

Romans 6 (Part 2): 15-23 - Freedom From Sin

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Romans chapter 6. We're picking up here this chapter right about in the middle. Let's just say a quick word of prayer and we'll get into it here.

Heavenly Father, open our hearts to the ministry of Your Word. And we just really want to hear Your voice today. And so we ask in Jesus name that You would fill us with understanding and insight. And that You would allow us, Lord God, to be able not only to grasp what the passage is saying, but also help us to apply it to our lives. For therein lies wisdom. We ask these things in Jesus name, amen.

Last week when we did the first half of Romans chapter 6, we were dealing with Paul's argument that God has not only saved us from the penalty of sin, but He has also saved us from power of sin. And there are a lot of Christians who don't connect the dots on those two things. They will thank God that they are saved from the penalty of their sin. But when it comes to understanding that the power of sin has been broken over their lives, that's a whole new avenue of thought.

And that's what Paul has been talking about here in this chapter. In fact, it's what he's been talking about for a while. This whole Romans - the Book of Romans - this first several chapters are all about our salvation. And Paul is explaining all about how we are saved. And these are such important things for us to see here.

And you might remember that last week, for those of you that were here, if you weren't, I encourage you to get online on our website and check out the message from last week. But Paul ended with verse 14 last week. And if you look with me again in your Bible, he ended with this statement, "*for sin will have no dominion over you.*" In other words, sin will not be your master since you are not under law, but under grace.

The reason Paul makes that statement is because the law can do nothing to give us power over sin. The law can do nothing. We've said this many, many times. The law will show you where you are in relationship to sin and righteousness, but it can do nothing to actually improve your life. And that only happens

through God's grace. That's why Paul says you're not under law, but you're under grace.

But not everybody understands grace. The Jews living in Paul's day didn't understand grace. There's a lot of people today who don't understand grace. Years ago, pastor Chuck wrote a book called, *Why Grace Changes Everything*. It's a great book. If you've ever you can probably attest to that. And if you haven't, I think we've got a copy in our bookstore. You can find it elsewhere. But just a great read.

Because pastor Chuck and his usual typical teaching style, he just goes through and does a Bible study on grace. But he also tells a lot of interesting stories about his own background and life in early years of Christianity, where he was really trying to live the Christian life on his own.

And I get that from people from time to time. They're like, well pastor Paul, I'm just really trying to live for God. And I just like, wow! That's a tough one. Because what they're often communicating to me is that there is a work of their own strength that's underway to try to live that Christian life. And we can't live that Christian life. The Christian life is outside of our ability apart from God.

And what we need to do is recognize that it is God's grace that enables us to live the Christian life. It's God's grace that brings about a work of holiness and sanctification in our lives. It is God's grace that empowers us to say no to sin. And that is what Paul has been saying in the first half of Romans chapter 6. It is only by God's grace that you're going to be able to say no to sin and yes to God.

But like I said, the Jews didn't understand that. And then they would really mess with Paul when he would teach. They'd get these people called the Judaizers. And they would come around after Paul had been in a particular place and they would stir up all kinds of trouble.

And they'd say, yeah, this apostle Paul guy, he's telling you just the grace of God and stuff like that. And there he's telling you're not under law. Didn't he say that to you? You're not under law but under grace. Yeah, that's what he told us. It's ridiculous.

They'd say, the only thing you do when you get out from under the law is you end up with lawless people. It's all you do. You got to be under the law. The law gives us guidelines. The law gives us rules. The law gives us safety. You got to be under the law. It's ridiculous to say you're not under the law. That's exactly

what Paul was saying. You're not under law. You're under grace. And they'd say, how can that be?

Well, they said that because they didn't understand grace. They didn't understand the power of grace. They didn't understand the ability of grace to change our lives. And there's a lot of people I'm betting in this room or within the sound of my voice who don't understand that same grace to change lives. Paul wants to talk more about that here a little bit.

This chapter has been... He's been giving arguments explaining why true believers when they're under grace are not just going to give into a life of sin. And you'll remember that he argued last week because... The reason we're not going to give into a life of sin is because we've been baptized into Christ or, as we talked about last week, immersed into Christ.

And in Him we join with Him in the benefit of His death. Remember? And because we share His death, we've been set free from the tyranny of sin because we died to sin. Used to be we were dead in our sins. Now we've died to sin. And sin no longer has mastery or control over our lives. Because sin doesn't control a dead man.

