

Romans 6:15-23

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[0 : 00] Let's read God's Word. What then? Are we to sin because we are not under law but under grace?! By no means! Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey,! Either of sin which leads to death, or of obedience which leads to righteousness.

But thanks be to God that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart, to the standard of teaching to which you were committed. And, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness.

I am speaking in human terms because of your natural limitations. For just as you once presented your members as slaves to impurity, and to lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness, leading to sanctification.

For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. But what fruit were you getting at that time from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death.

For now that you have been set free from sin and become slaves of God, the fruit you get leads to sanctification, and it's in eternal life. For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

[1 : 24] Let's pray together. Thank you. Gracious Heavenly Father, I ask that you would be gracious to us here this morning.

That you would reveal yourself to us. That you would show us who we are in Jesus. And show us how to live because of who we are.

Because of Jesus. I thank You for the love that You've shown us. I thank You for Your Spirit that is moving and working even now. And we ask that You would continue to work.

I don't know the situations in this room. Nobody knows every situation in this room, God. But I know You do. And we trust that what is spoken will speak to each person because there's power in Your Word.

And I pray that the words that come from my mouth will be Your words, not my opinions, but Your words this morning. Show us how we should live because of Christ.

[2 : 34] And we thank You for Him. In Jesus' name, Amen. The Constitution, the U.S. Constitution, was designed to defend and protect the freedoms of each individual person.

The U.S., freedom is celebrated. We have Independence Day. We have people protesting because they have the freedom to do so.

If we strip freedom down, if we take those layers off and we strip it back, and we look at the real meaning and the effect of freedom, we really come to the realization that none of us are free at all. We are enslaved to something. And for us, in the middle of the day, that might be several things. Example, you have a desire to eat. You're hungry.

Well, you're now enslaved to that desire. Temporary enslavement, nonetheless, but still enslavement. You have a desire for companionship because you're lonely.

[3 : 41] You are enslaved to that desire. You want chocolate milk. You're enslaved to that silly desire. We are all enslaved and not really free.

Scripture reduces it even further for us. That we are either enslaved to sin or enslaved to righteousness. The hard truth about this is that's it.

There is no middle ground. There is no neutral stance. We are either enslaved to sin or enslaved to righteousness. It's like Joshua in Joshua 24, chapter 24, verse 15.

At the end of his life, he says, Choose this day whom you will serve. And then the famous, As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord. It's not a choice on us, but it's either one or the other.

In reality, there's no such thing as freedom from outside power. There's no such thing as being autonomous and just floating by yourself, answering to no one, being affected by nothing.
[4 : 57] The truth is, we are a slave. And we have a master. So, I want to ask you, as I preach this morning, as I proclaim what I feel like God is wanting to say to us, I want you to come up with a conclusion on your life.

Who is your master? Is it sin or is it righteousness? Who do you bow to? Who do you worship? In the end, I hope that you come to a clear conclusion who that is and what that is.

Three points, really two big points. We're going to look at what it looks like for a person who is enslaved to sin. And we're going to look at what it looks like for a person who is enslaved to righteousness.

Each having evidence of both. So, let's look at what it is to be enslaved to sin. What does this look like? Verse 16 says, Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness.

The result of being enslaved to sin is death. Later on in verse 19, it says, Lawlessness. More lawlessness. The result is death.

[6 : 32] It doesn't mean anything else. Sin is very powerful. John MacArthur said this about sin, and he's got alliteration, and I try not to do that, so forgive me.

Sin is very powerful. It is the most devastating, debilitating, degenerating power that ever entered the human stream. The most devastating, debilitating, and degenerating power.

The evilness of sin corrupted all of mankind. So let's look at a few descriptions of sin from Scripture real quick. Sin is defiling.

It is a pollution of the soul. It's like a corrosion on a beautiful piece of metal, or smog in a beautiful sky.

Pollution. Isaiah 30, verse 22 says, Sin is called an impure thing. Deuteronomy 32 says, Sin is the poison of serpents, and the cruel venom of asps.

[7 : 40] Even though we could consider to be righteous the things that we think are good, Isaiah 64, verse 6 says that they are filthy garments, or menstrual cloths.

2 Corinthians 7, verse 1 says that sin is the defilement of flesh and spirit. Titus 1 says that sinners are those whose minds, minds and consciences are defiled.

