

Monday, May 15, 2023 ◻ Read Romans 6:15–19

Questions from the Scripture text: What question does v15 ask? How had it previously been asked (cf. v1)? What answer is given? How does the question in v16 begin? What must we know about presenting ourselves to obey? What does this make us to be like? And if our primary pattern is presenting ourselves to sin, and therefore a slave to sin, what will that lead to? But if our primary pattern is presenting ourselves to obedience, and therefore a slave to obedience, what will that lead to? How does the apostle begin v17? What pattern does this establish for how to walk in obedience? What had we been? From what did we obey the gospel—where did the change take place? What sort of transaction took place? From what were believers set free (v18)? When believers were handed over to the gospel doctrine, of what did they become slaves? How does the apostle describe calling it “slavery” to righteousness (v19)? Why would he use this kind of language? As slaves of what two things had they previously presented themselves? What does being a slave of lawlessness result in? But how must believers now use their freedom—of what are they to present their members as slaves? In what does this slavery to righteousness result?

Why must Christians walk in obedience? Romans 6:15–19 looks forward to the sermon in the midweek meeting. In these five verses of Holy Scripture, the Holy Spirit teaches us that **Christians must walk in obedience, because if they don't, then it turns out that they aren't Christians at all.**

A pattern of fleshly responses. You can tell, from v15, that Paul is accustomed to wrong responses to gospel truth. “Does grace superabound where sin abounds? Let's continue in sin that grace may abound!” (v1). “Are we not under law but under grace? Let's sin because we're not under law but under grace!” (v15). The response is, of course, “certainly not!” We know where such thinking comes from: their weak flesh (v19). If you ever respond to gospel truth by thinking that it makes sin more tolerable or acceptable, you can know exactly where that thinking comes from: your flesh. The only question is whether you are still in your flesh, or whether you are in Christ and such ideas are coming from your remaining flesh.

Whose slave are you? The problem with the kind of thinking that makes sin acceptable or tolerable is that it is serving sin. Such thinking is not looking to employ the doctrine for holiness but employing the doctrine for sin. When we hear such a thought from someone (or from our own mind), we must wonder, “whose slave are you, anyway?” Whomever you are serving as a slave, you need to know that you are actually its slave (v16a–b).

Thus, if sin is not an enemy but a master whom you are seeking to serve, you can be sure that ends in the lake of fire, which is the second death (v16c, cf. Rev 20:13–14). But if you have begun to pursue your own obedience, to present yourself as a slave for obedience, then you can be sure that you will end up entirely conformed unto righteousness (v16d).

So, dear reader, which do you do with a doctrine? Do you try to figure out how it can make you feel better about your sin? Or do you look for how the Lord would use that doctrine to drive you to holiness? The way that you answer that question can tell you whose slave you are; it can tell you how you're on the way to ending up.

God be thanked, if you are a believer. Now, there's some very good news in v17. The apostle believes that his Roman readers, generally speaking, are actual Christians. But the news that begins the verse is even better news: “God be thanked.” It was not the believers, but God, Who has transacted to hand them over from their former master to their new master. They have been delivered “handed over” to a particular type (more literal than NKJ's “form”) of doctrine—doctrine that accords with godliness (cf. 1Tim 6:3, Titus 1:1).

How do we know that it was God Who did this? Because their response to the gospel came “from the heart.” God alone can change the heart, and everyone who has listened to and responded to the gospel from the heart can know that it was God Who changed his heart.

v17 uses the word “obeyed” to describe what happened at their conversion, as if to hint that just as a right response to the gospel was given by God, so also right responses to the law will be given by God. He Who began the good work will bring it to completion (cf. Php 1:6). We will work out our own salvation with fear and trembling because it is He Who works in us both to will and to work for His good pleasure (cf. Php 2:12–13).

If I have responded to the gospel from the heart, thanks be to God, Who has given that change of heart. Surely, He is worthy of our obedience, and surely His grace will uphold us in obeying Him!

New slavery, but so much more. In v18 the apostle summarizes what he's been saying about this exchange of masters that has taken place. But why has he been speaking in terms of a new slavery? He answers that question in v19: he's been speaking as a man because of the weakness of their flesh. As we noted back in v15, only from the flesh could the idea come that being under grace means that we should sin more.

So, the apostle spoke as a man in order to be helpful to those who are still so weak in their flesh: you've been handed over from an evil master who's trying to kill you to a new and good master who is saving you. Offer yourselves as slaves to your new master! What does uncleanness do to its slaves? Makes them filthy. What does lawlessness do to its slaves? Puts them in bondage to even more lawlessness. But what does righteousness do to its slaves? The end of v19 answers that it sanctifies them, brings them to holiness.

