

Romans 6:15-23
The Wages of Sin and the Gift of God

Romans chapter 6 at verse 15, **What then? or therefore? Shall we sin because we are not under law, but under grace?** The term *God forbid* literally means **May it not happen!** expressing impossibility.

16) Do you not know, that to whom you yield (or *present*) yourselves *as* slaves for obedience, slaves you are to whom you obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?

17) But thanks be to God, that you were slaves of the sin, but you obeyed from out of *the* heart into which type of doctrine you were delivered.

18) Now after having been freed from the sin, you were enslaved to the righteousness.

19) I am speaking to you in the human on account of the weakness of your flesh: for just as you presented your members *as* slaves to uncleanness and to lawlessness for the purpose of lawlessness; so (that is, *in the same way*) now present (or *yield*) your members as slaves to righteousness for sanctification.

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

21) Therefore what fruit you had then over which now you are ashamed? For the end of those *things is* death.

22) But now you have become free from sin, and you have become enslaved to God, have your fruit for sanctification, and the end eternal life.

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

We are in the same subject as we are the first hour [see Galatians 6:6, <https://btministries.org/bsa/gal06v06-10a/>]. Except in Romans Paul is dealing with and presenting it from a doctrinal standpoint. Sanctification chapters 6 through 8. *Sanctification* is being set apart by God, and that happens when I experience the indwelling of God's Spirit, when He comes to dwell within me, and that is a permanent situation. But there are always those who want to use that as an excuse for sin.

Remember this chapter is divided up by two questions. First of all, in verse 1. Because of what he shared in chapter 5 verse 20 that, **where sin abounds grace does much more abound.** In other words, does not your sin level - even if you are the chiefest of sinners God's grace is greater. He can save you. But there were those who said, "Well, where sin abounds grace does much more abound. Therefore we will sin so that we can experience more grace." And so he says, **What shall we say? Shall we continue in sin in order that grace may abound? It is impossible. We have died to sin.** Though sin continues to exist, we have died to its power over us by the coming and the presence of God's Spirit. We still live in this flesh that has the law of sin in it, but it no longer has power over us except when we yield to it. It is voluntary that we want to follow after the desires of the flesh.

But then we come to the second question in verse 15. **What then? Shall we sin, because we are not under law but we are under grace?** One was sin producing grace and one was grace producing sin. We are under grace now so grace produces sin. We can go out and sin because there is no law that tells us we cannot. But again, the basic principle is and this goes along, it runs right through every understanding and doctrine that we have on salvation, which I say we in the body of Christ don't understand today, which is why we have so many versions of what it means to be a Christian and what it means to be saved.

How can I continue to live in sin if Christ has come and His Spirit is now indwelling me and He has separated, which is what *death* means, separated me, literally delivered me, and saved me from the power of sin, who is Satan himself. And Satan was energizing and feeding through my flesh and held me captive to be a servant to sin. But when Christ comes, which is why Jesus Christ must come to live within. He must literally save me and deliver me - cut off the source of my sin that is energizing me. I still have the portal through which sin comes but the power of sin no longer lords it over me. Christ comes to live within. He fills my spirit and He seals my spirit. In my spirit is perfect peace and perfect joy all of the time because Christ is there. He is not sharing it with anybody. And where Christ fills and is dwelling no one else can be there but Him.

That is why Paul, in Ephesians chapter 3, kept encouraging people to look into the inner man where Christ dwells. Do not look out here, it is going to disturb you. And it does, it is very disturbing.

So one group of people they said, "Well, let's sin so we can experience more grace." Another group says, "Well, since we are under grace and not under the law, grace can produce more sin." But you see grace frees us from sin. Grace does not produce sin. And does not give us the freedom for sin. Grace brings freedom from sin. We do not have to do that anymore. It is no longer our lord and master. Sin actually works against grace and grace works against sin. They are opposites. They are enemies. Grace does not come along sin and say, "Go ahead, sin, I am grace. Go ahead and sin, I will take care of everything for you." It is the opposite.

So he opens up with this second question because they said, "We are not under law, we are under grace so we can just go out there because grace is going to let us sin." He says in application, "It is impossible."