Sin is pollution of the soul. Sin is also rebellious. It is the acting out and the ignoring of God's word. It is rebellious.

Somebody called, and I don't know who this is, called sin, God's would-be murderer. Because if sin had its way, it would destroy God Himself along with His righteousness.

We see this in Romans chapter 7, the next chapter we're headed to, where Paul says, I do what I don't want to do, and I don't do what I want to do. Sin is rebellious.

[8 : 46] Sin is also ungrateful. Every person indulges in God's gracious provisions, but we fail, or mankind fails to give credit to God, much less to thank Him.

We take God's blessings and use them to serve ourselves for, and Satan. Every sinner is like Absalom. You know who Absalom is?

David. It's one of David's sons. In 2 Samuel chapter 14 and 15, this son of David kisses his father at the same time plotting to take his throne.

This is what sin does. It is ungrateful. Sin is incurable. No matter how hard man tries to fix the problem, no matter how creative we be to come up with a solution, it's impossible to fix our situation.

Jeremiah 13 talks about the Ethiopian changing his skin. It's impossible. Or a leopard, his thoughts, cannot change who we are.

[9 : 58] It is a helpless state. Ephesians 2, Colossians 2, it is a dead state. Sin is overpowering.

In Romans chapter 1, verse 21, it says that sin dominates the mind. In John 3, it dominates the affections. In Jeremiah 44, it dominates the will.

It says darkness hovers overnight, sin hovers over all mankind. Sin is overpowering. And lastly, and the scariest of all, sin damns the unrenewed soul to hell.

In Revelation chapter 20, John is given a vision of this throne, the judgment. And he writes, And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened.

Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done. And the sea gave up the dead who were in it. Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them, according to what they had done.

[11:08] Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he or she was thrown into the lake of fire.

Sin damns the unredeemed soul. John 8.34, Jesus' word says that everyone who commits sin is a slave to sin.

As we have seen what sin is, the power and control that it has, we all have been or are currently slaves to sin.

It's one or the other. If you are a slave to sin, then death and lawlessness are the fruit of your labor. The fact is that you're going to do what your master asks of you.

There's no, I don't know, maybe, maybe not. If your master is sin, you are going to sin. If your master is obedient to righteousness, you're going to do righteous things.

[12:16] Act pure. Act perfect. Live sinless. And if we're going to do what our master does, then we're reflecting that master.

We represent him. We portray his attributes. And eventually, eventually, we become like him or it. So the question for you just this far, what do you portray?

What are you reflecting to the world? Who is your master? Now the sad part of this situation, the sad part about all mankind, is that most of the world doesn't even know it.

They don't even know the situation that they're in. Let's just look at Georgia for a minute. Smaller picture. 2010, the projected number of lost people in Georgia is 6.8 million.

2020, they said, it's going to raise to over 8 million. That is astronomical. That is 8 million people who do not know that they are enslaved to sin.

[13:24] There are 900,000 people who live inside the perimeter in Atlanta. 800,000 are lost. Are not affiliated with a church or Jesus.

So, 70% in our state and 90% inside the perimeter. in the Bible belt. Some would say the buckle of the Bible belt don't know Jesus.

They don't know that they are enslaved to sin. So, no matter how good they are, how religious they are, and some of us in this room, how good we are, how religious we are, we're still enslaved to sin. Here is something else. Did you, did you know that in the Civil War that slaves would fight for their masters for the, for the Confederate Army?

They would fight for the guys who were their masters. They'd fight against the very people who were trying to emancipate them, who were trying to free them from this slavery.

[14:36] They fought the very ones who were fighting for them. Now, I bring that up because, isn't that what we do as Christians? Don't we fight the one who fought for us when we sin, when we become enslaved to sin voluntarily?

Isn't that what we do? We do the exact same thing. We fight against the one who has fought for us. Are you fighting against Jesus?

This is what sin does. It gets us to fight. It gets us to hate the one who died for the very sin that we're committing.

So whether you have been a slave to sin or you are a slave to sin, there is hope from this bondage. There is a way out. There is no reason for you to stay in your situation being ruled by sin.

And I say ruled because sin is your master if you do not know Jesus Christ. So let's talk about those who are enslaved to righteousness because this maybe is better news for us.

[15:53] Maybe not. So if you're not enslaved to sin and you're enslaved to righteousness, which when I say righteousness, I mean holy, perfect, sinless life.

