



ROMANS

The Gospel of God

The Gospel of Freedom!

Romans 6:15-23

Message #13 of 33 – S1141

Sermon given on March 2, 2025



Sunday Morning Service

Pastor Rick Lancaster

The Gospel of Freedom!

Romans 6:15-23

Opening Comments

- Open your Bibles to **Romans 6**
- Today, we continue the series through the letter to the Romans – **The Gospel of God!**
- Let's open this time in our service with a word of prayer. - **Pray**

Teaching

- **The Gospel of Freedom!**
- As modern Americans, we are 150 years removed from the ugliness of slavery that once divided our nation.
- That darkness was not isolated to our nation.
- Every nation on earth has had to deal with its attitudes toward this terrible practice.
- Today there is still the buying and selling of humans.
- Even in our own country, women and children are being trafficked into unimaginable horrors.
- I am so thankful for the Trump administration and its efforts to put an end to that in this country.
- Most of us, thankfully, have little or no personal experience with true slavery.
- Paul, this morning, is going to speak of a different kind of slavery.
- We are all slaves, either slaves of sin or slaves of righteousness.
- In the previous section, Paul encouraged us to reckon or consider ourselves dead to sin.
- In chapter 5, Paul said where sin is increased, grace abounds abundantly.
- He followed that thought with the rhetorical question, since grace abounds where sin abounds, should we continue in sin?
- He replied, certainly not! We are dead to sin.
- Sin no longer has authority over our lives.
- Through faith, by the power of the Holy Spirit living in us, we have the power to say no to sin.

- Although Paul seems to state his point very clearly, he feels compelled to reinforce it.
- **Romans 6:15**
- If we are under grace, then maybe sin doesn't matter that much.
- We are free from the penalty of sin; therefore, sin is not really a problem for us any longer.
- It is not uncommon for people who feel like this will say something like, I am a child of God, I am covered by grace, God will forgive me.
- One of the problems with this kind of thinking is that it leads to more and more sinning. **F.F. Bruce**

“To make being ‘under grace’ an excuse for sinning is a sign that one is not really ‘under grace’ at all.”

- Paul employs a metaphor to make his point – slavery.
- **Romans 6:16-19**
- This would have gotten the attention of the church in Rome.
- It is estimated that at the time Paul wrote this about one-third of the population of Rome were slaves.
- If you count the people who had been freed from slavery that percentage could be half, or more, who were or had been slaves.
- Every member of the church in Rome had a firsthand understanding of the metaphor Paul is using here.
- One of the universal realities of slavery is obedience.
- Slaves obeyed their masters or there could be severe, even fatal, consequences.
- While the manifestation of slavery is different today, it is very likely that there are some people here or watching online who are slaves to something.
- Some might be enslaved to work, or success, or wealth, or influence.
- Others are enslaved by habits, both legal and illegal.
- It might even be something that one might not see as slavery.
- An angry person is a slave to their emotions.
- The same is true of the worrier, fearful, or anxious person.
- The sensual are slaves to their body and pleasure.
- You can be a slave of food, drink, or entertainment.
- Let's read verse 16 again.

- **Romans 6:16**

- All humanity can be divided by what we obey.
- We are either slaves of sin leading to death or we are slaves to obedience to God leading to righteousness.
- There is no gray area – you either are a slave to sin or you are a slave to God.
- Being a slave to God leads to life and the good of God.
- Being a slave to sin leads to death, physical and spiritual.
- Jesus had a confrontation with the self-righteousness Jews of His time (**John 8:31-34**).

Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, “If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. ³² And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” ³³ They answered Him, “We are Abraham’s descendants, and have never been in bondage to anyone. How *can* You say, ‘You will be made free?’” ³⁴ Jesus answered them, “Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin.

- They had been slaves in Egypt, Babylon, and now to the Romans.
- It is the human way to declare your freedom from the prison of your sin.
- In fact, the more imprisoned they are in their sin, the more bombastically they will declare their freedom.
- Instead of slaves to sin, Christ-followers are slaves of Christ through obedience.
- Slavery to sin brings death. Slavery to Christ brings true freedom.
- True faith is not chained by rules and regulations but is constrained by love and adoration.
- I stay close to the Master because of my love for Him and my desire to be near Him.
- Obedience to God liberates us to walk with God.
- Kelly and I are associated with Patriotic Service Dogs.
- They train service dogs for veterans and first responders suffering with PTSD.
- If you watch these dogs work with their handlers, you can tell they are having a great time.
- They love their handlers and there is no sense of slavery in their behavior.

