

Romans 6:15-23 - The Gospel of Freedom!

Scriptures:

15 What then? Shall ~~we~~ ~~sin~~ because we are

G264 – to violate a divine law.
[VFAI - Future Active Indicative:
signifies an action that will be
performed by the subject in the
future, expressing a definite
prediction or statement about
something that is going to happen.]

not under ~~law~~ but under ~~grace~~? Certainly not!

Notes:

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 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.

[verse 1]

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.

"To make being 'under grace' an excuse for sinning is a sign that one is not really 'under grace' at all." F.F. Bruce (Hughes, 1991) page130

Paul employs a metaphor to make his point – slavery.

Scriptures:

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."

16 Do you not know that to whom you present

yourself slaves to obey, you are that one's

slaves whom you obey, whether of sin

leading to death, or of obedience leading to

righteousness?

Notes:

[verses 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 were or had been slaves. Every member of the church in Rome had a firsthand understand of the metaphor Paul is using here. For most of us, we have no personal experience with slavery. In fact, we would have to go back several generations before we found anyone who had firsthand experience with slavery.

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. The angry person is a slave to their emotion. 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.

[verse 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). They had been slaves in Egypt, Babylon, and now to the Romans.

It is the human way 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 masters, 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.

Scriptures:
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.

Proverbs 4:23 - Keep
your heart with all
diligence,
For out of it spring the
issues of life.

17 But God be thanked that *though* you were

slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart

Notes:
If you were 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](#)). 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](#)).

that form of doctrine to which you were

delivered.

G3860 – pass on
traditional
teaching.

Scriptures:

18 And having been set free from sin, you

G1659 - [VAP -
Aorist Passive:
indicates a single,
completed action
in the past where
the subject is the
recipient of the
action.]

became slaves of righteousness.

Notes:
We are either going to be slaves to
sin or slaves to righteousness. One
leads to death and the other to life –
eternal life.

19 I speak in human *terms* because of the

weakness of *your* flesh. For just as *you*

G769 –
“weakness
(physical) n. — a
lack of strength or
vigor.”

presented *your* members *as* slaves of

~~xxx~~ uncleanliness, and of ~~xxx~~ lawlessness *leading to*

G167 – “immorality
⇒ filth n. —
immorality
understood especially
as dirty and impure;
especially used of
sexual sins.”

G458 –
“lawlessness n. —
the state of being
or behaving in
open defiance to
the law.”

more ~~xxx~~ lawlessness, so now present *your*

members *as* slaves *of* righteousness for

holiness.

Notes:

Paul knows human nature is inclined to allow ourselves to be made slaves of sin. Paul would rather speak to the as mature believers but knows they cannot handle it.

Paul is calling us to radical faith manifested by complete obedience to God. To experience the fullness of God’s presence and power we must get past the idea that being a slave to righteousness is a bad thing.

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. You will not see her without a leash until she is totally obedient. 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.

Scriptures:

20 For when **you** were slaves of sin, **you** were

Notes:

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.

free in regard to righteousness.

G1658 – “free
(not obligated)
adj. — not under
compulsion or
restraint; able to
act at will.”

Scriptures:

21 What fruit did **you** have then in the things of

Notes:

[verses 21-22]

Prior to coming to Christ, everything in our life was leading to shame and death. No good thing comes out of a life that is not yielded to God through faith in Christ. 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.

G2590 –
outcome.

which **you** are now ashamed? For the end of

G1870 - to be
ashamed v. — to be or
become characterized
by feelings of shame,
guilt, embarrassment,
or remorse.

those things *is* death.

Scriptures:

22 But now having been set free from sin, and

G1659 -

Notes:

having become slaves of God, you have your

fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life.

Notes:

All sin leads to death. Every time we sin, something dies at least a little bit.

Even as saved, their masters were pay them, even if it was just food, clothing, and lodging. 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).

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 come 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.

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 real life is (Psalm 16:11).

Scriptures:

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.

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.

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.

23 For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of

G3800 – result, compensation.

G5486 – [χάρισμα (charisma)] – a gracious gift.

God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

sense of freedom. Love God – obey God – and God will set you free!

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).

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

[Top of Section](#)

[Top of Chapter](#)