

Romans 6:15-18 **Everyone is a Slave to Something**

We are in this last section of the book of Romans. Romans chapter 6 verse 15 to 23. Paul says, **What then?** Or more literally, **What therefore?** **Shall we sin because we are not under law, but under grace? God forbid!** That phrase represented by *God forbid* is the most exact form of negation you can express. **May it never happen!** (verse 17) **Do you not know, that to whom you yield (or present) yourselves slaves to obey, his slaves you are to whom you obey.** It is not just the word *servants*, it is the word *slaves*, **δοῦλος** (*doulos*). **Whether it is of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?** (verse 17) **But God be thanked, that you were slaves of the sin principle, but you obeyed from out of *the* heart that form of doctrine which you were delivered into.** That is the literal translation. It is awkward in Greek so they put in the translation *that was delivered to you*. But the verb shows that these, and we as well, are delivered into the form of doctrine.

18) Having then been made free from the sin principle you became slaves of righteousness.

19) I speak according to the human on account of the infirmity (or weakness) of your flesh. For as you yielded (or presented) the members of your body as slaves to uncleanness and to lawlessness for the purpose of lawlessness, even so now present (or yield) the members as slaves to righteousness for the purpose of holiness, which is literally the word *sanctification*.

20) For when you were servants of the sin principle, you were free *with respect to* righteousness.

21) What fruit did you have in those things whereof you are now ashamed? For the end of those *things is* death.

22) But now after having been set free from the sin principle, and having become slaves to God, you have your fruit unto holiness, and the end eternal life.

23) For the wages of the sin principle *is* death, but the gift of God *is* eternal life in (not *through*) Jesus Christ our Lord.

This chapter is broken down into two sections and it is divided by a question. Verse 1 is a question and verse 15 is a question. Both sections follow the same outline. So this is a planned presentation by Paul as he is presenting about sanctification. Remember sanctification is when you are set apart for God by the coming and indwelling of His Spirit in your life. That person is sanctified. But in presenting that doctrine there are those who would approach and say, "Well, in light of the fact that I am sanctified what benefits are there?" If I am saved by grace through faith and not of works and I am set apart by God's Spirit, then what about sin?

See Romans chapter 6 verse 1 is in response to chapter 5 verse 20 where Paul says that **Where sin abounds grace does much more abound.** So somebody says, "Well, if grace is there in more abundance than sin whenever sin is present, I will sin so that I can experience more grace." It is a perverted twisted presentation of what grace is all about. So Paul answers that by saying, **What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin in order that grace may abound?** He says, **May it never happen! How can we who have died to sin live any longer in it?**

And he went on for the rest of this section to explain that because of the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ we have died to sin and we have been raised up a new creation in the resurrection power and Spirit of Christ. So if I have become dead to sin, how can I continue in it? And, again, *death* means *separation*. It does not mean non-existent, even when it comes to the death of human beings. When a person dies it does not mean that they cease to exist, it means that they have separated from their body. Every person will live forever in one place or another. No one is annihilated, everybody lives forever.

So he says, because of the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, and His death and His resurrection in your life, you have died to the sin principle. That is to say, it no longer has power over you. Sin is still there. It is in my flesh. As we will see when we get to the end of Romans chapter 7, the law of sin is still in my flesh but I have been delivered from the power of sin controlling my life. Now I respond in choice. I can choose to entertain it again, or I can choose surrender, and yield myself to the Spirit of God.

So he now comes to the second question, which I think is interesting. Because the first question basically answers the person that says, "Well, the more I sin, it would bring more grace." And this philosophy says that sin increases grace. The more I sin, the more I experience God's grace. So that person is saying sin increases grace. But now we have a second question that deals with the person that says, "Well since it says," right at the end at verse 14 it says, **For sin shall not have dominion (or lordship) over you, for you are not under the law but under grace.** "Well, if I'm not under the law, there are no laws! There are no rules and regulations. I can do as I please. I'm free." The law permits more sin this person says. Before it said, sin increases grace. This person says, grace increases sin. Any way you look at it is being perverted. Twisted. Abused.