Well, we not only died, but then we came back to life again. But we came to a new life. Right? We were resurrected unto a new life. I know this is difficult stuff to hang on to. And the reason it's difficult is because Christians recognize that once I come to Jesus, I don't stop sinning. And here you are, pastor Paul, telling me that the sin has been loosed from my life. And the power of sin is no longer in control of my life. Well, then why do I still sin? And that's a big bugaboo with a lot of Christians. It's like, man, I keep messing up. Well, so do I.

But here's the point. The reason that you and I sin as believers, okay, it's because we choose to. Yeah. It's because we choose to. We choose to sin. I know that probably doesn't make you feel real happy, but that's the fact of the matter. You used to be in slavery to sin. And what that means is you had no choice before. You just sinned because you were a slave. And that's what slaves do. Slaves to sin - sin. Right? That's what they do. And they don't have any choice in the matter.

And the Bible tells us that the whole world is under the control of the evil one, John writes in his first epistle. (1 John 5:19) And sin was just... It was just like breathing. Well, then we come to Christ and we accept Him as our Savior. We enter into His death. And through that death, we die to sin. We died to the power of sin to control our lives. And now suddenly we're brought into a

freedom to choose not to sin. We didn't have that freedom before, but now we do. And we can say, no, I'm not going to do that. That temptation comes our way and says, here, do this. And we go, no. Well, we can do that now we're free to do that.

But you know what we're also free to do? We're also free to sin. Because if you're not free to sin, you're not really free. Right? Why do I keep sinning? Because I'm free to sin and I want to. I choose to. Right? That's why we do it. I have to re-learn what this freedom is all about that God has given me to say no to the sinful nature, and to say yes to God.

That's what Paul is going to be dealing with now as he continues this thing. He begins again with another question in verse 15. Look with me in your Bible. And he asked the question, "*What then? (So what now? What are we going to do now?) Are we to (just go ahead and) sin because we are no longer under law but under grace?*" (ESV)

And the Jew would answer that question and say, well, of course, that's all there's left." If you tell people they're not under the regiments and the restrictions of the law, what are they going to do but just sin. Paul says no. He answers his own question. He says, and this is very emphatic in the Greek. It's like, "*By no means!*" God forbid! Absolutely not are we going to do that!

And then he goes on in verse 16. And he's doing this just like he did at the beginning of the chapter and says, "*Do you not know...* (This is stuff we're supposed to know.) *Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are (the) slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness?*" Stop there.

This is a powerful argument to why we, who are living under grace, no longer desire to give in to the old flesh and the life of sin. It's because we know and understand this principle that whatever we give ourselves to, we're a slave of that thing. We understand that is the fact of the matter. When we give into things, we become slaves to that thing. It's just... It's a law. It's a spiritual principle. And we understand that we can either be slaves to sin or we can be slaves to righteousness.

Now again, before you knew Jesus, you didn't have that choice. You were a slave to sin and there was no option except to come to Christ and be set free. But now you've come to Jesus, I trust. And He has set you free from that slavery to sin.

Well, people ask themselves, well, how do I know what I'm a slave to? How do I... What does slavery look like? Well, it's probably a good question. Because most of us have never witnessed slavery except on some Hollywood screen. And who knows how accurate that was.

But you know what slavery looks like. It looks like obedience. It's what it looks like. It looks like whatever snaps its fingers causes you to move. Causes you to get up and move. Whatever says, hey, jump. And you say, how high? That's what you're a slave to and it's really not rocket science.

Look what he says. Look again with me in verse 16 in your Bible, he says, "*Do you not know that if you (and this is an important word) present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves (Look at this) of the one whom you obey.*" The one whom you obey. That's who you are a slave to. The one whom you obey. Right?

We all have all kinds of passions, and thoughts, and desires, and things, that come into our lives and impress themselves upon us. And some of them are quite ungodly and quite worldly. And when we obey them, we show that we are a slave to that thing. Because it says, this is the way you need to go and so forth.

The question is, who or what are you obeying? We'd all - every one of us - would like to be able to say very clearly here today, well, I obey God. I'm a... But the fact of the matter is sometimes we realize that's not the case. And we also understand another biblical principle. This one that Jesus gave us. Let me show you this on the screen.

Matthew 6:24 (ESV)

No one can serve two masters...

No one can serve two masters...

