



World Christian Fellowship

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Romans 63 Slaves of Sin to God! Romans 6:15-18

Romans 6:15-23, *What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? Certainly not! ¹⁶Do 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? ¹⁷But 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. ¹⁸And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness. ¹⁹I speak in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. 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.*

²⁰For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. ²¹What fruit did you have then in the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death. ²²But 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.

Romans 1:17 introduction.

Romans 1:18-3:20 the sinfulness of man.

That truth helped us to understand how utterly sinful, guilty, hopeless and hell bound.

Romans 3:21- 5:21, the doctrine of salvation by grace through faith and the substitutionary work of Jesus Christ.

John 8:34, *“Whosoever commits sin is the slave of sin.”*

All men who live a life of committing sin are slaves to that sin. Every person who comes into this world is under the dictatorship of sin.

Sin controls their thoughts.

Sin controls their words.

Sin controls their actions.

Romans 6:17, *“you were slaves of sin.”*

Romans 6:20, *“For when you were slaves of sin,”*

Twice in that passage.

You used to be slaves, ***doulos***, bondslaves to sin.

Ultimate end of being a slave to sin is death.

Romans 6:21, *For the end of those things is death.*

Romans 6:23, *For the wages of sin is death*

Sin ultimately kills.

Sin is a debt, a burden, a thief, a sickness, a leprosy, a plague, a poison, a serpent, a sting. Everything that man hates, sin is.

Who is the undertaker that digs man a grave?

Who is the murderess that destroys his life?

Who breaks the hearts of parents?

Who changes gentle children into vipers, tender mothers into monsters, and their fathers into worse than Herod's, the murderers of their own innocence?

Who brings division in the church?

Who is this Delilah that sings the Nazarite asleep and delivers up the strength of God into the hands of the uncircumcised?

Who turns the soft and gentlest heart to stone?

Sin.

Sin is terrible life-wrecking, soul-damning reality which clings like incurable cancer to the human breast and ultimately devastates to which men are enslaved.

Men cry to be free from sin, but they cannot. They run to flee its guilt, but they cannot find relief.

V 18, 20 and 22, "Being then made free from sin"

This passage becomes to all those haunted by their sin, a promise of deliverance, free from sin.

The greatest gift that God could ever give a human being would be to be free from sin and to be restored to the place of righteousness.

Free from sin. From its power and from its debilitating and killing presence, free!

Paul is discussing the great doctrine of sanctification, which is connected to the doctrine of justification.

Having discussed that in chapters **3, 4 and 5**, he is showing the result of that we saw in the first half of **chapter 6** is to be made holy.

The result of that in the second half of chapter 6 is to be made free from sin. Both are one and the same.

Paul is looking at the same great reality from two angles. In this chapter we learn the great reality of what sanctification is, and we also learn the great reality of how it is connected to justification. When we were redeemed and made right with God, it was to make us holy and free from sin. That was the intention.

Now, we learned in the first fourteen verses of the chapter that we are united with Jesus Christ in His death and resurrection, and thus we have died to sin and risen to walk in newness of life.

The penalty for sin has been paid in that death.

The power for sin has been broken, and we walk now in newness of life, alive to God.

Now in **verses 15 to 23**, Paul demonstrates that we are made holy in another analogy.

Not only have we died in Christ and risen in Christ and now are walking in a new life, having died to the old one, but we also have become slaves to God and in so doing the slavery to sin which was characteristic of our former life has been broken.

Paul shows the believer has a totally new relationship to sin after salvation, different than before because he died in Christ and rose in Christ and because he has a new master which obviates the old master. This is the main theme of the second half of the chapter.

A truly regenerated person cannot go on in the same pattern of sinning that was characteristic of his life before he was saved.

Why?

Because we are no longer in the same relation to sin. We have died in Christ and risen. We have a new master now which means we no longer are under the old master.

A truly justified, redeemed, saved individual is going to have a different relationship to sin than he ever had before.

A redeemed person cannot continue to live as he was.

This section begins with a proposed question.

The legalist can't tolerate grace teaching.

V 15, "What then?"

If you are saved by grace, then you are we are no longer under the law.

V 14, "Shall we sin then because we are not under the law but under grace?"

People who are legalistic, grace appears like a license, grace appears like lawlessness.

The Jewish people who all their lifelong have been trying to earn their way into heaven by good works. When you tell them that all your good works are nothing but filthy rags.

You can be saved by the free gift of God given to unworthy sinners.

