of life. In another sense, we have a new master. Both saying the same thing. Salvation doesn't free you to sin, it frees you from sin for the first time in your life to do what's right. Salvation takes unholy men and makes them holy. Salvation is a call from sin to holiness.

And no evangelism can stand without this kind of affirmation. Anything other than this kind of presentation of evangelism, I believe, is cheap grace. I believe we have to say to people, "Look, count the cost. When you come to Jesus Christ, He's calling you from sin to holiness. And if you're not willing to come on those terms, there are no other terms available."

Jesus is not looking for people who want to add Him to their sin. He's not looking for people who want to add Him to their lifestyle. He is calling men who want to die and rise again. He's calling men and women who want to say no to the present master and yes to a new master. Grace covers sin. That's right. But it never condones it. And further, it transforms the sinner.

Let me close with this. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, German theologian, thinker, sometimes was a little far afield, sometimes right on target, wrote this. "Cheap grace means the justification of sin without the justification of the sinner who departs from sin and from whom sin departs. Cheap grace is not the kind of forgiveness of sin which frees us from the toils of sin. Cheap grace is grace without discipleship, grace without the cross, grace without Jesus Christ. Costly grace is the grace of Christ Himself now prevailing upon the disciple to leave all and follow Him."

When he spoke of grace, Luther always implied as a corollary that it cost him his own life, the life which was for the first time subjected to the absolute obedience of Christ. Happy are they who knowing that grace can live in the world without being of it, who by following Jesus Christ are so assured of their heavenly citizenship that they are truly free to live their lives in this world.

That's the kind of grace God calls us to in Christ. What does it mean to be a Christian? Chapter 5 said it meant to be secure. Chapter 6 says it means to be free from sin. Chapter 7 will tell us there's still a battle. And chapter 8 will tell us how to win it. Let's pray together.

Lord, we're so thankful tonight for Your Word. How rich. We are thankful that we've been made free from sin. And if we're indifferent to that tonight, forgive us. Oh, what a glorious gift. And how tritely do we treat priceless treasure. How easily do we allow the flesh its own way and mock our liberty.

Thank You for reminding us, Lord, that we are slaves of obedience, as Paul says in one verse, slaves of righteousness, as he says in another, slaves of God, as he says in another. One and the same. And free from the tyranny of sin. Bless You for that. And may we live out in practice what we are in position and never return to the things that produced shame and death but, always those things that produce righteousness, holiness and life.

With your head bowed for just a moment, if you have never come to Jesus Christ, received Him as your Savior and Lord, you are not free from sin and it will kill you. But Jesus offers His freedom to you if you will give Him your life, if you will believe that He, God in human flesh, died and rose again for you. Open your heart right now to Him. Say "I want to be free from sin, and I want to be a slave to righteousness, possessor of eternal life."

Christian, reaffirm to God your thanks for the freedom He's given you. Tell Him you're thankful that you do not have to sin, that you've been delivered from the bondage and the tyranny of that old master. And then ask His forgiveness for the times that you obeyed a master who has no claim on you and in your humanness you sinned. And then ask Him to lead you in the way of holiness that you might fulfill in your life all that He desires of purity and obedience.

Father, we ask that You'll do Your work in every heart, that we might come truly to understand what it means to be free, to rejoice in that freedom, that some might even be set free tonight is our prayer for Christ's sake. Amen.



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