In the instruction in verse 16, he says, **Do you not know that to you yield or present yourselves as slaves for obedience you are slaves to whom you obey, whether it is of sin to death or obedience to righteousness?** The word *obedience* means *to put your hearing under*. Whatever persuasion you are listening to, if you have dialed in to the flesh and to the world and you are listening to that persuasion, it is going to be pulling you in. But it is not dominating your life because that is what you were saved from, the dominance and the power of sin over our lives. But I become the slave to whatever or whomever I listen to. Whether it is to sin, which brings death, or whether I am obedient, that is, I listen to righteousness for eternal life.

In verse 17, he explains as he gives the illustration of the master and slave relation. He says, **I give thanks to God that you were slaves of the sin**, that is the sin principle, Satan, **but you obeyed from out of the heart**. Obedience to Christ is not just a head thing, a mind thing. It is from the heart. Naturally we fight against the truth.

If you can picture a submarine - you know I am a concept person. I learn and I understand things conceptually. Imagine that your inner faculties, you are a submarine. And we have a tendency that when the head gets filled with knowledge we shut all the doors and cut it off so it does not make it down to the heart. We keep it up in the head. We shut off that compartment because we do not want the whole thing flooded with the truth. But with our mind we understand it, and with our mind we believe it, but you see it has to reach down into the heart. The heart, the **καρδιά** (*kardia*) as it is called in Greek, is the center of a person's will. The center of the emotions. The center of the intellect. Everything. The center of you as a person. All its faculties and functions, it is called the heart, the center of a person's life. We are deceiving ourselves if we think that it is just believing the right things. There must be a change of heart.

II Corinthians chapter 5 verse 17 Paul says, **In Christ we have become a new creation**. It is not a new religious belief but literally He changes our nature. We try to discipline ourselves in a human way to act better and be a better person. But we are never saved until Jesus Christ changes our nature and we become partakers of the divine nature. We look the same from the outside but we are different. We are not the same. We are set apart for Christ. Not by our beliefs, but by the presence of His Spirit living within. He says, **But you obeyed from out of the heart into a type of doctrine to which you were delivered**. Not only will what were we delivered because out of the heart we obeyed, but we were delivered into and over to a type of doctrine, teaching.

And he says in verse 18, **After having been freed from the sin you became enslaved to righteousness**. Do not get the wrong idea about what *freedom* means. To be forgiven and set free by Christ means that we are now free to be His slave. Paul is saying here that everybody is a slave to something. There is no such thing as not being a slave. You are either a slave to sin or you are slave to Christ, one or the other.

But he says in verse 19, the commission, he says, **For I am speaking humanly - I am talking about master slave relations in a human sense - on account of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you yielded (or presented) your members (that would be the various parts of our bodies) as slaves to the sin and to lawlessness to work out lawlessness, so (that is, in the same way) now present (or yield) the members as slaves to righteousness for sanctification**.

Because he says now that you have been delivered when sin comes and knocks on the door you have a choice. You have a choice because Christ has saved you. You are not free because of your religious beliefs. We are set free because we belong to Christ because He has come in and literally saved me from the power of Satan energizing my life.

So he says, just like you presented yourselves to sin, present yourself to righteousness. It is the same word that's used in Romans chapter 12 verse 1 where he says, **Present your bodies as a living sacrifice.** What is God's will for my life is that I come before Him and just yield myself, my human faculties. Everything that I have and everything that I am and just say, "Lord, here you go. Take over. Do as You wish." That is yielding. That is submission.

But notice verse 20, what a verse. **For when you were slaves of the sin principle you were free from righteousness.** A nonbeliever can literally say, "I am not a Christian so I have been saved from Christianity. I am a slave to sin and I am free from righteousness." Because that is true. When I was a slave to sin I was completely free from righteousness, did not have anything to do with it. But now, because Christ has come within, I am now a slave to righteousness but I am free from sin. It is either one or the other.

So, he says in verse 21, your production, he says, **Therefore what fruit you had** - and the word *had* is imperfect tense, which means continuous action in the past - **what fruit you had then over which you are now ashamed.** So basically he is saying that if you are really saved, there will come a time when you look back on what you once were. And now you look back on it and you are ashamed at the fruit your life bore because it bore corruption and death. It is destructive. He says, **for the end of those things is death.**

But now, verse 22, after having been freed from sin, and having become enslaved to God, you have your fruit for sanctification. Some texts say *holiness* but it is the same word, **ἁγιασμόν** (hagiasmon) as we just read before. **And the end of that fruit is eternal life.** Not only are we a slave to somebody or something, but we are also producing things. My life is either producing death and destruction, or my life is producing the expression of eternal life.