We saw the first part, verses 1 to 14, it is impossible for a true born-again believer in Christ to continue in sin. It is impossible. Because we were told the Spirit of God is in us and it is the Spirit of God that keeps us from that. We can commit acts of sin but we cannot continue in a lifestyle of sin. God's Spirit will not let us. So that is why Paul says, **How can we who are dead to sin live any longer in it?** If you use that as a license for sin in order to continue in your habit and lifestyle of sin, you are not saved. But he poses the question of we who are saved how can we hold that kind of a perverted philosophy if indeed we become dead to sin. How can we live any longer in it?

But now what about the freedom of the law? Verse 15 says, **Therefore shall we sin because we are not under the law but under grace?** So any sin that I commit and you come up and show me out of the Bible a law that I am breaking, "I am not under the law." So, for me, grace increases my sin because I have freedom and liberty. It is another perverted approach.

To these questions, the application, Paul says, **May it never happen!** The term [translated] *God forbid* is **μὴ γένοιτο** (*mē genoito*), *may it never happen*.

But then he gives us instruction in verse 16. **Do you not know**, and this style of presentation is Paul saying to them that they do know. They either conveniently forgot it or purposely not remember it. But he says, **Do you not know that to whom you yield yourselves** - and the word *yield* is the word *present*. It is a word used in the Old Testament for bringing up a sacrifice to the altar to be offered to God. The word means to present oneself to be at the disposal of the person to whom you are presenting yourself. Same word used in Romans chapter 12 verse 1, **Present your bodies as a living sacrifice**. That does not mean we just stand before Him in a liturgical setting and religiously present ourselves, "Here I am Lord," and then just walk out the door. We present ourselves. We are at His disposal. I am yielding, I am presenting myself to You.

But he says, **Do you not know that to whom you yield (or present) yourselves as slaves unto obedience, you are slaves to whom you obey, whether it is sin unto death, or obedience unto righteousness?** Everybody is a slave. Whether you are saved or you are not saved, everybody is a slave. He is telling us in the instruction in verse 16 that a person is either a slave to sin or a slave to righteousness. One or the other. So that, the moment that Christ frees me and delivers me and saves me from the power of sin dominating my life I become a slave of Christ. There is no independence. So for the person who is looking for grace, or the person is looking for, "I am not under the law anymore," to that person who is looking for freedom, there is no freedom or independence for yourself.

So what is the difference? Being a slave to sin kept us from our normal purpose for which we were born: is to be slaves to God. That is what liberty is. Okay, now you are free. If you have been saved, now you are free, first of all, for the Lord to restore you, heal you from going your own way and all the effects of it, and to begin to use you for the function for which He created you. And so, in that sense I am now free to function the way God meant me to function. He brought me into this life at a certain time in history according to His will, and it was for His purposes. But for a number of years I walked my own way. I was a slave to sin. But when Christ saved me He brought me back into a relationship with God that was broken and brought me back into a function with God for which I was created.

Every single person has been born in time in history, and a place, gone through the things that they have gone through, for the purpose of being restored to Christ, so that we can function in the way that He created us for, and the purpose for which He created us for. In II Corinthians chapter 1 it tells us that we have gone through hardships and we have experienced the comfort of the Lord so that we can comfort others. That whole section there in II Corinthians chapter 1 tells us that whatever difficulties and hardships we have gone through, and are going through in life, somewhere down the road that is going to be our ministry, with people who suffer that way. My trials are different than your trials. In fact, I might be your trial. Who knows?

But my trials are designed for my specific relationship and function in Christ and my function in the body of Christ. And some people wonder for years how much difficulty must I

go through and what is this really all about? It is to really minister to the people who have and will go through the same things. And once I have experienced Christ through those difficult times, I can honestly sincerely come up to someone who is going to the same thing and say, "I know what you are going through. Let me tell you how faithful Christ is, and how He has been to me. Let me share with you what He has done in my life and for my life." I am not talking about reading out of a brochure, some kind of sales presentation. I am talking about real life experience with Jesus Christ.

I have gotten to a point now that when I come across people in public, and, of course, I always kind of withdraw when they say, "Well, we are looking for a church. You know a church we can go to?" Nope. Sure don't. You see if people are looking for a church, for some reason it is like, "No, you don't want to look for a church, you want to look for Jesus." If you are looking for the Lord, I can point you in the right direction. When people say to me, "I am looking for a church," that says programs and whatever.

