

# Your New Relationship with Righteousness

Romans 6:15-23

LTS. Titus 2:1-14

In Christ the Christians is rescued from slavery to sin and freed to serve righteousness.

It's always amazing to me that whenever I prepare to preach a passage of Scripture, I discover that the word of the Lord is so much deeper and richer than I ever imagine it will be. At least, that has been my experience in these first 39 sermons from Paul's letter to the Romans. What a delight it is to stand before you week after week and unfold the word of God in your hearing.

I am confident as we begin yet another message from the next passage in Romans 6, that you are expecting to be reminded that the gospel that Justifies us is the gospel that Sanctifies us. And if that is indeed your expectation, all I can say is, "You will not be disappointed." Paul has been teaching us that It's not possible for a Godless, hell-bound sinner to be born again without experiencing radical change in the heart that bears the fruit of a changed life.

Specifically, we learned that the first change that takes place in the new believer's life is that they receive a new relationship with sin. Whereas before Christ, your life was characteristically marked by the practice of sin and delight in sin, now we hate our sin and long for the day when we'll not only be free from sin's power but from son's presence as well. "Even so come, Lord Jesus.

This week, however, Paul is determined to teach us that as believers in Jesus Christ we not only have a new relationship with sin, we also have a new relationship with Righteousness. At the moment of salvation We who have been declared righteous by God start becoming righteous in the way we live. Not self-righteously, but righteous in the sense that we strive in everything to be obedient to the Lord and pleasing to the Lord. This is what Paul has in mind for us today. So...

Take your bible and stand with me in honor of God's word as we read the text for this morning.

Read: Rom. 6:15–23

*What then? Are we to sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means! <sup>16</sup> 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?*

*<sup>17</sup> 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, <sup>18</sup> and, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness. <sup>19</sup> 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.*

*<sup>20</sup> For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. <sup>21</sup> 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. <sup>22</sup> But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the fruit you get leads to sanctification and its end, eternal life.*

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

May the Lord add his blessing  
to the reading of His word.  
And you may be seated.

Unfortunately, there are many professing Christians who think that obedience to God is not required since we now live under grace rather than under law. But my responsibility this morning is to correct that error.

Someone will say, "But I thought that we are saved by grace and not by works of righteousness. How can we be saved by grace alone and yet still be required to obey the commands of Scripture?"

That's an excellent question. And I think Paul will answer it for us over the next 40 minutes or so.

I have a simple outline to guide us as we go. Only three points.

I. The Controversy:

II. The Correlation:

III. The conclusion:

Let's get started.

## I. The Controversy.

- A. Once again, we begin by hearing from the opposition. In verse 15 (Rom. 6) we read, What then? Are we to sin because we are not under law but under grace? This was basically the same controversy that was raised in v. 1 of this same chapter: "What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound?"
- B. Both of these questions imply the charge that Paul was teaching antinomianism, a false doctrine that says that since all our sin is covered by the super-abounding, all-forgiving grace of God, and since that grace reveals the glory of God, we, don't have to be concerned about sin anymore! We can just live however we please
- C. You may remember that the final verse in last week's message (6:14) declared, "Sin will have no dominion over you because you are no longer under law but under grace. What does it mean to be Under Law?
  - 1. To live under Law means to live under the tyranny of attempting to earn justification by obeying the O.T. law. The proper name for this teaching is legalism.
  - 2. To be Under Grace, however, means to live under the life-giving rule of Him who justifies the ungodly by faith alone.
- D. Paul's opponents seemed to be suggesting that since we are no longer Under law but Under grace instead, sin is no longer an issue. But Paul is offended by such a suggestion. His response was simply, "May it never... be! not in a thousand years! Again, this is the strongest term of negative response in the GK language. True believers do not pretend to have a license to sin. They are done with sin! They hate their sin and are quick to repent of sin whenever they become aware that they have sinned.
- E. In Christ, they have been set free from the dominion of sin. They no longer have to sin. Their old self "has been crucified with Christ in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing." The believer's relationship with sin has changed. Radically changed! And knowing what we have learned from the first five chapters of Romans,

this should not be controversial, but it was. So, this was The Controversy:  
And that brings us to...