It's from Matthew chapter 6. Jesus said this, He said, "*No one can serve two masters...*" And that's a biblical principle that applies. And by the way, you might notice that ..., up there means that I didn't give you the rest of the verse. Do you know why? It's because the context in which He spoke it was, "*God and money...*" And He basically said, you cannot serve two masters - God or money. You "*will love one and hate the other.*"

And you might say, well pastor Paul, isn't that wrong of you to use that verse out of context? Have you ever had Christians breathe down your neck because you used a verse out of context? Do you know that there's nothing wrong with

reusing a verse out of context when the context is universal? And you do need to understand when the context is universal.

But whenever it says something like this or something about God particularly. Like the Bible will say, God is love. Well, guess what? I don't care what context you put that in. It's always going to be true. God is always... There's never a point when God's not going to be love. Right?

And frankly, there's never a point where you can serve two masters. You will always only be able to serve one master. It's a biblical principle, whether it's God and money, God and sex, God and drugs, God and power, God and pleasure, whatever it may be. Whatever your particular poison is - or besetting sin - you can't serve both the things. Right? Doesn't matter. That's an important thing to keep in mind.

Remember that we learned in the first half of this chapter? And I've been talking a lot about slavery to sin. But I want you to remember something guys. Again, for all of us who are in Christ today, we have been baptized into Jesus. Meaning, as we saw last week, baptized into His death and because of that, we have been set free from slavery to sin. We've been set free. We've been liberated.

I want to just look in verse 17. This is how Paul says it. He says, *"But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin (that's past tense) have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed, ...having been set free from sin (again past tense) have (now) become slaves of righteousness."* You see, for the believer, this freedom of sin has been activated. It's a done deal. Okay. It's a done deal.

When you come to Jesus, there is a freedom that comes into play, whereby you and I are set free. Not from the ability to sin, but from the tyranny of sin. Do you understand the difference? I'm not saying when you come to Jesus you're going to stop sinning. I'm saying that when you come to Jesus, the power of sin to control your life has been ended. And now from this point on, you choose to sin because you want to, or because you are addicted to it. And we get addicted to things.

Addictions are big these days. We talk a lot about addictions. And the fact of the matter, an addiction is nothing more than a deep rut in your life. You can go down here by Vail and other places. And you can still see that the ruts from the Oregon trail. They created deep ruts in the ground where they all traveled for years over this certain area of ground.

And that's very similar to our lives. In the sense that, sin rolls over certain aspects of our life over, and over, and over, and over again. And we develop these deep ruts of sin that become very difficult. But it's not because you haven't been set free to live a different life. It's because there's these deep ruts.

But now we're told that you can be a slave to God, instead of being a slave to sin. You've been set free from sin. And now you're free to be a slave of God. How does that make you feel when I say that? When I say that you can be a slave of God? Sometimes that doesn't make people feel all that great. Because the word slave or slavery, still carries a very negative sort of a connotation.

And whenever they hear the word slave in whatever context it may be given, they just think, oh, that's nasty. But what's interesting about being a slave of God, is that it's the only slavery you will ever be involved in that will produce freedom in your life. Sounds like a strange statement, doesn't it?

But do you know why slavery to God produces freedom? Because He's the only free being in the universe. The only truly free being in the universe. And when we give our lives to Him to be a slave of Him, He brings forth that same freedom into our lives. And He sets you free. And him whom the Son sets free is free. (John 8:36) But He's the only One who is free. We think we're free. We're kidding ourselves.

I was sharing, that when I was a kid, I was made to go to church every week. And I hated it. I hated it all through my grade school years, junior high, and whatever all else. Until my parents couldn't really convince me to go anymore. But I remember thinking, boy, I tell you when I turn 18... When I move out of this house, I said, I'm not going to step into a church ever. And you know what? I was good on that promise for a long time. I didn't darken the door of a church. Because church was nothing but boring with a big fat B.

And I told myself I was never going back. And I thought, I'm free. I'm free. I don't have to go to church. I'm a free man. I was kidding myself. I was just as much in slavery as anybody else. I was still enslaved to all my passions, and all my desires, and all my wants and wishes. I was a slave with a chain around my neck, singing about my freedom. And I was an idiot, just in case you were wondering. I was kidding myself.

We do that. Sometimes we think we're free to do what we want. I'm not going to... Nobody's going to tell me what to do. Listen, somebody is going to tell you what to do. Something is going to rule your life. But you come to Jesus, you get set free from that. Now, what's that look like? How do we begin to live your

life? How do you begin to change the way you've lived your life for all these years?

