

Romans 6:19-23

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[0 : 00] We've been studying through the book of Romans. We're in Romans chapter 6. The last few verses of the chapter. Romans chapter 6.

That's a hard song to follow. I'm just going to say it. Alright, we're equal.

Romans chapter 6. I'll start reading in verse 19 through the end of the chapter. Paul is writing to the church in Rome.

He writes and he says, 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 these things is death.

[1 : 13] But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the fruit you get leads to sanctification and it's in eternal life. For the wages of sin is death.

The free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus, our Lord. Let's pray together. Father, we thank you for Jesus.

We thank you for the grace and the mercy that you've shown us through him, through his life, his death, and his resurrection. We thank you for your word that you have revealed to us, that you have shown us, so we can hold in our hands and read.

We thank you that your word speaks of Jesus, shows us about Jesus, teaches us Jesus. I pray this morning that we prove with the word spoken and the ears of listening that we love Jesus.

I pray, God, that we would honor him, lift him up, and he would receive all praise this morning. Speak to us this morning in Jesus' name.

[2 : 31] Amen. Now, I'm going to approach this text a little different. Usually it's verse by verse. This is what it's saying. This is what it means.

I'm still going to be faithful to it, but I want to look at how does being set free, we've been set free in Christ from the power and burden and control of sin, how does that affect our gathering?

How does that affect this meeting time, our meetings during the week, our meetings with families or one-on-one discipleship? How does being set free really affect our lives?

Because theologically and doctrinally, we can say it all along, every moment of every day, but how does it affect our everyday life and in specific, us here together?

In other words, so what? So we've been set free. So what? What does it mean? What does it lead us to? So we have sin in our life that no longer has power over us.

[3 : 39] What do we do with that? And why does the fact that we have been set free from sin and now have been made slave to God impact us and our gathering together?

This is the question that I want to answer this morning. The easy answer, the simple answer is in every way. In every way it changes, it impacts our gathering.

In every way, in how we speak, in how we sing, in how we gather, in how we care for one another, in how we look at one another, how we listen to one another. In every way is a simple answer.

So let's get a little more specific. And in our text, I think we have a little more specific answer. If we've been set free, if our identity has changed, if we're no longer slave to sin, but slave to God, then our identity has changed.

Because if our identity has changed, then what we do, how we live, and why we gather changes as well. So no matter how mature you are as a Christian, you know how much knowledge you have, or I have, we all need help in this endeavor to live out this Christian life.

[5 : 01] We all need help. None of us have figured this out. None of us have perfected it. Paul himself says, I am not yet perfect. I continue on forward.

We need one another to preach the Gospel to us, to remind us that we are set free from sin, and to etch into one another's minds that this gathering is not about us.

It's about Jesus. Joy to the world is about Jesus, not about us. So as I review, Romans 1 and 2, divine for us, clearly, that all human beings, then and now, have been born into a curse.

We are dead. Curse that goes all the way back to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. Adam and Eve bought into the lie that the devil gave them, bought into the lie that they can be important, that they can be special, that they can be like God, and they decided to worship themselves instead of worshiping God as they were created to do.

As we are today, they were created to worship God, to bring glory to God. As our Logos question number two says, the adult version is, what is the chief end of man?

[6 : 24] To glorify Him and enjoy Him forever. That's what we were created to do. We were created to worship Him alone. And from this moment in the Garden of Eden, through all of eternity, mankind, and all of time, mankind has been cursed with the inability to worship God.

We've been cursed with the inability to please God, to do God things. We cannot worship Him apart from a supernatural act of God.

So we come to Romans 3, and it says, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. All of us have sinned. No one is left out of that equation.

We are unable to bring glory to God. We are unable to do good, God-glorifying things. Now of course, semantics, we can do good things.

We can do nice things. We can be nice human beings and care for people and love people, but we cannot do God-honoring, God-glorifying things. We cannot enjoy Him as we were created to do.

[7 : 38] Even religious things are like filthy rags. We weren't created to be religious. We weren't created to be Baptists, although some people might say we were.

We weren't created to be Methodists, or Presbyterians. We were created to be God's people, His children, and whatever name you want to put to that.

That's what we were created to be. Religion was created by man to replace God, to make where we have no need for Him.

And if there's no need for God, then our curse that we are born into no longer has powers, no longer as powerful as we thought. And then we can fix that issue with good deeds or religious activities.

But that's not the case. Romans 1, 2, and 3, and then building up to chapter 4, all of it proves that even religion does not save.