What a great master! And when we have such a master, if we hear that we are under grace, we will say, “let us now obey God's law, since we are under grace!” And this is still the apostle speaking “as a man.” For, we have not been taken into the possession of Christ that we might be only slaves. But also enlisted soldiers in service of the grace kingdom. And even entitled subjects, with all the rights of citizens of the kingdom. And, even more, adopted and beloved sons! Already, in our passage, the deliverance is great, and the motive to obedience is glorious. But our new slavery is the lowest way of thinking about our conversion. Before long, we will come to the highest one.

What should we recognize about any response to grace that considers sin more ok as a result? What sort of heart refuses to think this way about sin? Do you have this kind of heart? If you do, how did you come to have a heart that obeys this type of doctrine? Where does sin take each of its slaves? Where does obedience take each of its slaves?

Sample prayer: Lord, we thank You for the mercy in which You delivered us from our old slave master, sin. And we thank You for the power by which You handed us over to our new Master, Christ in the gospel. Grant that by Your Spirit, we would be thankful for this blessed transaction, and give us to present ourselves as slaves, soldiers, subjects, and beloved sons to obey You in Christ, we ask in His Name, AMEN!!

Suggested songs: ARP32AB “What Blessedness” or TPH466 “My Faith Looks Up to Thee”

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(The following is a machine-generated transcription. PLEASE BE AWARE of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording via hopewellarp.org)

Romans six versus 15 through 19. These are god's words. What then shall we sin? Because we are not under the law, but under grace Certainly not. Do not

know that to whom you present yourselves as slaves to obey. You are that one slaves, whom you obey? Were sin unto death or of obedience and to righteousness?

But god, we thanked that Though, you were slaves of sin, yet, you obeyed from the heart? That form of doctrine to, which you were delivered. And having been set free from sin, you became slaves. Of righteousness. They speak in human terms. Those are the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members, As slaves of uncleanness.

And of lawlessness. And more lawlessness.

But slaves, have uncleanness and love lawlessness leading to more lawlessness. So now present your members as slaves of righteousness, For holiness.

One of the problems that the apostle, Often faced as he preached and As he wrote, as we can see here, Is that not everyone? He wrote to was a believer. And so, there are Ways that unbelievers think and respond to the word of god? That can even confuse believers.

And of course, what does the unbeliever want to do with every? Truth with every doctrine with every the christian teaching. He wants to find in it, a reason or an excuse. That it's okay to sin. Because he doesn't do anything about sin. He doesn't love. God, he doesn't love to obey.

God, he hasn't been given. This new heart in union with christ, he's not under the power of grace. The only, um, The only hope that Um, he could have had for righteousness was law. And that's no hope at all because That. The law cannot weakened by sin and able someone to be righteous.

So he's he's unable to be righteous. This is not surprising that at every point, when he hears the truth, Or part of the truth of the gospel. He says oh well that means it's okay that i can sin right. That's what he does. Every time. For receive at the beginning of the chapter.

You hear about grace abounding, where sin has abounded grace much more bounds. Oh, what shall we say then? Shall we? Continue in sin that grace may abound, oh grace abounds, we're grace, super amounts or sin abounds that's great. That means i can just sin, right? Because graceful superbound And now same thing, he's just heard we're not under law but under grace oh if i'm under grace, that means i can just sin right?

So, The. The pasta asked the question, what then shall we sin? Because we are not under law, but under grace, he's heard this question. With great, pity because The person who asks this question. Is either a very confused. Believer. His remaining sin is, Uh, so entrenched in his Mind.

That he's Responding completely irrationally and even worse, unchristianly. To the truth of the gospel. Or. Just as likely. Is an unbeliever altogether. Who is inaccurately calling himself a Christian just because he happens to be around them. Just because he happens to participate in the same worship as they do.

Just because he Happens to agree with many of the same truths. So what then show shall we sin? Because we are not in our law, but under grace, certainly not May it never be or may it not even begin to be.

And then he gives A simple test for For your christian. Are you a believer? Are, you know, united to christ through faith. Are you under the power of his grace? As One who is at war with your remaining sin. Because jesus is your new king. And you offer your Self, and every part of Who and who you are?

And what you have? Unto god for righteousness. These are all the same question. But people are usually not asking the last question. Oh, that wasn't even the last question. Yeah, it was we did under the power of Grace, i think. With the usually don't ask the last question. They just so Am i a christian?

Sure i'm a christian. Well, that means i'm forgiven i can do whatever i want. Problem is. That's not how christians respond. That's not how the new nature responds. Thought, or A thought or response like that comes into the heart or mind of a believer, it is not coming. From god, the holy spirit.