I mean pursuing good deeds, trying to live for God, following His laws, honoring Him with your life. Now we become part of this group.

We become enslaved to righteousness, not by anything that we have done. We have to be clear about this. not by any good merit, not by any prayer that we pray.

There was nothing in us that earned this transfer and master that is all by the grace of God. Verse 18 says, it does not say, I'm sorry, verse 18, does not say that you set yourself free.

It says that having been set free from sin have become slaves to righteousness. It is an act done to you, not by you. God, through Jesus Christ, has set you free.

[17 : 06] These are chains that we cannot break ourselves. He sets you free from the bondage of sin, from the control and dominance of sin. You're now slaves to righteousness, which is a good thing, not a negative thing.

God didn't have to do this. He didn't have to. He wanted to, and he's the only one who could do it. So if you have a desire to do good, a desire to honor and please God, if you treasure Jesus, then your master is righteousness, your master is obedience.

there's been a dramatic change in your life. You are dead to sin now, no longer dead in sin.

You are dead to sin. It no longer has power over you, no longer has control over you. So, when you're in the hardest of times, the most ferocious fights, the most vulnerable moments of temptation, you don't have to give in.

You can have victory over that temptation because Jesus Christ has freed you from that power.

Jesus has defeated death and sin so that you can grow in God's grace, so that you can grow in His love for you and His love for others, so you can grow in knowledge of Him.

[18 : 41] And the best part, I think, is that you can grow in your vulnerability to sin. You no longer give in to sin as often because you've been set free. You can live sinless life.

The result of being a slave to righteousness is sanctification. Verse 19. Last part, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness leading to sanctification.

Whenever you see this word in scripture, whenever you see it, the idea is there's a person being set apart for God's glory, a person being perfected and set apart.

I know analogies fall short. They never always work, but I'm going to try to give you this one. When I was a kid, I had a baseball card collection. I would buy a pack of cards and you got six or seven or ten cards and the top, you got the little piece of bubble gum that was horrible, but you liked it because you were a kid.

And the high percentage of the time, you got nothing good. A lot of times, you got a whole pack and there was not a good card in it. You're a little disappointed, but you did get the gum.

[20 : 01] Now, when I did, when I did get a good card, I would take that card and I would set it off to the side. I would set it off to the side because I knew that this is a good card. This may not be worth 15 cents, 5 cents, but it was a good card.

It was just somebody's rookie card, some good player. And I would set it apart and I would put it in my folder with the individual slots for cards. And I would set it aside so that I knew that I could go to that card, I could go to those good cards and I could enjoy them and I could look at them.

It's the same for us. We have been set apart. We've been put aside for the rest of mankind for the purpose of bringing God great joy and glory. We have been set apart for a purpose.

And my baseball cards, they weren't going to make me rich, but I sure did enjoy looking at the good players and their stats. God has chosen to use you to get the gospel to those who need to hear it.

We were not set apart to sit and stay protected from the evil world. We were set apart to look different, to live different, and to love different in a dark and evil world.

[21 : 22] And the whole time pointing to Jesus and not to ourselves. another word to keep in mind when seeing sanctification is holiness.

We are being made holy as God continues to mold us into the men and women of God He wants us to be. As the clay in the potter's hands molds His creation, God is molding us and perfecting us.

So being enslaved to righteousness is not a bad thing. It is not a negative thing. It is a glorious thing. So here's some evidences of being enslaved or being slaves of righteousness.

Evidences from our text. Evidence number one, you are thankful for the proper things. Verse 17 says, But thanks be to God that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart of the standard teaching to which you were committed.

thanks be to God for the lives that have been radically changed by God's grace. This Thanksgiving, did you thank God?

[22 : 36] Did you thank God physically for the physical things? Did you thank God for the spiritual things? Are you thankful for the brothers and sisters you have in Christ in this room?

Are you thankful for those who are coming from their enslavement to sin over the enslavement of righteousness? Are you rejoicing? Are you thankful for those?

There's a lot of things that we can be thankful for. We can be thankful for the places we live, the cars we drive, the clothes we wear. We can be thankful for the food we eat. But there's only one that we can be thankful for that is eternal.

One thing. And that is the salvation that we have through Christ. And so often, so often we take this very thing, take it for granted.