[8 : 44] Chapter 4, we have Abraham, who's been justified, Paul lays out for us that Abraham was justified by faith, not by anything else, not by works, not by religious activity, no special bloodline, no being the patriarch of the Jewish people.

That didn't save him. What saved him was his faith or faith from God. He was justified by faith. No religious activity, no good deed.

Abraham did not earn his faith. He did not earn the salvation that he received. Romans 4, verse 20 and 21 says, of Abraham, no distrust made him waver concerning the promise of God.

But he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised. So this amazing faith that Abraham showed was nothing of his doing or his ability.

It was all based and rooted on who God is and what God has promised. What God said that He would do. This same faith can be evident in your life and in mine.

[10 : 00] But like Abraham, it is God working through us. just earlier in Romans 4, faith wasn't given to Adam and he wasn't made righteous because of being circumcised.

And I point that out because that is the one religious activity of the Jewish people that was important. That was it. It proved to the world that they were Jewish.

It proved to them that they belonged to God's chosen people. And even Abraham, who was the patriarch, was not made righteous because of being circumcised. Made righteous because of his faith.

So, to summarize, we are justified by faith apart from works. It's a good Christian saying, but it's very important. We are justified by faith apart from works.

So, nothing in us earns, deserves the salvation that God gives us. This is the launching point. [11:01] This truth, justified by faith apart from works, that's the launching point for all of Romans. As Paul writes to the Christian church, to the church in Rome, to the Christians there, he writes to them and he says, as Abraham, you too can be justified by faith.

Not anything that you have done. You haven't earned it. Everything we are and do is out of being justified. Being made right before God because of his love, his grace, and his mercy. We've got to make sure we understand this. And on the cross is where we've been justified. On the cross is where our sins were taken by Jesus.

And in return, we are given his righteousness. Martin Luther calls the great exchange and we mention it often. Jesus took our sin and gave us his righteousness.

This is the launching point. See, at the cross, we find victory over sin. At the cross, we are set free from that same sin.

[12:15] At the cross, we are given peace with God. Because of the cross, we can approach the throne room with boldness. Because of the cross, we live victorious lives.

Because of the cross, we love our neighbors. See, all of what we are and do as Christians because and through the cross of Jesus Christ. At Calvary, where He died for you and for me.

That's where it all comes from. John Piper, in his book, *The Roots of Endurance*, is writing about William Wilberforce, John Newton, and Charles Stimeon.

Three great men of, as we sometimes say, old dead guys. Great men of faith. He writes about them and he says, they were careful to savor the cross first as the basis of justification before they experienced its purchased power of sanctification.

Before the power of endurance came the pardon of guilt. Before the blood-bought enabling of righteous living came the free gift of perfect righteousness credited to our account because of Christ alone through faith alone.

[13:28] These men, we can lift them up, but they're just men. These men knew that what we do is secondary to what Christ did on the cross. What Christ did on the cross determines what we do here.

So out of what Christ did, we now live for Him. Justification is the launch point for Romans and for the Christian life.

So we now come to chapter 6. On the cross, our sin nature died with Jesus. If we are Christian, if we are believers, if we are a biblical definition of being a Christian, if you know when you love Jesus, then you have been set free on the cross from the control and bondage of sin.

And now, in our text, we have the outcome of being set free. We have the outcome of no longer being empowered or no longer being powered over by sin. And that outcome is sanctification and holiness.

Or sanctification or holiness. The infinitely holy God through Christ has given us His holiness.

[14:42] It is a process. A long process. A slow process. But we are being perfected because of Christ. Because of His work on the cross.

We can be holy as He commanded. Be holy as I am holy. We can be holy as God is holy because of Jesus. Later on in the book, John Piper says of the time that William Wilberforce lived, he said, nominal Christians were confusing and reversing sanctification and justification.

They were making the fruits of holiness the cause and not the effects of being justified. What the whole beginning part of Romans is about up to this point is out of being justified we are becoming sanctified.

Out of what Christ has done we are able to live a certain and specific way. Sounds a lot like our time, doesn't it?

We know people who are trying to live good lives. People who are trying to be religious. We are surrounded by nominal Christians or non-Christians at all believe that they have to live a good life.

[15:55] They just have to be good in order to earn God's favor. But we know that that is not the case at all. We don't want this building, we don't want this gathering to be filled with people who are nominal Christians who think they have to earn God's grace.