- It is impossible for them to handle.
- It sounds like lawlessness.
- It sounds like liberty to sin.
- It sounds like it doesn't matter how you live.

If you preach this message of salvation by grace, that I don't do anything to get saved, and none of my goodness matters in my salvation, and it's all grace and God is going to forgive me, and I am not under the law and I am under grace, then you have turned me loose.

Paul's answer in the first half of the chapter is simply this. No, we haven't turned you loose because God's put in you a new nature and your new identity isn't going to do that.

The first opposing question came in verse 1.

Romans 6:1, *What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?*

Does the doctrine of salvation by grace give freedom to sin in an unrestrained way?

The accusation that is made against this doctrine.

Imagine what would have happened to Paul in the Jewish society?

When Paul preached in Galatia that salvation by grace through faith, the Jewish people followed him along, and they came into all those churches and said No!

You must be circumcised.

You must keep all the law of Moses.

If you do that, then you can come to Christ.

Paul had to write Galatians and say, “Don’t you let anybody bewitch you. Don’t let anybody add works to your gracious salvation. If anybody comes along and preaches that, I don’t care who it is, even an angel, let him be accursed.” The doctrine of grace stands.

There have always been those critics who said the doctrine of grace leads to lawlessness.

Grace preaching and teaching always is liable to this charge. It always exposes itself to this criticism, but we aren’t going to change it because I am not afraid of that.

Again, the opposition asks the question.

V 15, *What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? Certainly not!*

Now who have been delivered from being under the law, and by that he does not mean that we are no longer responsible to obey God's Word.

Since we have been delivered from trying to earn our salvation, since it's a free gift of grace, shall we just go on and sin?

Does grace free us to sin?

Answer:

It is an utterly unacceptable thought.

To even ask the question is to prove you are not a Christian.

Paul doesn't just give you short answers.

Paul takes time to explain.

His explanation doesn't need proof because it's obvious,

V 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?*

A very simple axiom.

If you sign up to serve a certain master and you are bound to serve that master.

It is obvious. It is self-evident.

A slave is bound to obey his master because of the nature of the slavery. If you sign up to be a slave to somebody, you sign up to obey them. If you give yourself to any master, you become the slave of the master.

You willingly yield yourself to that individual. You give yourself to a master, and you become the slave of that master. Obvious.

V 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?*

Paul personifies these two masters.

- Sin,
- Obedience.

Sin is disobedience.

We could simply say that it is,

- Disobedience,
- Obedience.

To what standard do we either obey or disobey God?

So, the whole issue then is some people yield themselves servants of disobedience to God, and some people yield themselves servants of obedience to God.

Romans 5:17, *For if by the one man's offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.)*

You are either serving sin or obedience.

There are only two options.

There is no middle ground.

- You choose to serve sin or
- You choose to serve obedience.

- You choose to obey God or
- You choose not to obey God.

If you don't obey God, you become the subject of the prince of the power of the air, Satan himself.

It is a universal law then that a man becomes a slave of whatever master he commits himself to, just a simple axiomatic principle.

You never can serve two masters.

You are committed to one or the other.

Matthew 6:24, *“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.*

You can't serve God and money.

You can't serve two masters.

It is the nature of slavery that you can't have two people giving you orders if you are a slave. Once you have chosen your master, by the very definition of that act, you become bound in obedience to that master.

The idea is the slavery analogy.

When you became a Christian, you say that I submit myself to God through Christ.

There is no salvation apart from such a conscious submission.

When you come to Christ, you come as a slave to a master, as a servant to the Lord. No other terms!

When you say, “I come as a slave or a servant to the Lord and Master,” you are affirming your commitment to be subject to Him.

V 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?

If you are the slave of sin, what does it lead to?

Death.

If you are the slave of obedience, what does it lead to?

Righteousness.

Sin leads to sin, leads to sin, leads to death.

Sin begets sin, begets sin, begets death.

If you serve obedience and obedience, it leads to righteousness, to righteousness.

Ultimately where does the obedience lead to?

Eternal life.

So, you have your choice.

- ✓ You can be a slave to sin which you are by nature, or
- ✓ You can be a slave to God, which you are by new creation.

One who comes to God through Christ and says, "I take you as my Saviour, Master and Lord," is not only ethically bound to obey but he is creatively made to obey.

This is a very important truth.

When you become a Christian, it is not simply that you are ethically bound to obedience. It is that you are creatively made unto obedience.

Ephesians 2:10, *For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.*

Salvation is unto good works, without ambiguity.