We have this ho-hum attitude. You know, it becomes just, you know, just something we do, something we are. No big deal. It's like a hat to put on and take off.

[23 : 43] This salvation that you and I have, it should be that new car we drive around in slow, down the road so that everybody sees it. It should be that new necklace we wear on the outside of our clothes so that everybody can see it.

That driveway filled with cars so people know something is happening. That billboard that grabs everyone's attention, that should be our salvation, not something we hide and pick up Sunday morning, not something we don't do, something we don't live out.

We hide it way too often. And Jesus spoke about this in the Sermon on the Mount. He says, you are the light of the world. Because of your salvation, you are the light of the world.

A city set on a hill cannot be hidden, nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand and it gives light all in the house. So question then, are you a city on a hill?

A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Are you enslaved to righteousness? Our thankfulness is a good thermometer of the temperature of our salvation, what we really think and feel about it.

[25 : 10] So what are you thankful for? See, this salvation is supernatural. It's an act of God, making the dead alive. The sinner a saint, the slave of sin into a slave of righteousness.

So evidence number one is you are thankful for the proper things. Evidence number two, your obedience to God has action. We have said this time and time again.

Scripture says it time and time again. but your obedience to God has action. Verse 17. But thanks be to God that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed.

Obedient from the heart. Whenever the Bible talks about the heart, it's not the organ. It's not the organ pumping blood for your body. It's also not the central hub of emotions and feelings.

You know, I love you from the bottom of my heart. That's not what it's talking about. From the heart here is from the entire being, from the soul.

[26 : 20] It's the seat of physical, spiritual, and mental life. It's what makes you who you are. When he says from the heart, he's saying that you were obedient with every fiber of your being.

That there was sincerity, sincerity to your obedience. Meaning, that there was action that followed that obedience.

My question is, is your obedience just mouth service? Is it just something you say and nothing you do? Because, my friends, that is not obedience. Is there action that reflects what you believe?

this is one of the reasons why the Christian suffers. This is one of the reasons why Scripture over and over and over tells the Christians that we're going to suffer.

Because God in His sovereignty puts the Christian in a position where they have to live out what they say they believe. You can't just say you're a Christian and not act like one.

[27 : 28] It doesn't work that way. You can't just say you believe something and not be forced to live it out. It doesn't work that way. God is not like that.

It doesn't work. We are we suffer and we are forced to believe what we believe so that people around us can see Jesus.

We put action to what we say we believe. suffering also puts the Christian in a complete dependence upon Jesus. Not on our abilities or our possessions or our comforts but on Jesus alone.

So just like there's no neutral stance in being enslaved to sin or enslaved to righteousness, there's no middle ground, there's no Switzerland here, there is no passive or neutral Christian.

Okay? There's no passive or neutral Christian. If your life has been changed, it cannot be and is not a whole long life change. It isn't.

[28 : 44] And if somebody is telling you it is, then they're lying to you. Passiveness is for the unbeliever. We must be men and women of action and fight.

You want to see Jesus glorified? Get off your rear end and do something for Him. You want to see your workplace changed? Stop being passive and silent and speak up.

You want to be in a healthy relationship, a God-honoring relationship? Stop talking and work towards it. Trust Jesus in all areas of your life.

He knows what's best. And He has the power to enable us to do it and the strength to sustain us. Jesus defeated death.

He can surely help us through the fight that we're in. Defeat the fear that we have. Obedience has action.

[29 : 52] evidence number three is that you reflect the master, capital M. Verse 16. Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness.

And as I have said already, we are going to be mastered by one. It's not who you decide you master by.

You're going to be mastered by one or the other. If you are a slave to sin, then you are going to act as your master act, which is sin.

If you are a slave to righteousness, slave to living, perfect, holy lives, honoring God, then you're going to act as your master act and do those things.

So let's say, for an example, that you own a restaurant. Now your employees represent you and the company. Now I'm pretty certain that if you own a family restaurant, whatever it is, a family restaurant, you're probably not going to hire somebody who has spikes coming out their head and out their cheeks and tattoos all the way up on their necks and every other word is a curse word.

[31 : 16] You're just not going to do it. Why? Because that person, as your employee, represents you. And you're trying to portray a certain environment. They represent you.

And so you hire somebody who right or wrong, who looks like you, who cares like you, and who can represent you the way you want to be represented.