That wouldn't be grace at all. And there is no victory in that life. That is a life of slavery, of burden, trying to earn God's favor and God's grace.

We want to lead people who love out of joy, who gather out of joy and who bless out of joy, not out of obligation or out of some form of payment to God.

So as we look at our text this morning, so what? So what does this mean? What does this mean about how we gather? We have been set free, so what?

Well, as I've kind of set us up, we can't go any further without completely and totally understanding verse 23 of chapter 6. We have to get it, understand it, know it.

[17:12] Verse 23 says, for the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. Wages of sin.

There is a payment to be paid. Our sin earns a payment. It earns a paycheck. So sin is working against you and against me and as it works, it's earning its wage or earning a wage.

Sin doesn't just deserve death. Sometimes we'll say, you know, sin deserves death. Deserve leaves room for subjectivity.

It leaves room for a little play, too much play. According to our text, the wages of sin, sin earns, there's a clear payment exchange there.

It's wage and the wage is death. And it's not talking about you dying here on earth. It's talking about eternal, permanent separation from God.

[18:20] Everything God does is good. Everything God does is right. Everything God does is holy and just. You're going to be separated from that eternally because of the sin in your life, because of your sin, if you do not know Christ, if you do not love Him.

this is the reality of our curse that we're born into. We receive, we're born into this curse by the second part of verse 23.

But, the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. We receive a gift, an undeserved gift from the Creator. That is eternal life.

Eternal life in Christ. He's because of Jesus. In Jesus and for Jesus, our lives are all about Jesus.

That's why our vision statement is not up there.

Christ's Family Church exists to experience, proclaim, and display the supremacy of Jesus Christ in all things. Our lives are all about Jesus.

[19:31] Our gatherings are all about Jesus. Our entire life is about Him. So, we move from verse 23.

We got verse 23. We have to understand verse 23. And then out of that, so what? So what do we do? Because we are recipients of this gift from a holy God, our identity changes.

As I mentioned a few minutes ago, we're no longer slaves to sin if we are Christians, if we are born-again believers. we are now slaves to God. And that is a complete identity change.

Ephesians chapter 2 says you were dead. You're now alive. That's a big identity change. See, at that moment of being justified, being born again, our identity changes.

verse 19 of Romans chapter 6 says, for just as you once presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness leading to more lawlessness.

[20:40] See, before Jesus, our identity was in what we did. Sin. And I don't mean, you know, your sports accomplishments, your life accomplishments, your struggles.

It was in how we lived, what we did, what determined what we did, and that was sin. That was where our identity was. According to this, impurity and lawlessness was your identity, was our identity before Christ.

Impurity represents the inward sin, the thoughts, the lust, the judgment, the hatred, the anger, the vanity. We have those inward sins that nobody might see.

We can hide those. But lawlessness represents the outward sin, the actions, the murder, the malice, the hatred, the homosexuality, the fornication, on and on and on.

Both of those lists. We could go on and on and on. That's who we were. That's what our identity was and what we did. But after Jesus, we become slaves to righteousness leading to sanctification.

[21:54] holiness. See, our identity is not under the power of sin anymore. It is now becoming empowered by God leading to holiness. See, as the nominal Christians did and thought and will before us time, we are holy out of what Jesus did, not on what we do or try to do.

When our identity changes, what we live for changes. What we desire changes. For example, if I became a Muslim, if I decided I'm going to become a Muslim, I like their ideas and I like how the Quran is spelled a little weird and I just like it.

my identity, who I was, would change. It would obviously change. I don't even know half the laws and stuff they have, but I follow them.

But what I live for would change. That identity would determine how I lived.

as a Christian though, my identity is Jesus. It's for Jesus, through Jesus, and so I live for Jesus and His glory.

[23 : 16] So when we gather together, big group, small group, morning service, community group in midweek, families over a meal, a one-on-one discipleship, whatever it is, when we meet together, we unite over our identity.

We unite over what binds us together, and that is Jesus. That is His righteousness, His holiness. We unite over what Jesus did for us. 2 Corinthians 5 says that His love compels us. We are compelled to live for Him.

And honestly, no matter what that means or looks like, we're going to do that. We're going to live for Him and love Jesus. Because, truth be told, He did the extreme for us.

He did the radical for us by dying on the cross for our sin. See, our new identity based in Scripture, based on who Jesus is, has already measured the cost.

[24 : 30] And Jesus is worth it. Already measured it. We are willing or should be willing to go to do and to be whatever He requires, whatever He commands.