It is not coming from the scripture. It is not coming from his union with christ and has not coming from his new nature, and which he was made alive in jesus christ. That sort of response. Could only come from the flesh.

And so the apostle responds, do you not know? In other words, this is obvious. You already know it. And if you don't, then Something has gone greatly a mess. With the instruction that you have received or how you have. Um, attended upon it. You ought to know. Do you not know?

That to whom you present yourselves slaves, to obey. You are that one's slaves, whom you obey. So, if your sin There's not something that you are battling against and is a defeat in a war. Whenever you commit it. Then you are actually since slaves because if it's not your enemy, if you are, if you are trying To figure out how it can be, okay, to send.

Then you are still walking in sin.

The person who is looking for, Reasons. That sinning is more tolerable. That. So sinning is more acceptable. Is living as? A slave of sin. And if you use a slave of sin, That's not leading into righteousness. And life. That sort of thinking, is a red flag. That someone is still on his way to hell.

Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves, to obey? You are that one slaves? Whom you obey. So, you can't be. Slave of. Of righteousness unto god. And live. In order to do what you want to get away with your sin. Or. Of obedience. So, Percenting yourself as slaves of obedience on to righteousness.

And then, if you are a slave of obedience, If you love. If your goal is to obey, this is Your purpose in life. And, Whenever you do sin, that's coming from a former nature. In which? You and your master are disappointed. Because you you just served someone something else.

Namely sin. Well, the one who is already pursuing obedience will be Completely righteous at last. When he says of obedience, that is unto righteousness. He's not talking about that righteous standing that we have before, god. From which all of our obedience comes. Or more accurately. That righteousness, that righteous standing that we have before god from christ.

From whom. All obeying comes. So if you have a righteous standing before god, if you're right with god, then you have christ. And if you have christ, You have a new life. And you have a new love. And you live to obey, god. And if you don't, Then you're in the former category, but if you do, Then there's good news for you in verse 16.

And that is You will be righteous in your conduct. Righteous in your thoughts. Righteous into your desires. That the one who has, The gun, a good work in, you will be faithfully to complete it. So, if you have begun, To love god's law from the heart and love him and want to obey him.

You will reach your destination.

But if you're still using, Christian doctrine as a way to feel better about your sin. You'll reach your destination. Just the destination isn't righteousness. It's death. So, we read that verse again. 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. 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. Now, this to what you were delivered language. Is. At the end is very important.

Because it means, To which you are handed over. There's been a change of custody. There's been a transaction. Sin is no longer your master, it is no longer your king. You have a new master who freed you by, purchasing you? And the way that, You became free was the doctrine of the gospel.

Which said, God is taking for himself in the lord. Jesus christ. Those Who in christ? He gives a completely righteous standing with himself immediately. And in christ, he gives complete forgiveness of your sins immediately. And when you came to christ, it was this wonderful transaction. In which you were no longer your own, you are no longer belonging to your sin.

You are no longer unrighteous before god, you are on no longer guilty before god now you belong to god. Now, you are perfectly righteous before him forever. Now you are absolved forgiven of all of your guilt. You've been handed over to the lord jesus christ. So, we do not take jesus into our lives.

He takes us. Away from our sin. And we have all the benefits that come to us and that transaction and one of those benefits. Is that the gospel teaches us? That those whom jesus make gives a righteous standing with himself. Jesus makes completely righteous. Now, that's a process. The giving of a righteous standing is a moment.

The making completely righteous. In our thoughts and in our, Uh, Conduct, that's a process, but the gospel says that this is what jesus does, he has no partial savior, He is a glorious. Perfect. Complete savior. And so, Um, Paul reminds them. That this all rests upon god even by the way, he begins in verse 17 but god be thanked.

In other words, remember. Who has purchased you? That though, you were slaves of sin, And now remember how he purchased you, Yet you obeyed from the heart. That form of doctrine to which you are delivered or to which you were handed over. And so, the way he purchased you was You heard the gospel?

And he changed your heart. To hand, you over to jesus christ in the gospel. So that you didn't belong to sin anymore. And who can change the center's heart. Sophia, who can change the sinners art?

The holy spirit alone who is god and and he is the one who did this. And so you hear the difference. And they hear the difference. When god. Delivers us from sin. Takes us away from being sin and hands us over to the gospel hands us over to christ in the gospel.

He does. So even with a change of our hearts, So that we no longer respond. To hearing about being under grace and say oh well then i can send No, we say, huh? I don't have to sin. I can disbase it. It's not my master. I can obey christ.