Well, Paul starts talking about that. And what it is guys, it's called walking out your freedom. It's learning to live like a free person. That's hard when you've lived your whole life in slavery. And then suddenly Jesus comes along. And He goes, you're free.

And you go, yeah? What's that mean? What's that even look like? I don't know what freedom looks like. I've never been free before. No, you're free to live the life you want to live, but let Me just say this... There's a warning He gives. He says, listen, you are free to go back and live a life of sin if you want to. Let Me tell you where that leads. It leads right back to slavery, or you can choose to walk out your freedom, and truly be free."

What's that look like? Verse 19. Look with me in your Bible. Paul says, *"I am speaking in human terms, because of your natural limitations."* I don't know if you're aware of it, but he just insulted us. That's a very polite way of saying, I am putting this in really simple terms because you're dense.

And he goes on and he says, *"For just as you once (in the past) presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness, (leading to more lawlessness) so now (that you've been set free,) present your members as slaves to righteousness leading to sanctification."* Or, your Bible may say, holiness.

Do you guys understand how he just really made this very simple for us? We're sitting there going, I don't know what to do. And he comes along and he goes, all right, I'm going to make this really simple. Remember how you used to live your life for sin and you'd present your body for sin? Yeah. Well now present it to God

And we're thinking, okay, what did I do to present myself for sin? Oh, I went to the bar. I hung out at the bar and just drank. Or, I was flirting with all kinds of women. Or, I was doing drugs. Or... We can all probably stand up and talk about all the wonderful ways we lived our life of slavery.

He says, you know how you used to give yourself to that? Yeah. Now give yourself to God. And the word, present is a very important word. He says, you know how you used to present yourselves, the members of your body to sin? Yeah. Now present yourself to God.

Interesting, isn't it? And do you think that's not a daily thing? It's a daily thing. It's a daily thing where I come to God and say, you know what? I know that You have set me free from sin. But today I have to once again present myself to You and say, Lord, I give myself to You.

And I used to use my voice back before I knew You to get what I wanted from people. I used it to manipulate. I used it to curse. I used it to express anger and frustration with people. Now, Lord, I begin this day today and I give my voice to You. To speak praises, to speak prayers, to speak encouragement to people. To tell people about Jesus Christ.

You know Lord, I used to use my eyes to look for things that would benefit me. Whether it was a pretty woman. Or, whether it was something I wanted to buy that I was coveting. Or, I would use my eyes to... Lord, I give my eyes to You today. To see what You want me to see. The people You want to bring across my path.

Lord, You know how I used to use my ears to listen to all the garbage that the world was saying, and singing, and talking about. Lord, I give my ears to You today to hear good things. To hear the things of the kingdom and mostly God, to hear Your voice.

Whereas, you used to present your members, literally, lay them out there and just absorb the sin of the world. Now take what you have, who you are, and lay it out there for God.

Paul's going to say this a different way when he gets...Later on into this book, he's going to say, in view of God's mercy, offer therefore your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God, which is your spiritual act of worship. (Romans 12:1) He's going to say that because that's a reiteration of what he's saying right here. Give yourself to God every day. Every day.

Listen, you don't miss a day. Because if you do, there's all kinds of wonderful temptations out there that are going to try to tempt you to take what you've given to God, and bring it back into your use, for your and my selfish purposes. Offer yourselves to God.

We have to start walking like a free person. Because you know what? You don't walk like a free person, you're going to walk like a slave. And if you act like a slave, you're going to find yourself back in the slave quarters. And you're going to have a chain around your neck, again. But it's not a chain that came to you by God's purpose or plan. It's one you put back on. A yoke of slavery.

We talked about this last week. I showed this verse last week. In fact, I think I showed it. Galatians 5:1. Remember?

Galatians 5:1 (ESV)

For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.

For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.

Why did Christ set us free? Well, so we'd be free. It's for freedom that He set us free. What are we supposed to do? Stand firm, walk out your freedom, and don't go back and submit to a life of slavery. Don't go back and do that. You're free. Why in the world would you go back to the slave quarters and put yourself under slavery again? Why?

There's absolutely no reason to do it. Because you're not bound to that life anymore. Why would you go back and do it? Because I want to. That's why we do it. We go back and live in the slave quarters. We don't have to. But we're used to it, aren't we? It's where I lived for an awfully long time. And now I'm just drawn back into living that old life, even though we've been set free.