Let me just say to you that the word *eternal* does not talk about duration, it talks about quality of life. Yes, it is forever. But eternal life is quality of life, not duration of life. Key text is I John chapter 5, at verse 18 it says, **Jesus Christ who is eternal life.** It is Him. That is why He could say in I John chapter 5 verse 13, **I am writing these things to you so that those of you who have the Son of God, you know that you have eternal life.** It is not something that He gives to us, it is something that He is. Therefore, if I have Christ I have eternal life. Not only the longevity of living forever because He lives forever. If He is ever going to die then I am going to die. But He will never die. So because He lives, I live also. But it is the quality of life, too. Why do I as a believer want to bring into my life such a shallow destructive force, in looking to and being involved with the world, and the material things, and make that be my life and my satisfaction? Death. Corruption. Decay. That is all it is. When I have the quality of God's nature living inside of me, I have all that I need.

Then verse 23 in closing. In the conclusion, **For the wages of sin is death but the gift of God is eternal life, notice this - in Christ Jesus our Lord.**

The word *wages* is a special word that is used for the military. Military pay only it does not involve money, it involves rations. Back then instead of handing out paychecks on payday they gave you the food and sustenance to live. Sin pays wages. Some people are going to have big paychecks waiting. But it is true, when this life is over sin will pay its wages and the wages are death. Separation from God throughout eternity.

But the gift of God, those in the Greek class **χάρισμα** (charisma) gift, which means *expression of grace*. The expression of God's grace is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. God does not pay wages. Sin does. God gives it as a gift. The whole thing. All its benefits as a gift. As an expression of His grace. And that gift is eternal life. Not only Jesus himself but the quality of God's life living inside of me.

And, again, the emphasis is that it is eternal life in Christ Jesus, not through Him, but in Him. That is how it literally reads. Because He is eternal life. If I have Christ, I have life. And we must understand that whatever we study from the Bible where it talks about our inheritance, or it talks about eternal life, it talks about all these various things that are part of the Christian life, it is not something that Jesus just reaches in His pocket and starts handing things out. It is Him. He is eternal life. He is my peace. He does not give me peace, He is my peace.

Paul said at the end of I Corinthians chapter 1, He is our wisdom, He is our sanctification, He is our redemption. He is all of that. So if I have Christ, I have all of my inheritance. The Bible says that we are co-inheritors with Christ. So whoever He is, and whatever He has, is mine, because His spirit is now in my spirit, never to be separated throughout eternity. If you understand that concept it is just - when His Spirit comes into my spirit I become one with Him and we will never be separated. When my spirit leaves my body, His Spirit will take me up to the presence of God. When I live eternally in eternal life, not eternal death, when I live eternal life I will live forever because He lives forever, in my spirit. I will experience the fullness of heaven because He will be there. If He is there I am going to be there because His Spirit is in my spirit.

That puts a whole different approach in trying to understand what it means to be a Christian. Especially in our day and age where you can say to somebody, "Do you believe in God?"

"Sure."

"Alright, you are saved."

We do not understand that saved is not a religious term. It is an actual experience that one has when they become saved. It is literally the Spirit of Christ coming within. It is being "born of the Spirit of God," it is called. It is called "regeneration." It is called "becoming a new creation in Christ."

And if somebody comes up and asks me, "What makes you a Christian?" He is the only one that makes me a Christian. Not my beliefs because some the things that I can believe can be

way out in left field just because I am caught up in some kind of a persuasion now that is not of the Lord. But He promises to bring me back. It is not dependent upon me, it is dependent upon His presence in my life. Period. And that is the good news that we proclaim to others. No, it is not your religious beliefs and no, you do not become a Christian, which means you have got to go door-to-door and be a salesman. It means you have eternal life Himself living inside of you. It is a quality of life and you become saved and delivered from the energy of Satan dominating your life through your flesh. "Oh, nothing dominates my life!" Well, what are you enslaved to? Everybody is a slave to somebody or something. You are either a slave to sin or slave to righteousness. One or the other. There is no in between.

Two weeks from today we will venture into chapter 7, as he now takes the truths of chapter 6 and divides them out we will talk about his struggle in the flesh in chapter 7, and his deliverance by the Spirit in chapter 8. But right now he has put it all together. Just because we are saved in our spirit does not mean that our flesh is saved. And so we have this battle that we struggle with. So he is going to let us know that just because you are in the struggle - that does not mean you are not saved, it means you are saved because nonbelievers do not have that struggle.

Let's close with prayer.