

## Slaves to Righteousness – Romans 6.15-23

<sup>15</sup> *What then? Shall we sin because we are not under the law but under grace? By no means!*  
<sup>16</sup> *Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to someone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one you obey—whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness?* <sup>17</sup> *But thanks be to God that, though you used to be slaves to sin, you have come to obey from your heart the pattern of teaching that has now claimed your allegiance.* <sup>18</sup> *You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness.* <sup>19</sup> *I am using an example from everyday life because of your human limitations. Just as you used to offer yourselves as slaves to impurity and to ever-increasing wickedness, so now offer yourselves as slaves to righteousness leading to holiness.* <sup>20</sup> *When you were slaves to sin, you were free from the control of righteousness.* <sup>21</sup> *What benefit did you reap at that time from the things you are now ashamed of? Those things result in death!* <sup>22</sup> *But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life.* <sup>23</sup> *For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord* (Romans 6.15-23).<sup>1</sup>

**Memory Verse: For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans 6.23).**

Praise the Lord Almighty for His wondrous mercy and grace. Because He cared enough for us, He sent His Son to die in our place, paying our price, freeing us from the grips of sin and death. “Thanks be to God, because though we used to be slaves to sin, we have come to obey, from our hearts the pattern of teaching that has now claimed our allegiance” (Romans 6.17, my emphasis).

This is the point of faith in Jesus Christ, to have allegiance to Him, be committed to Him, serve Him and only Him. Therefore, we are slaves to righteousness, bought with Christ’s blood, set free from our slavery to sin and death (Romans 8.2; I Peter 4.1).

Robert Mounce noted how people are obviously slaves to whom ever they offer their obedience to. In his commentary on Romans he quotes J. Denney who said, “There is no absolute independence for man, our nature requires us to serve *some* master.” Mounce continues,

“Unbelievers may think they are free and would have to give up that freedom should they accept Christ. Such is not the case. They are servants of sin right now. In coming to Christ, they simply exchange one master for another. Servitude to sin is replaced with servitude to God. The master we obey is clear evidence of whose slaves we really are. There is no room for compromise.”<sup>2</sup>

Therefore, we must all choose a master, someone we are going to serve, follow and obey. To be even more blunt we actually only have to choose one master, Jesus Christ, because at birth our master is Satan, the ruler of sin and death. We are born into sin, and are a slave to it from that very position, caused by Adam’s sin in the garden (Genesis 3).

Our choice is one of freedom in Christ or continued bondage to sin and death. Paul simply tells us just as we used to give ourselves up to evil, to wickedness, and whatever we wanted to do because it was in our nature to live this way; we need to offer ourselves up to righteousness in the same way. In other words, the way we lived our lives prior to Christ, with reckless abandonment, in many cases doing as we please, because it felt good or was pleasing to us. Paul says, we need to have this kind of attitude in our life with Christ, a willingness and commitment to do whatever God wants us to do. Never complaining, saying, “I cannot do it,

<sup>1</sup> *The New International Version*. (2011). (Ro 6:10–23). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

<sup>2</sup> Mounce, R. H. (1995). *Romans* (Vol. 27, p. 156). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

because...” We must have the attitude both Christ and Paul spoke about; Christ said, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me” (Matthew 16.24, ESV).<sup>3</sup> Paul saying, “and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me” (Galatians 2.20, ASV).<sup>4</sup>

Christ calls us to choose, Him or something else, but we must choose, and when we do then we are to deny ourselves. This means we are to let go of everything about us, because it is no longer about us, but Christ, just as Paul said, “It is no longer I who lives, but it is Christ who lives in me.” When we become a child of God, we have died to our old self and are made new in Christ (II Corinthians 5.17).

After which we are to ‘take up our cross,’ we are called to have a commitment to our Lord and Savior. Not a superficial one, but a real, deep, trusting relationship, where we will obey His commands, do His will, and honor His Word because we know it leads to everlasting righteousness.

Finally, we are asked to follow Christ. It might seem strange Christ did not say, “If you come after Me, follow Me, deny yourself, take up your cross.” But if we think about this for a moment it can make perfect sense. If we asked Christ into our lives, and then just followed Him, what would happen when hard times come? What about suffering, or trials, tribulations and so on?

See when we deny ourselves, we are allowing Him to reign supreme in our lives, we are submitting to His Lordship, and we are surrendering ourselves to Him as Master of our lives, we are slaves to righteousness. This is right where we need to be in order for us to ‘take up our cross’ and yes, you guessed it, ‘followed Him,’ This is the proper order for us to understand and come into the right relationship with Christ.

Tomorrow we will finish this section of the Romans Road, how are we doing in learning our memory verses: Romans 3.23, 5.8, and 6.23. Keep working on them we all will find them useful as God gives us opportunities to share His gospel.

## Application

1. When you think of the word ‘Slave’ what does it make you think about? Please explain.
2. Whether you are a Christian or not you are a slave to someone—Christ or Satan. Understanding this, how does it change your way of thinking? Please explain.
3. **Deeper Thinking:** people are always saying, “I do not want to become a Christian because I will have to give up...” What are the ‘Give Up’s?’ How are they nothing more than excuses based on the understand you now have? Please explain.
4. Make a commitment to share the gospel with at least one person today and continue to memorize Romans 3.23, 5.8, and 6.23.

## Prayer

Our dear Heavenly Father, thank You for loving me. For sharing Your Son with me, a slave to sin. Thank You for setting me free. Help me to remember my freedom and look for and walk in Your righteousness. Help me to never forget the cost of Your love and the price paid to set me free. May I share it with others today as You give me opportunities to share Your gospel today, all this I pray in Your Son Jesus Christ’s Name, Amen.

<sup>3</sup> [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Mt 16:24). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

<sup>4</sup> [The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version](#). (1989). (Ga 2:20). Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers.