

Romans Session 81

Free from Sin 2

Romans 6:15-23 (NASB)

¹⁵ *What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? May it never be!*

¹⁶ *Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone as slaves for obedience, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness?*

¹⁷ *But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed,*

¹⁸ *and having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.*

¹⁹ *I am speaking in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness, resulting in further lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness, resulting in sanctification.*

²⁰ *For when you were slaves of sin, you were free about righteousness.*

²¹ *Therefore what benefit were you then deriving from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the outcome of those things is death.*

²² *But now having been freed from sin and enslaved to God, you derive your benefit, resulting in sanctification, and the outcome, eternal life.*

²³ *For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

Paul is presenting his argument to those in the Roman Church concerning the Christians new relationship to Christ, and therefore his new relationship to sin.

For the first time the Christian is able not to live sinfully and is able for the first time to live righteously.

Paul speaks of five things that we must consider,

- 1 The Antagonist (6:15a)
- 2 The Answer (6:15b)
- 3 The Axiom (6:16)
- 4 The Argument (6:17-22)
- 5 The Absolute (6:23)

We have already talked about the antagonist, the critic and why they are critical of Paul's teaching. They believed that with Paul's scenario the Christian could then being free sin as he pleased since he was under grace

We have seen Paul's answer, absolutely not, no, no, may it never be!!

And we have also talked a bit about the axiom, (an axiom being a general truth that is so self-evident it needs no proof. That axiom being that whoever you obey, whatever master you obey, then you are a slave to that master. Paul applied that to the Christians life, in obedience to God.

THE AXIOM (Continued)

Here are the choices, be a slave to sin with Satan as your master
Or be a slave to Righteousness with Christ as your master.

There is no neutral ground. All men are either mastered by sin, which is to say they are under the lordship of Satan, or they are mastered by righteousness, which is to say they are under the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

Mathew Henry, in his commentary observed, "If we would know to which of these two families we belong, we must inquire to which of these two masters we yield our obedience" (Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible, vol. 6 [Old Tappan, J.J.: Revell, n. d.], p.405).

Although the natural, freedom-seeking, rebellious mind recoils at the truth, no human being is his own master. The popular notion that a person can master his own life and destiny is a delusion that Satan has foisted on mankind ever since the fall.

It was by that lie, in fact, that Adam and Eve were drawn into the first sin.

Warning against false teachers in the first century who proclaimed that attractive falsehood, Peter wrote:

2 Peter 2:18-19 (NASB)

¹⁸ For speaking out arrogant words of vanity they entice by fleshly desires, by sensuality, those who barely escape from the ones who live in error,

¹⁹ promising them freedom while they themselves are slaves of corruption; for by what a man is overcome, by this he is enslaved.

If the reality of man's situation is honestly acknowledged, it becomes obvious that human beings are not independent creatures.

They are not and cannot be free in the sense in which the world defines and values freedom.

Many people resist the claims of Christ because they are afraid of having to give up their cherished freedoms. Of course, they have no freedoms to lose.

The unsaved person is not free to do good or evil as he chooses.

He is bound and enslaved to sin, and the only thing he can do is to sin.

His only choices have to do with when, how, why, and to what degree he will sin.

It ought to be just as self-evident that no human being can be the slave of two different masters.

Matthew 6:24 (NASB)

²⁴ "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.

Paul's point in the second half of Romans 6 is the same one that Jesus made in the above passage.

A person cannot have two different and opposing natures at the same time, and he cannot live in two different and opposing spiritual worlds at the same time.

He is either the slave of **sin**, which he is by natural birth, or he is the slave of **righteousness**, which he becomes by the new birth.

Paul is not here speaking of moral and spiritual obligation but of moral and spiritual reality.

He is not saying that believers ought to admire righteousness or desire righteousness or practice righteousness, although they should of course, do those things. He is not here teaching that a Christian ought to be a slave of righteousness but that every Christian, by divine creation is made a slave of righteousness and cannot be anything else.

Paul is saying exactly what John says in his first letter:

1 John 3:9-10 (NASB)

⁹ No one who is born of God practices sin, because His seed abides in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.

¹⁰ By this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious: anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor the one who does not love his brother.

Paul tells the Colossians:

Colossians 1:21-22 (NASB)

²¹ And although you were formerly alienated and hostile in mind, engaged in evil deeds,

²² yet He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach—

In other words, for the Christian, the life of unrighteousness, of alienation from and hostility toward God, is past.

The old sinful way of life cannot continue to characterize a true Christian.

Obedience to God in righteous living is a certainty in the life of a truly justified person.

Because of temporary unfaithfulness, sinful disobedience may at times appear to dominate a Christian's life.

But a true believer cannot continue indefinitely in disobedience, because it is diametrically opposed to his new and holy nature which cannot indefinitely endure sinful living.

John emphasizes that truth repeatedly in his first epistle.

1 John 1:6 (NASB)

⁶ If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth;

1 John 2:4 (NASB)

⁴ The one who says, "I have come to know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him;

1 John 3:9 (NASB)

⁹ No one who is born of God practices sin, because His seed abides in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.

Then Paul moves on to the Argument

THE ARGUMENT (explaining the two slaveries)

Romans 6:17-22 (NASB)

¹⁷ *But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed,*

¹⁸ *and having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.*

¹⁹ *I am speaking in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness, resulting in further lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness, resulting in sanctification.*

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Paul here explains and applies the principle he has just stated in verse 16, namely, that a person is a slave either to sin and Satan or to righteousness and God.

In doing so, he contrasts the three aspects of each of those two domains of servanthood:

1. Their position
2. Their practice
3. Their promise

THEIR POSITION

Romans 6:17-18 (NASB)

¹⁷ *But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed,*

¹⁸ *and having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.*

First the apostle gives **thanks, to God** that his believing readers were no longer subject to the slavery that leads to death.

He does not thank or praise them for their own wisdom or intelligence or moral and spiritual determinations, because none of those things had a part in their salvation.

John 6:44a (NASB)

⁴⁴ *"No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him;*

John 6:65c (NASB)

⁶⁵ *unless it has been granted him from the Father."*

Our thanks for salvation should always be to God alone, because it is God alone;

1 Corinthians 15:57 (NASB)

⁵⁷ *but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.*