He has my master. Now, this isn't the best way. For the highest way. To talk about it. Being a slave of righteousness. Because slavery has distasteful. And what we've actually been given is freedom. To obey him who is a right and proper and good mask. And even more than that, we've been, we've been given Um, Employment.

As soldiers and his war against sin. Every part of who we are. And what we have becomes a weapon. And even more than that, we become subjects of a new kingdom. Citizens. With all the rights and honor and supply. There's a war right now going on, where The men fighting the battles in the front are really starting to suffer, dude.

A lack of supply. Question doesn't like supply, he's under grace, he has a pipeline back into god himself. By the holy spirit, using the means of grace. The supply line cannot be broken the Uh, the Repository. To which the line goes back. Cannot be diminished. But we're not just Made.

Slaves and employed as soldiers. Have made new subjects. As we're going to be hearing. Especially in chapter 8, we're even adopted a sons.

And so the apostle says, gives the reason why he started with this lowest way of speaking I speak in human terms. Because of the weakness of your flesh. At bottom the lowest way to talk about what has happened to you. Is it was a transaction between slave masters. But as one discovers, when He is coming home from the slave market.

And he's grateful. At least, because he doesn't belong to that horrible master before. Who has intent on killing him. That's the kind of master sin is Don't ever obey your sin, it's intent on killing you. He comes home with his new master, he doesn't even know yet. That he is not just going to be employed and taken into The household as As someone who has all the rights and privileges as a citizen, and subject of the house.

But that the one who just bought him at the market. Has adopted him as his son. And paul says, i'm just, i'm starting out just with the slavery transaction. Because your flesh is so weak. You are so weak in your flesh. That you're still tempted to think of christian doctrines.

That's a reason to keep on sinning. So, let's just do that much. You were a slave of a horrible, master sin. But you obeyed from the heart. Something changed in you. When you were handed over to your new master, the gospel. And christ jesus. In the gospel. And so he describes now.

The transition from being. The slave of the one to the slave of the other. For just as you presented your members, As slaves of uncleanness. And of lawlessness. Until more lawlessness. Okay, so you're never getting out of it. So now, Present your members as slaves. Of righteousness. And as you begin to serve your new master.

You discover that the end of it is Holiness. Consecration unto God. Being treasured by him. Who is holy in himself? And makes you holy sets, you apart to himself. And in this case, set to a part as holy children to himself, Who says you're just at the beginning? You're just at the beginning.

You've begun. Presenting your members of slaves of righteousness. And Maybe it feels like that because of the Um, how weak you are in your remaining fleshiness? That you keep having to force yourself. To use your mind. To serve righteousness, force yourself by grace independence, upon grace, i'm not talking about independently.

But it's a It's a hard. Strengthening the weak hands and straightening the weak knees. When pursuing peace with everyone. And the holiness without which we

won't see the lord. And yet, knowing that the lord, Who has taken you in and hinted you over to the gospel? Will bring you at last to that holiness.

And when we see him, we'll be like him. Because we are already called the children of god. And the one who hopes thus the one who Hopes to end at holiness. And diverse 19. First, john three says purifies himself. Even as he is pure, which means You offer yourself as a slave to righteousness?

And if that lowest way of thinking about it, you're not even moved on to In a soldier subject or sun. If that's as far as you can get that. Uh, so far. Well, Here, the apostle speaks in human terms. Because of the weakness of our flesh. So that we won't respond.

To being under grace by saying, oh well then it's okay for me to send Lord, give you my dear children. To obey the gospel from the heart. To see christ. As your savior. And to love that you would belong to him. And not to your sin. That you would be joined to him.

And have him and all that he is. He would have you. And all that you are. For a few have obeyed from the heart. Then thanks be to god. You will be slaves of righteousness and to holiness. Right.

Our father, we thank you for This portion of your word, i look forward to hearing it preached. If the lord jesus should terry. Until the midweek meeting of the coming week. We thank you that you would not let our old master keep us. But that you not only gave Christ for sinners.

But specifically for us. Because you were going to give us that change of heart. In which you handed us over to the gospel and handed us over. That slaves under righteousness, handedness over a slaves them to christ. And so we pray o, god, that you would Help us to recognize the change in thinking.

That comes when this transaction takes place. And be thankful to you that you have done it and be thankful to you that you have begun. It will complete it. And don't let us o lord, be gullible to our sin. And think in our former ways. But give us to be presenting.

Ourselves onto righteousness. Presenting ourselves asleep to righteousness. Which is the way by which You bring this at last unto holiness? We love you and we are grateful. That you have so loved us as to call us your children. And we pray that, since our hope is that we will be like christ when we see him as he is.

That you would make us to live as those who are purifying ourselves even as he is pure. For we ask this in his name. Amen.