He hung and died on the cross so that we can fight for Him and love the people of the world. He hung on the cross so that we can live victorious over sin and not constantly stumble over the same thing.

1 John 3.16 says, By this we know love, that He laid down His life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers. When we gather, when we're apart, be willing to lay down our lives for the brothers.

Whatever that means, because Jesus is worth more than what measurements we can put on here on earth. When we unite over our identity in Jesus, we gain a kingdom view.

We gain a vision of what God is doing and what He wants to do. And that becomes contagious. Infectious even.

[25 : 45] When we unite over our identity in Jesus, this kingdom view becomes contagious. When the body gathers, the body becomes infected with the commission of the King.

Because being set free, because of Jesus and being set free from sin, we do radical things then. We make radical decisions.

We live radical lives for Him. Turn to Isaiah chapter 61. Isaiah 61 is a prophecy of the coming Messiah who we know is Jesus.

Isaiah 61, Isaiah writes, the Spirit of the Lord God is upon me because the Lord has anointed me to bring good news to the poor.

He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn, to grant to those who mourn in Zion, to give them a beautiful headdress instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the garment of praise instead of a faint spirit, that they may be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the Lord that He may be glorified.

[27 : 27] They shall build up the ancient ruins. They shall raise up the former devastations. They shall repair the ruined cities, the devastations of many generations. Look at these actions.

Bring good news to the poor. Bind up the brokenhearted. Proclaim liberty to the captives. Open the prison to those who are bound. Comfort all who mourn. Proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.

Grant those who mourn in Zion. Give beautiful headdresses instead of ashes. Give the oil of gladness instead of a faint spirit. If this is Jesus, then this is our mission too.

If this is Jesus, then this is why we gather what we celebrate. We are united with one identity.

An identity that changes the world. An identity that crushes the power of sin and enables us to live in freedom and to share that freedom.

[28 : 30] We have freedom to love Jesus and fight for Him. we unite over identities and we minister out of that identity as well.

We minister together. We minister to one another. We minister apart to those around us in our circles out in the world. world. We haven't been called just to meet.

We haven't been called to gather together on Sunday morning at 1030. We have been sent into the world to live for Jesus, to fight for Jesus, to make disciples, to live in the world and love those around us.

We have been sent to be as 2 Corinthians 5 says, ministers of reconciliation. But the question is, how can we be ministers of reconciliation if we ourselves have never been reconciled? If we ourselves have never received faith to believe in Jesus and repented of our sins? Or maybe we just don't understand that being set free comes from Jesus' work on the cross and not from some good life that I live.

[29 : 57] Turn to Colossians chapter 3. And then we'll come back to Romans. Colossians chapter 3. The beginning of chapter 3, Paul, writing to the church at Colossae, says we basically have a new identity in Christ.

Verses 1-4, this is our new identity. Because of what Christ has done, this is who we are. So we can jump down to verse 12.

This is how we should live together, how we should gather together, how we should act amongst one another. It says, put on love. Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another. And if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And above all these, put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.

And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

[31 : 30] And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him. This is living like this.

Put on compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, patience. Put on love. Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly. All of that is out of what Christ has done for you and for me.

You can't do any of this apart from the work of Christ on the cross. Apart from a new identity. Our new identity identity is not this ambiguous idea.

It's not this someday, maybe, possibly, might happen thing. It's present now. It's a present moment thing.

Look at verse 22 of Romans 6. Back to Romans chapter 6. Language is in present tense.

[32 : 34] Verse 22. But now that you have been set free from sin, writing to the church in Rome, writing to Christians, to believers, but now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the fruit you get leads to sanctification and eternal life.

It is now that we have a new identity. It's not when we die and we're with Jesus. It is now. We are no longer slaves to sin. Sin no longer has power over us because of Christ and the cross we have this new identity.

Galatians 4, verse 7 gives us a clear picture of identity change. Verse 7 of Galatians chapter 4. So you are no longer a slave, but a son.

And if a son, then an heir through God. We are no longer a slave to sin, but an heir to the greatest kingdom. The greatest kingdom that has ever been.

A kingdom that is beyond our understanding and comprehension. This is who we are. This is our new identity. And this new identity affects every area of our lives, including the times we gather together.

[33 : 52] in verse 20, it says in chapter 6 of Romans, for when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness.

Which, just reading it is a pretty obvious statement. When you're slaves of sin, you're not connected with, bound with righteousness. There's no connection there.