Many people have infected in **Romans 6** because they don't understand that concept.

- Paul here is not talking about an ethical binding, that is a binding of moral conscience.
- Paul is talking about a remaking of the nature of an individual so that the obedience factor is a reality.

There is an ethical reality there as well, but it begins with a creative fact and moves to an ethical responsibility.

Does Everybody who is saved is transformed?

Yes!

Romans 6:1-14 we saw the transformation through the death and resurrection.

Here we see the transformation through the analogy of having, died to the old slavery to live to the new slavery.

In the **Romans chapter 7**, we are going to see the same analogy, only that time it will be in a marriage situation where you have got a former husband and a new husband.

Paul is keep hitting the same thing, that there is a new creation. Even though we still possess the flesh, even though we can only experience imperfect holiness, we will obey. We must obey. It is an essential in our new creation.

Colossians 1:21-22, *And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled²² in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight—*

Now when God reconciled us at the cross, something happened. He reconciled us to present us holy and unblameable and unreprouvable in His sight.

When God redeemed us, that new creation became holy, and it will issue in a consequential behaviour change.

Obedience is a certainty in the life of a truly justified person. Now that is not to say that there won't be sin there, and there

won't be times when that sin appears to dominate. But obedience will be there if obscured even at some points.

If a person continues in continued habitual, persistent, willing sin as he did before he supposedly came to Christ that no matter what he thinks, he is not a Christian.

So, the very fact of the question asked in **verse 15** is ridiculous for someone to say, *"if we have come under grace and we are not under law, let's just sin."*

You show by asking such a question that you are not even a Christian. If you continue as a slave to sin.

1 John 1:6, *If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.*

1 John 2:4, *He who says, "I know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.*

1 John 3:9, *Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God.¹⁰ In this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest: Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is he who does not love his brother.*

If you are a Christian, then you are going to manifest righteousness and you are going to manifest obedience.

2 Peter 2:19, *While they promise them liberty, they themselves are slaves of corruption; for by whom a person is overcome, by him also he is brought into bondage.*

Whatever dominates you is indicative of who your master is.

If you are a real Christian you may sin, but the real you is going to hate that sin.

Romans 7, “The things I want to do, I don’t do. The things I don’t want to do, I do, O wretched man that I am!”

There are two reasons in this chapter why a believer will not continue in sin under grace.

1. He is united to Christ.

He has died to sin. Sin has no power over him.

2. He is a slave of a new master.

He will obey the new master by a very definition of his slavery. V 16, the obvious truth.

Verses 17-22 become the argument. Paul unfolds all his thinking based on the axiom there.

Verse 23, closes with an absolute.

Paul is now explaining the principle of verse 16.

Applying it to the situation, and he does so by drawing an extended contrast between these two slaveries.

- The slavery to sin,
- The slavery to righteousness.

Paul gives us three Phases.

1. Position
2. Practices
3. Promise.

1. Position

V 17-18, *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.*

Two slaveries.

V 17, you were the servants of sin.

V 18, you have become the servants of righteousness.

V 17, *“But God be thanked,”*

Whenever you are talking about someone's salvation, who do you have to thank?

God.

You didn't come to Christ because you were

- Intelligent,
- Ability,
- Intellectually,
- Research data,
- Convinced by someone,
- Etc.,

John 6:44, *No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day.*

You always thank God for salvation because He is the author and finisher of our faith.

It is God alone who can break the slavery to sin. Salvation is of God and no other.

Romans 1:8, *First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world.*

The transformation that takes us from death to life, from sin to God, is one that God works Himself.

V 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.*

In the past, you were continually a slave of sin.

Now that is the natural condition of every man. People don't want to admit that. They don't like to hear that.

From the start, you by nature have been sinners, continually. That is your natural condition, involuntary forced and harsh dominance has been opposed on you by being born in the world.

Where did you get it?

From your mother and your father, and they go back to Adam and Eve.

Men and women born into this world are born into this slavery to sin.

Romans 3:10-18, *As it is written: "There is none righteous, no, not one; ¹¹ There is none who understands; There is none who seeks after God. ¹² They have all turned aside; They have together become unprofitable; There is none who does good, no, not one." ¹³ "Their throat is an open tomb; With their tongues they have practiced deceit"; "The poison of asps is under their lips"; ¹⁴ "Whose mouth is full of cursing and*

bitterness.”¹⁵ “Their feet are swift to shed blood;¹⁶ Destruction and misery are in their ways;¹⁷ And the way of peace they have not known.”¹⁸ “There is no fear of God before their eyes.”