## II. The Correlation:

- A. Here Paul develops an illustration or an analogy to help him communicate what he wants us to learn. The illustration is based on the theme of slavery. Paul admits (v.19) that its not a perfect correlation, but he's confident it can be useful it to make his point. Look again at v. 16.

*<sup>16</sup> Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey?*

- B. Here Paul is simply establishing a fact that everyone who lived under Roman rule would have understood perfectly and intuitively.
- C. The Roman Empire of the first century was a world of slavery. It has been estimated that there were about sixty million slaves under Roman rule during the days of Paul. That means about 1/3 of the population of large cities such as Rome, were slaves.
- D. Unlike American slavery of 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, there were a number of ways a person could become a slave under Roman rule. You could become a slave by committing crimes against the state, or by being captured in war. But you could also become a slave by indenturing yourself to someone to pay back a debt, or learn a trade, or even become a citizen. This seems to be the kind of slavery that Paul is referring to.
- E. Notice the word “present” (16). It means to makes oneself available to another. The idea here is that a man will find himself in such need that he becomes willing to present himself to someone as a good prospect to be a slave, whether to pay off a debt, or for some other reason. Paul is not concerned about any of that. His point is very simple, namely, whoever you become obedient to is your master.
- F. Said more simply, if you are a slave, you have a master. And if you have a master, you are NOT free to do as you please. Rather, you do whatever your Master requires. By definition the slave lives to obey his master. This lends clarity to Jesus' statement in Luke. 6:46, “Why do you call me Lord, Lord and do not do what I say?”
- G. The word for slave here is *dulos* and wherever it is used in the N.T. it means slave – one who lives in obedience to another. This is a major theme in the text before us as evidenced by the fact that *dulos* is used 8 times in this chapter.

H. In chapter 1 Paul refers to Himself as a slave. He introduces himself (Rom 1) as “Paul, slave of Christ Jesus.” Why does he refer to himself as a slave (dulos). Because he has entered into a life of obedience to Jesus. Jesus is Paul’s Master and Paul is his slave.

I. Now, notice the next phrase. Paul says (16)

*“You are the slave of the one you obey, either of sin which leads to death, or of obedience that leads to righteousness.”*

J. In other words, there are only two masters to choose from. You can either be a slave to sin or a slave to righteousness. And as far as this illustration is concerned, there are only two Masters in the world. You used to be a slave to sin, but if you are “in Christ,” now you are a slave of righteousness. A radical change has taken place. This is what happened when you were justified; when you were born again. You remained a slave, but you experienced a change of master.

K. Notice how Paul describes this transition. He says (v.17-18)

a. *But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart. and, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness.*

L. The phrase “You became Obedient” is a passive verb. You didn’t become obedient from the heart by your own will and determination. God had to unshackle you from the dominion of sin. He did what He promised to do all the way back in Ezek. 36, and Jer. 32. He gave you a new heart. A Heart that loves God and finds its pleasure in obeying, serving, and submitting to Him.

M. That’s what true righteousness is. It’s living a life of joyful, willing obedience to Jesus our Master. As Paul words it (16), we are “slaves of obedience.” Why “slaves of obedience? Because, obedience to your master is by definition what identifies you as a slave.

N. My friend, regardless of how you think of yourself, the fact is, you are a slave. You are either a slave of sin or a slave God. And frankly, so much of the confusion and abject depravity on display in our world right now is rooted in the false notion that you can be an autonomous being – free to do whatever you please.

O. The word of our time is “*You be you.*” Or “*You do you.*” But that, my friends, is an illusion. You are either a slave of sin or slave to God. And if you think you’re not a slave to your sin, do this. Try to stop. Identify 2 or 3 patterns of sin in your life and

try to stop them. You will soon learn how much of a slave you really are.

P. Jesus said (Jn. 8:34)

“Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin. Then (8:36) He says, “So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.” The point is that you are either a slave to sin or you are a slave of Christ. No one is free to do as they please. And the only way to become truly free from the tyranny of sin is to change masters.

### Insert Gospel

Q. You may be sitting here and asking, “How can I discern whose slave I am? Answer, you can only discern who your master is by the way that you live. Who do you live for? Who do you obey?

R. The issue here is NOT what you say about your faith. Rather, its about how you actually live. James wrote in his little epistle the following words (Jam. 2:14-17):

*What good is it, my brothers, if a man Says he has faith but does not have works. Can that faith save him? If a brother is poor or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, and one of you says to them, ‘ Go in peace, be warmed and be filled, without giving them the things they need, what good is that?’ So, faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.*

S. What I want you to see, beloved, is that the identity of your master is revealed by what you do and how you live. What master do you serve? Sin or righteousness? God or your pleasures? Jesus made it clear (Lk. 16:13) “*No one can serve two masters.*”

T. For the believers in Rome, all of this was a wonderful. Listen to what Paul says next. (v. 17-18)

*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,<sup>18</sup> and, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness.*

U. The word “*committed*” here means to hand something over, such as when In Matt.

25:14 the master handed over his property to his servants. At first blush it may seem that Paul is speaking about the apostles giving sound doctrine to believers or giving the word of God to believers.

- V. However, Stephen Yuille is probably right when he argues that the subject of the sentence is not “the standard of teaching” (the doctrine) but rather the believer. Paul’s NOT saying the word of God was committed to us, but that we were committed to the word. In this sense, the word of God, “the teaching,” the Scripture has become our new master. We obey Christ by obeying His word. Who committed us to the word? God did. “We were slaves to sin and suddenly we became obedient from the heart to the Word of God. And John says “His commands are not burdensome. (1 Jn. 5:3). Rather, they are our delight.
- W. Before Christ, we were helpless, without hope and without God. We were enslaved to sin and to legalism which only increased sin. But then, we experienced the New Birth. We became a “New Creation” (see 1 Cor. 1:30).
- X. And this has happened to every single believer. At the moment of conversion, God unites us to Christ and creates in us a new relationship with Sin and a new relationship with righteousness. We became obedient to a new master. Paul calls it (Rom. 1:5). *The obedience of faith*. This is what the Gospel does. It produced obedience that is the fruit of faith.
- Y. Steve Lawson says, “There is no such thing as faith that doesn’t produce obedience. And there is no such thing as disobedient saving faith
- Z. And this brings us to the third point. We have talked about

The Controversy  
The Correlation, and now...

### III. The conclusion:

- A. How should believers respond to what Paul is teaching here? Well, he tells us (19).  
*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.*
- B. When Paul speaks of your “members,” he means the members of your body –

- your eyes (what you look at and watch;
  - your mouth (the things you say;
  - your feet (where you go;
  - our ears (what you listen to;
  - your hands what you touch.
- C. Just as you once employed all of these precious gifts of God for sexual impurity and lawlessness, leading to further lawlessness...
- a. Let me pause here again to point out that this is precisely what we are experiencing in our culture. Sexual impurity leading to lawlessness that leads to even greater lawlessness.
  - b. And those who practice these things believe they are free, but in reality they are shackled and in bondage to sin. And the only way to escape is to present yourself to a new master – Jesus our Lord.

D. Returning to Paul’s counsel here, we read,

*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.*

E. Sanctification here is a progressive growing in the likeness of Christ. The more we obey Christ by obeying His word the more like our Master we become. And by the way, as you think about your past life, how, exactly did you profit from that kind of living? Or as Paul says it:

*For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness.  
<sup>21</sup> 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. But now – now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the fruit you get leads to sanctification and its end, eternal life.*

F. How do we benefit from living in obedience to Master Jesus? Are you kidding? We get a changed life! We get a new relationship with sin – we are no longer under its dominion. But we also get a new relationship with Righteousness and the blessed adventure that is ours to belong to Him, to live for Him, to do His bidding in this world for His glory.

G. I think the whole thing can be summed up in verse 23.

“For the wages of sin is death, but the Free Gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

H. Do Christians believe that we can live and sin however we please? May it never be. We who are in Union with Christ have a new relationship with sin and a new relationship with righteousness because, by the super-abounding grace of God, we have a new relationship with Christ.