You're not under its master. We were free from righteousness, which means, as I've already said, we were unable to do it or be righteous.

Unable. We were unable to please God. We had not been forgiven. We had not been given a right standing before God.

But not only were we unable to do righteous acts because of verse 20, really because of our sin, communicated in verse 20, there's also no binding, no commitment between us and righteousness.

[35 : 00] There was no relationship between us. It did not have control over us. It did not change how we did things. It didn't change our identity at all.

We couldn't do any of it. We couldn't do righteous acts. We were broken from doing good. It was not connected because we were not born again.

Look at the end of verse 22, though. The fruit you get leads to sanctification and it's in eternal life. The end of verse 19. So now, present your members as slaves to righteousness leading to sanctification. Because of Jesus, because of His life, death, and resurrection, because of His perfect life, sinless life, He took on our sin.

He took on your sin so that you can be holy. You can be made holy. holy. Jesus died so that you and I can be holy as God is holy.

[36 : 17] God is working. He's working in your life. He's working in my life. He's working in everyone's life in here. If you're a Christian, when we gather, we celebrate what God is doing in us.

When we gather, we celebrate what He's done for us. We gather, we see the evidence of what God is doing in each other's lives. We see the identity change.

And that encourages us. That strengthens us. We gather to rejoice in Jesus, to celebrate Him because of the slow process of making us holy.

Perfecting us for His glory and our good. He's healing our broken hearts. He's mending marriages back together. He's breaking addictions.

He is making the dead alive. We come together to taste and see this stuff. We come together to see that He is God and He is good.

[37 : 27] We see it among His people. We see it in the face of the husband and wife whose marriage has been reconciled. We see it in the college graduate who is more excited about serving Jesus than any potential job pay.

We see it in a life that has been changed by the gospel. We come to rejoice that we all in Christ have been set free from sin.

We've all been set free. We live no longer under the power of sin but in the victory over it. And we push one another on. We push one another forward.

Lord, we come together to celebrate that death for us is a beginning and not an end. And eternal life is our destination.

Eternity with Jesus is where we're headed if we know Jesus. We come together not to celebrate what He has done, what we have done.

[38 : 30] We don't come to celebrate that or our talents. Although sin will tell us that's why we gather. Sin will tell you to come and celebrate what you have done.

We have been given victory over that sin so that we can come and rejoice in what Jesus is doing and has done. We come together to lift up Jesus so that we can go strengthened and empowered to fight the good fight for Him and His name.

Listen to these words from Charles Simeon in a sermon. He says, For a nominal Christian is content with proving the way of salvation by a crucified Redeemer.

So a nominal Christian is content with just saying, I am saved because of Jesus on the cross and that's it. But the true Christian loves it, delights in it, glories in it, and shudders at the very thought of glorying in anything else.

The true Christian loves it, delights in it, glories in it, and shudders at the very thought of glorying in anything else. This is who we want CFC to be, to be filled with.

[39 : 47] This is what we want CFC to be. True Christians who love Jesus, who delight in Jesus, who glory in Jesus, and shudder at glorying in anything or anyone else.

We come together to rejoice in Jesus, as our statement of faith says, to experience, proclaim, and display the supremacy of Jesus in all things.

Because we have been set free, our identity has changed, and we gather to celebrate that in Jesus' name. We have been set free from sin to live lives that are no longer in bondage to sin, but is victorious over it.

It is that simple. In verse 19, I skipped over this phrase the last two weeks because I wasn't sure what to do with it. The beginning of verse 19, I am speaking in human terms because of your natural limitations.

It's not an insult. He's not saying you guys are dumb. And so I'm speaking clearly to you or speaking in simple tone or simple words. What he's saying is I'm using simple language because you understand and you need to understand.

[41 : 07] So he uses slave and master because the church in Rome would understand that clearly. He uses this and he repeats it over and over and says it in different ways so that they can understand.

We have been set free from sin. Sin no longer has power over us. It's that simple. simple. Jesus died on the cross for our sin. It's that simple. Let us not muck up the water so that no one can understand it.

We have been set free. You have been set free. I have been set free. We have received a new identity and that is why we gather. We meet together because Jesus died for us.

We have been justified by faith. we are being made holy by God. We can worship together.

We can celebrate together and we can rejoice together because of what Jesus has done giving us a new identity. Christians, let us rejoice over our new identity.

[42 : 13] Let us fight for His name, for His renown, for His acclaim, for He is worthy of all praise.