And so as their employee, you enforce certain guidelines and rules. You dress a certain way, you act a certain way, customers always write, you do these types of things so that they properly represent you and the restaurant.

When we are slaves to sin or to righteousness, we represent that master. So on this level, for us, the illustration breaks down a little bit, for us, there's no rules to follow.

There's no things that we should do. We're just going to do it. We're going to obey that master.

That's just the way it is.

[32 : 25] So if our master is sin, we're going to sin. And what Paul is trying to say is that if your master is righteousness, then you're going to do righteousness.

And you're going to be subjected to Jesus and honoring him. This is how we were created. This is how we were created.

We have a master. We're born into being a master, being mastered by sin. And Jesus comes and changes that.

See, we were created, originally man was created to reflect, one master. We were created to be created in his image, Genesis 127. We were created to reflect him, to be image bearers, the creator of the universe.

We were created to bring glory to him, to him alone. We were created to worship him and to bring honor and praise to him, to prove that he is worthy of all praise.

[33 : 36] That's what we were created for. Genesis 3, all that changed. Because of sin, we have been corrupted. Because of sin, we no longer are image bearers of God.

We no longer can worship God. But we're now image bearers of ourselves. We now worship ourselves and sin is our master.

sin. We have a worship issue. We worship ourselves, which is sin.

We are held captive by that sin. Instead of worshiping the creator, we worship the creation and become enslaved by it.

you guys have been there. Can't think of anything else. Can't do anything else without giving in.

[34 : 36] It just happens. It just comes out of your mouth. It just whatever. Then it's slaved to sin.

This is a worship issue. You're not reflecting the master. you're reflecting your master. There's good news. There's good news.

Instead of being enslaved to sin, instead of being controlled by sin, if you're a Christian, you've been set free from that sin. You've been set free.

Sin no longer has power over you. We can live for him. because of him. Turn to Colossians.

Now if we are enslaved to righteousness, and we are enslaved to Christ, to Jesus' righteousness, his righteousness that we have, it has power over it.

[35 : 55] Still, again, nothing that we do. Colossians chapter 1, second part of verse 16.

Because all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. he is the head of the body of the church, and he is the beginning, the first war from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent.

For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.

we can live for him because of him. We can live for Jesus because of Jesus. We can be set free because of Jesus.

Romans chapter 6, verse 18, our text this morning, it says, and having been set free from sin, having been set free from sin, you have become slaves of righteousness.

[37 : 09] You have been set free to worship and treasure Jesus. He is worth it. You have been set free to love those whom you cannot.

You have been set free to no longer fall for the lies of the enemy. You have been set free to forgive the most awful things done to you because Jesus died for you and for them, and he has forgiven us. You have been set free to let go of the grudge that you keep holding on to that has stunted your spiritual growth. You have been set free to accept the leadership of your husband no matter how hard it may be.

You have been set free to just let go. Let go of the things that you think God doesn't know, or the things that you think are too heinous and awful.

you have been set free to be different, to not buy the car or the house or the \$300 jeans. You have been set free to not care what others think.

[38 : 21] You have been set free to love God and hate sin. This is who we are. You're a Christian, this is who you are.

Christian, you have been set free. Jesus has done what we could not do so that we can live like he did. Let's live for his glory, for his renown, and prove to the world that he is all we need.

Because that's what scripture says. We have been set free. Real quickly, at the end of verse 17, there's a peculiar statement.

ESV says, the standard of teaching to which you were committed. Other versions say, hand it over. I bring this up because this is not evidence of your commitment or my commitment to the teaching. What he is saying here is this word is more like being committed to a mental facility. more like somebody acting on your behalf for your good.

[39 : 36] God committed us to his teaching. It is his action on our lives, but our good and his glory. Praise me to God.

He has committed us to his teaching. So this morning, my prayer is that God has spoken you, that he's made it clear to you who your master is, that you know if it's him, if your master is righteousness, if your master is him, praise God, thank him for his grace and his goodness.

If it's sin, that's okay, because you know where you stand at. Because God has made a way where you can no longer play the sin.

You can no longer live a hopeless and helpless life. Jesus died on the cross for your sins. He died. He died so that you can be set free.

from the power and control of sin. Let's repent and believe. Turn from your sins. Accept, admit your situation, and ask God to change you.

[41 : 07] Joshua 24, 15. Choose this day whom you will serve. As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord. and have to have!