

Bibles???

The Word of God is the Absolute Truth and the Final Authority

Turn your bibles with me to Romans 6

We are continuing our verse-by-verse study through this amazing letter that the Apostle Paul wrote to the believers in Rome and to us – about the Gospel of Grace.

Paul really wants us to grasp what grace is.

Paul wants us to understand that we are justified by grace through faith

However, Paul showed us last week that our sanctification

Our spiritual growth

is also because of grace.

Because grace transforms us.

The last verse we looked at last week –

[Rom 6:14 NKJV] 14 For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.

That means that we are not under rules.

We are not under regulations.

We are not under religious rituals.

The believer is under grace.

That means that God isn't waiting for us to perform:

It means He is waiting.....for us

So - we walk day by day in His grace

And so in our text this morning, Paul is going to show us – how in His grace, God has given us freedom.

Not freedom to sin or to excuse our sin

But,

Freedom to serve Him

Freedom to obey Him

So that we may live lives in submission and obedience to the Master that we serve.

Let's pray...

Read text

In 1979, the great philosopher - Bob Dylan – wrote a song

You may be an ambassador to England or France

You may like to gamble, you might like to dance

You may be the heavyweight champion of the world

You may be a socialite with a long string of pearls

But you're gonna have to serve somebody, yes

Indeed you're gonna have to serve somebody

Well, it may be the devil or it may be the Lord

But you're gonna have to serve somebody.

Very interesting song –

2000 years before - Jesus said this -

[Mat 6:24 NKJV] 24 "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.

And what Jesus was saying is that we can't serve both.

There is no middle ground in relation to sin

Our eyes, our mouths, our hands will either used for the Lord or they are not used for the Lord

We must choose who we will have as a master over our lives.

Now, apart from Christ – we have no choice to who our master was.

But God....

The Holy Spirit began to soften our hearts -

And we were confronted with the choice of what are we going to do with Jesus?

We can either push it away or we can receive it and have our lives forever transformed.

Now, for the believer, those that are in Christ, we can continue to choose who we will serve.

And as we continue to choose to serve Him, we will become more like Him as we are conformed into His image.

In Jesus, we can experience a life of love, a life of grace, a life of joy.

We will become like the one we choose to serve.

Let's look at our text -

[Rom 6:15-23 NKJV] 15 What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? Certainly not!

In our study last week – I pointed out that Paul as he is writing this letter – he anticipates these questions that people are going to have when they listen to it.

He knows that there will be individuals who will twist his words.

They will say that Paul is teaching that grace is a license to sin.

We looked at the first verse in the chapter – which is almost identical to verse 15 –

Because the question in verse 1 was – can I just continue to sin so that God's grace may abound or overflow more.

To which Paul responds – “no way”

We no longer walk in persistent sin because in Christ – we have a new nature.

Here in verse 15 – the question that Paul anticipates is – since we are under grace – and not the law - does that give me the freedom to sin.

And for the person who believes that grace gives them the freedom to sin – they really don't understand grace.

And the reason is because grace changes everything.

A relationship with God is going to have a dramatic impact on the life of the believer.

And the reason is because God's grace is the great motivator of life.

And tied into God's grace is the gift of the Holy Spirit who dwells in the believer and enlivens the life of God in our lives.

So the life of the believer is not about – I am just going to try really really hard to be a better person and try not sin.

It is about us learning to lean into His Spirit

Allowing the work of the Holy Spirit in us and through us as we are conformed into His image.

My life should be more like Jesus under grace than it was when I was trying to adhere to the law.

You see church,

For those who try to have a relationship with God through legalism – the motivation is guilt.

And guilt is not a good motivator because we are always thinking whether or not we did enough.

“I didn’t do this or I did this and now I am worried that God doesn’t love me”

God doesn’t use guilt –

Religion uses guilt, man uses guilt

We are no longer under the law.

We are under grace

We no longer have to perform for God

We no longer try to do to please God.

We realize that in Jesus Christ, He is pleased with us.

16 Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves **slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin [leading] to death, or of obedience [leading] to righteousness?**

I had you make a note of the word slave –

And the reason is that we are going to see this word multiple times in our text.

Paul is using it as an illustration.

Keep in mind – that...

When Paul was writing this letter – it is estimated that almost half the population of Rome was made up of current slaves or slaves that had earned their freedom.

We tend to have a hard time with this illustration because we have this imagery in our heads about slavery here in America –

Slavery in Rome was much different

There were people that chose to be slaves to pay off debts.

So here is where Paul is getting at with this illustration.

Obedience is the universal hallmark of slavery.

There's a master & a slave:

The master commands, the slave obeys.

That pretty much sums up their relationship.

And in that sense, everyone is a slave because we all obey some master.

Something governs our choices, our decisions.

We all obey something.

Now, for the person that says –

“I am not a slave to anybody. I do what I want, when I want and how I want. I am free”

That not freedom – that is slavery to self.

That person is still obedient because to their desires.

So we are all slaves, obedient to something.

Our slavery can lead to either bondage or freedom.

It can lead to death or it can lead to life.

If we serve the cruel master Sin – if we obey the desires of sin – it will ultimately lead to death. It will lead to spiritual separation from God.

If we present ourselves obedient to Jesus – now we become a slave to righteousness.

that leads to life.

17 But God be thanked that [though] you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered. 18 And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.

Apart from Jesus Christ –

Everybody is a slave to sin

Apart from Jesus – sin has power over us

We pretty much do whatever we want.

We can look back our lives before we became a believer and we used to do some pretty dumb self-destructive things.

But when we put our faith and trust in Jesus –

And we embrace the Gospel of Grace

Paul says that we have been freed from one form of slavery – and now we enter into a new form of slavery.