- They find their highest purpose in obeying their handler.
 - Brothers and sisters, the freedom we seek is found in absolute obedience to God.
 - The purpose you long to experience in your life is in obedience to God.
 - **Romans 6:17-18**
 - If you are a Christ-follower, you were a slave of sin.
 - No longer are you a slave of sin. You can say no to sin.
 - Paul says, ‘you obeyed from the heart.’ NLT says wholeheartedly.
 - Jesus confronted the religious Jews because their obedience did not come from the heart (**Matthew 15:8**).
- These people draw near to Me with their mouth, and honor Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me.**
- This was a quotation from Isaiah 29:13.
 - Strict obedience to rules and regulations is not the obedience that is pleasing to God.
 - God wants our heart before our obedience (**Proverbs 4:23**).
- Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life.**
- We are either going to be slaves to sin or slaves to righteousness.
 - One leads to death and the other to life – eternal life.
 - **Romans 6:19**
 - Paul would rather speak to them as mature believers but knows they cannot handle it.
 - Paul is calling us to radical faith manifested by complete obedience to God.
 - Our dog Emma is a pretty good puppy.
 - At four months she has learned a lot, but not enough that we would consider letting her go without a leash.
 - As she grows and matures, she will be trained to obey immediately and completely.
 - Only then will she be trusted to be free.
 - True freedom in the Christian life comes through obedience – the obedience of a slave to righteousness.
 - Right now, Emma cannot be trusted to make good choices with her own life.

- Can God trust you to make good choices with your life?
- Only within Christianity is freedom experienced through being a slave of Christ.
- **Romans 6:20**
- Before you were saved, you were a slave of sin – we all were.
- While you were a slave of sin you were free from any obligation to righteousness.
- That means God didn't expect you to do what was right.
- We shouldn't expect unbelievers to do what is right – slaves of sin.
- **Romans 6:21-22**
- Prior to coming to Christ, everything in our life was leading to shame and death.
- But a life of slavery to Christ results not just in freedom from sin, or the forgiveness of sin, but also promises power for this life and sanctification to be better every day as well as a daily experience with God.
- **Romans 6:23**
- All sin leads to death.
- Every time we sin; something dies at least a little bit.
- For those who are slaves of sin, sin is their master, and it rewards them only with death.
- 'the gift of God...' – salvation is a gift, it is not earned by our good works or by sinning less than another person.
- If God didn't save us, we couldn't be saved at all.
- It is all about grace – the unmerited favor of God to the undeserving.
- As slaves of Christ, we are rewarded or paid with life, both eternal life and an abundant life today (**1 Peter 1:3-5**).

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴ to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, ⁵ who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

- God created us to be free. Freedom is a choice we make.
- First, we must choose to receive God's gift of salvation.
- Second, we must choose to be dead to sin.
- Third, we must choose to obey God.

- It is through radical obedience that we are the freest.
 - There will be a day when we can allow Emma to be free.
 - But because of our relationship, she will choose to be with us and to obey us without hesitation.
 - As my faith grows, I will learn to obey Christ more quickly and more completely.
 - As I do that, I will be walking closer to Him every day because that is where I want to be.
 - The greatest freedom we will ever experience is to walk in perfect step with Jesus.
 - Where Jesus is going is where I want to go.
 - I know that with Him is where real life is (**Psalm 16:11**).
- You will show me the path of life; in Your presence is fullness of joy; at Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.**
- I don't know about you, but I want to be closer to Jesus.
 - The key to the freedom our hearts crave is obedience (**1 Samuel 15:22**).

Has the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed than the fat of rams.

- Obey God with your whole being.
- But don't do it out of a sense of religious duty or ritual.
- Do it with a heart of love, gratitude, and adoration.
- God knows you aren't going to do that perfectly. That doesn't matter.
- Give God everything and He will give you what you need to obey Him.
- If you are not sure how to obey Him, get to know Him better in His Word.
- Spend time with people who know Him better than you and are modeling faithful obedience.
- As you do, you will experience a growing sense of freedom.
- Love God – obey God – and God will set you free!
- **Pray! Last Song!**