Description of humankind, slaves of sin.

Men don't realize it; they think they are free.

There's no such thing as freedom to an unregenerate person!

None. They are slaves.

V 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.

It wasn't external!

When they came to Christ, it wasn't something they did on the outside.

It wasn't some water baptism or some church membership or signing or putting their hand up or walking down an aisle or doing some religious rite or saying their beads or lighting a candle or whatever.

- It wasn't something outside.
- It was something inside from the heart.

What happened in their heart?

They obeyed.

Even though it is the work of God, you are not passively transported from one master to another.

You are not just involuntarily picked up and turned over somewhere else.

You never see salvation occurring apart from the act of commitment to Christ. Gladly and eagerly, with a sense of the slavery to sin, you rushed to make God your new master.

What did you obey?

What do you believe?

V 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.

You believe that form of doctrine, the body of saving truth. It should read that you have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine into which you were delivered.

Not which was delivered to you, into which you were delivered. The Greek word **tupos** here means “a mould, a casting mould.” The mould is in the shape of a servant.

When you came into this world, you were poured into a mould, and you came out after the molten metal cooled into the world. You were a slave of sin.

You were a slave statue, and your slavery was to sin.

But God be thanked that you responded to the true gospel by obeying the form into which you were poured.

In Paul's analogy, when God saw you as a slave to sin, by His great grace, He melted you down and reduced you to the basic elements. While you were hot and molten, He re-poured you into a new mould. This mould is the form of doctrine into which you were delivered.

2 Timothy 1:13, *Hold fast the pattern of sound words which you have heard from me, in faith and love which are in Christ Jesus.*

That word "form" is used 16 times in the New Testament. There is form to this.

You have been melted down by conviction, by the beginning work of the redeeming Spirit and now you are re-poured into a new mould. When the metal is cooled and you have hardened and you are lifted out, you are in a new shape.

What is your shape?

It is the form of doctrine.

What does that mean?

You have conformed to the pattern of truth that is the gospel.
You now are a living statue of the reality of the gospel.

You are new!

People live the way they learn to live. You come to Church long enough, and we will pour you into our mould.

You will go like a Christian.

Romans 12:2, *And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.*

You have been poured into a mould of the form of sound teaching regarding the gospel.

You now are a slave statue all over again, but you are a slave to God. Only God could melt down that old person and pour that ingredient back into a new mould and shape that new person.

The one who once was stamped with false teaching is now stamped with the image of the true doctrine of God.

You must fit the form. You don't become a Christian by just floating all over the place and believing whatever you want.

The teaching of the gospel, believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, confess your sins, affirm His Lordship, His death, His resurrection. Gospel content.

If you are to come out in the image of the servant of God and to bear His stamp. You will have been poured into His mould.

Because you obeyed when the gospel call reached your heart. Foolish to try to fight doctrine.

Conclusion:

The word "obeyed"

The word appears the fourth time in these three verses.

The obedience of the faith.

Obeying the gospel.

The obedience of life is a Christian responding to the Word of God.

Believing Jesus Christ is the initial act of obedience, and then it becomes a life of obedience, obedience, and obedience.

We never get our independence!
We are always under the Master.
We are always under the Lord.
We are always to obey.

A Christian is marked as one who Obeys!
If you don't, you can't be a Christian, no matter what you say.

Obedience is the expression of faith.

Obedience says I believe God, I believe His Word, and I will act on it.

All true justification produces obedience.
The longer we live with Christ, the more obedient we ought to become.

Titus 2:11-14, *For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, ¹²teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, ¹³looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ, ¹⁴who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works.*

We were saved to good works.

We are saved to purification.

1 Peter 1:22-23, *Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart,²³ having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever,*

When you came to Jesus Christ it purified your soul.
You became a new creation, and a life of obedience is the result.

This new casting means a whole new master!

V 18, *“We became free from sin.”*

We do that now and then.

Not free from temptation, but free from the mastery and the dictatorship of sin where we couldn't do anything but sin.

Before you are a Christian all you do is sin. Even your good deeds fall into the sin category because they are not for the glory of God.

We are free for the first time in our life.
A sinner is not free.

All he can do is what?

Sin.

Who's the only person who has a choice?

A Christian.

So, for the first time in your life, you are free.

Not free to do wrong.

For the first time in your life, you are free to do Right.

That is Christian freedom.