God is our Master

So we are no longer a slave to sin

This freedom from sin results in a new form of commitment and relationship

We are slaves to righteousness.

We are slaves to Jesus Christ

His will is our will

Now –

I want to take you back to the start of our study in Romans.

[Rom 1:1 NKJV] 1 Paul, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, called [to be] an apostle, separated to the gospel of God

The word bondservant is the same word that Paul is using here in ch 6 for slave.

Paul, a slave of Jesus Christ, His will is my will – that is how Paul opens up the letter

Paul is not asking his readers to do anything that he, himself has not done.

Paul was born free

He was a Roman citizen.

He voluntarily enters into a free-will relationship of slavery to Jesus.

And as a slave to Jesus, that means that our new behavior reflects and honors Jesus's character.

Jesus didn't save us from sin to dishonor Him so that we can keep on sinning.

That means that we have a new allegiance.

We no longer wake up and think it is all about us and what we want.

Now it's about me surrendering to His will, getting to know Him more and more each day - so that I can truly serve and love others and He can empower me to do whatever He has called me to do.

By the way –

There is freedom in being a slave to righteousness.

[Jhn 8:31-32 NKJV] 31 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."

Free from what????

Our enslavement to live contrary to the purpose and plans of God (that is what the Bible calls - sin)

19 I speak in human [terms] because of the **weakness of your flesh.**

Let's pause right here.

This is similar as when today we say, “Let me spell this out for you.” Or “Let me make this perfectly clear.”

Again – Paul has been using the illustration of slavery –

He wants to make sure that they do not miss the point.

And the reason he is using this illustration is because of the weakness of their flesh (had you make a note of that)

This is in reference to everything that we are apart from Christ

So what Paul is doing in this verse is comparing the two slaveries.

And his conclusion –

Serve God like you used to serve sin

Look at the rest of the verse -

For just as you presented your members [as] slaves of uncleanness, and of lawlessness [leading] to [more] lawlessness, so now present your members [as] slaves [of] righteousness for holiness.

Before we came to faith in Christ, we used our bodies in the service of sin.

And so, we sinned – and sinned led to more lawlessness and more lawlessness and so on.

Now that we're born again, we're to present ourselves, including our bodies to the service of God.

And as we submit ourselves to Jesus, we begin to walk in righteousness, it is going to lead to more righteousness, and then more righteousness and so on.

That is the process of sanctification

It is a process – it doesn't come overnight

And it is a work that He does.

20 For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness.

Paul is describing the very condition of these Roman believers, before they were saved by grace through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul points out that people who are bound by sin and enslaved by Satan, only know one sort of freedom - they are freed from all that is good!!

They are delivered from all that is righteousness.

They are released from everything that is true - and unencumbered from all that is holy.

They are incapable of any good.

21 What fruit did you have then in the things of which you are now ashamed?

For the end of those things [is] death.

Turn with me to the Gospel of Matthew 7

[Mat 7:15-20 NKJV] 15 “Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. 16 “You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles? 17 “Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. 18 “A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor [can] a bad tree bear good fruit. 19 “Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. 20 “Therefore by their fruits you will know them.

When we were a slave to sin – we bore bad fruit.

Some of that bad fruit resulted in pain for some of our loved ones.

And unfortunately what happens in the life of the believer is that they will start to invite some of the behavior that was present in their lives when they were a slave to sin –

That is one of the horrible deceptions of the enemy – to keep us preoccupied so that we don’t think about the consequences of sin.

We forget about the bad fruit – and also the path that we were on as a slave to sin.

This goes back to Paul has been talking about this entire chapter – why would we go back?

Why would we continue in persistent continual sin?

Knowing that we are no longer a slave to sin

Knowing the sin no longer reigns over us

Knowing that we have the Holy Spirit living inside of us and gives us the strength to overcome sin.

22 But now having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life. 23 For the wages of sin [is] death, but the gift of God [is] eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The big take away here in these last two verse - Holiness and eternal life is a gift from God.

This is what God offers

The end of a life lived as a slave to sin is death

But God has set us free – we are no longer a slave to sin, we are a slave to God

And as a slave to God – we get the fruit of holiness.

Because God is holy – He shares His holiness with anyone who puts their faith in Jesus – so our lives begin to take on the quality of God's own holiness.

Once we get done with Romans – we are going to do the book of Leviticus.

In the book of Leviticus – there is a common phrase that is found –

Be holy as the I the Lord your God am holy.

God wants to make us the way He is.

And so – when we give up our slavery to sin and we commit our lives to Jesus, we become a slave of God

We want to serve God

We want to be submissive to God

We want to trust God and then God leads us into a life that is full of His holiness and the end of that life is eternal life.

Everything that we need has been given to us – in order to do all that is required of us.

But the most important requirement is to turn from our sin and turn to our Savior to allow Him to live His life in us and through us and for us.

Amen

Let's pray...

To Receive Christ do the following:

Admit, "I am a sinner."

Confess and be willing to turn from your sin.

Believe, by faith that Jesus Christ died for you on the cross.

Receive, through prayer, Jesus Christ into your heart and receive eternal life.

Dear Lord Jesus,

I know that I am a sinner and need Your forgiveness. I believe that You died on the cross for my sins. Please forgive me for my sins and cleanse me by Your blood. I accept You by faith as my personal Lord and Savior. Give me a thirst for Your Word and Help me to follow You all of my days. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

Regarding justification and sanctification

Justification is something God does for us

Sanctification is something God does in us

Justification is an act – At the cross - "It is finished"

Sanctification is a work / is a process that will continue until He takes us home.

[Num 6:24-26 NLT] 24 '

May the LORD bless you and protect you.

May the LORD smile on you and be gracious to you.

May the LORD show you his favor and give you his peace.'