I started writing an article the other day, I doubt it will ever get published because I will probably get crucified for it. The title of the article is: Instead of the Separation of Church and State, How About the Separation of Church and Christ, which is what is going on now. In the last days the church, what we call church, will be apostate. That does not mean it will cease to exist. It means that man will run God's church for Him man's way. It will not be by faith and God's Spirit will not be in it.

Everybody is a slave to somebody, either to Satan or to Christ. Grace frees us from sin. It delivers us from sin. How can we continue, how can we say, "Now I am free to go sin thanks to grace." No. They are opposites. Sin actively works against grace. And grace actively works to deliver people out of sin. Grace does not produce the freedom to sin. Grace brings freedom from sin. If a person says, "Well, I am under grace so I am free to go sin," that person is not free. And if you say, "Well, if you have been delivered by Christ and you belong to Christ, you are still not free." Yes, you are. You are free to be who you are supposed to be. That might be limiting to you but, indeed, it is freedom.

In verses 17 and 18 he begins the explanation. He has given us the principle that everybody is a slave to somebody, either to Satan or the Savior. So now he applies this principle beginning at verse 17. He says, **I give God thanks that you were slaves to sin.** In the past you were slaves of sin. And the word *sin* has the definite article: *the sin principle*, who is Satan himself. **But you obeyed.** Interesting. **You obeyed from out of your heart that type of doctrine into which you were delivered**, literal translation.

First of all, the characteristic of someone who is saved is that they obey. **ὕπακούω** (hupakouō) means *to put your hearing under*. That when God's Spirit presented God's truth that person responded and obeyed. Look where the obedience came from, **from out of the heart.** Not out of the mind. We can be deceived into thinking that I believe the right stuff in my head; but never have gone through a life change in the heart. Regeneration. Born again. Spiritual birth. Not in the head, but in the heart. The heart of a person's soul. But it is also interesting that the person who has responded in obedience from out of their heart - that we were delivered into a form of doctrine, a form of teaching. That when I received Christ I also was drawn into

and delivered over to the form of teaching that belongs to Christ. So I am still not independent. Not only have I received Christ and saved, but I am also part of His doctrine, His teaching. His Spirit flows and draws me to His word.

Verse 18, **And after having become free from the sin principle you were enslaved (became slaves) to righteousness.** Set free from one to be enslaved to Christ and to righteousness. Now it is very interesting because there is a little litmus test in the Scriptures about salvation. All during the week who do you listen to? I am not talking about a radio station or your boss. You cannot say to your boss, "You are not the Lord, get out of here. I only listen to Christ."

When a person puts their hearing under, they are listening for something. Not just listening **ἀκούω** (akouō). **ὑπακούω** (hupakouō) means *to put your hearing under*. I am looking for Him. And it is interesting, that whether I am a slave to sin or I am a slave to Christ, each person is obeying. Each person is listening to a persuasion. So the person who is saved has God's Spirit there ministering to them, even if they do not want to listen. And the person that does not know Christ, their entire life is a lifestyle of sin and they are obeying it. They are listening to the persuasion of it. A believer cannot live in a habitual lifestyle of sin. Cannot. Because of the Holy Spirit. When we sin, the Holy Spirit convicts us and brings us to repentance. He stops us. It is one of the proofs that we belong to Christ.

As we continue to go through this section, as we just read to you a few moments ago, **The wages of sin is death but the gift of God is eternal life in Jesus Christ our Lord.** Each master will give the reward for those who obey them. Sin gives wages. God does not give wages, He gives a gift. We cannot earn eternal life, it is a gift. But Satan gives wages.

Someone the other day said, "When those who reject Christ go for their paycheck some of them are going to get paid time and a half for their sin." Sin will reward those who seek it for their control of their life and for their pleasure. There will be wages paid, it is death. But the gift of God is eternal life in Jesus Christ our Lord.

As we continue to follow this through, following Paul's presentation of this very important principle. Old Bob Dylan song from 1960 something, was I born back then? "Everybody's got to serve somebody," he says in his song. He said in his song, "If you are not busy being born again, then you are busy dying." Very interesting. How people can have a perspective about life and realize you are going down one road or the other. There are only two roads. There are only two spirits. And a person is either obeying one or the other.

Let's close in prayer.