Paul ends up with a simple reminder here. Look at verse 20 in your Bible. *"For when you were slaves of sin, (Yeah, okay, maybe) you were free in regard to righteousness. 21 But what fruit were you getting at that time from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death."*

Here's what Paul's saying. If we were saying this in a modern way today... Have you ever... By the way, have you ever sat and listened to Christians brag about their sinful past? It's something we shouldn't do. But it happens. And particularly it happens among guys. Sorry guys, but we're guilty.

We get it amidst other guys. And we start talking about the life that we lived before Christ. And we go, yeah? Well, get this... And then I launch into some story of my sinful past and it's really ridiculous.

Here's the question Paul's asking: What'd you get out of those things? What did you get out of those things? What was the result of those things? What was the fruit of those things? You know what he says?

Look what he says here at the end of the end of verse 21. "...the end of those things is death." Why are we sitting and glorifying death? And what we used to... The way we used to live related to those things.

Sure you were sinning up a storm, but what did it get you? A big bushel basket full of death. And by the way, that's another principle that's unchangeable. And that is the sin results in death.

James said the same thing. You remember it from James chapter one. Each person he says, is tempted when he's lured away and enticed by his own desire. And then desire when it is conceived it gives birth to sin. And sin when it's fully grown brings forth death. (James 1:14-15) It's the progression that none of us can stop. Sin always issues forth in death.

Now you might say, well, now wait a minute, pastor Paul, is that the case even in my life as a believer? Well, let me explain this. This is very important. As a believer, Jesus Christ has broken the power of sin to invade or to bring death into your life on an eternal level. That can't happen. Because Jesus died for your sins. You with me? The wages of sin being eternal death - that can't happen to you now. Because Jesus has consumed that possibility. It's gone.

But Christians, don't think for a second that death still can't touch your life. Not eternally. But in a lot of other ways. And believe me, I've seen it happen in my own life. I've seen it happen in the lives of many people. Christians. I'm talking about believers in Jesus. Born again, washed in the blood, filled with the Spirit, Christians who give into sin and experience death.

It can be a death to trust. It can be... And sadly enough, I've seen it become a death to marriage. I've seen marriages, yes, Christian marriages. I've seen them die. I wish I could say that every wedding I've ever officiated at, has always just had a long, happy life. But many of them have ended in divorce. It's a very sad thing to admit. But it happens.

Why? Because sin brings death. Sometimes it's a death to a marriage. Yeah, these people are still born again. They're still going to heaven. But their marriage is over. And their kids are vibrating with the weirdness and the reverberations of that pain.

I have seen it create deaths. A death to someone's career aspirations and dreams. I have seen it create a death to close friendships that have ended that were a wonderful blessing before. But sin came into play and death resulted. And I have seen sin steal the blessing that someone would otherwise get.

Let me explain what I mean by that. As parents... And I never understood this until my kids grew up. And I know that you guys who've had kids grow up on you, you understand this, too. But there's a great desire that we parents have to bless our children, isn't there? We want to bless them. We want to bless them in life. We want to bless them in the decisions that they make in life. And it's one of the greatest blessings of being a parent is to bless our children.

Unfortunately, sometimes our children steal that ability to bless. Because they make bad choices. And we want to bless them in their decisions. We want to bless them in this, and that, and the other thing. We want to bless them when they choose a marriage partner. We want to bless them in the way they do this. But sometimes they take it out of our hands. Because they do it in illegitimate and sinful ways.

Instead of waiting on the Lord, they grab it themselves. They do it in their own power. And then they look to us and they say, will you bless me? I want your blessing. I love you. A parent would say, I want to bless you. You took it from me. You stole it out of my hands. I can't bless this. Right? That's what we have to... We look... I've watched as parents have dealt with this throughout the years. And they're agonized by it. I want to bless my child, but I can't. And now they're mad at me because I won't bless them.

People understand something. God doesn't bless sin. He's going to love you in spite of it. I understand that. You ought to understand that about your parents, too. Don't expect your parents to bless your sin. They want to bless you. But we steal it from them. It dies. It literally dies.

When the Bible says that sin brings forth death, it's not joking guys. Nor has that death been minimized from the day-to-day experience that you and I have here in this life just because we've accepted Jesus. Yeah, our eternal death, that's not going to happen. But today's present day death experiences, they will happen because of sin. It's an important thing to remember.

Last 2 verses in the chapter, Paul says, *"22 But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves to God, the fruit (that) you get leads to sanctification (or holiness) and (in the) end, (of course) eternal life."*

And that's the blessing that comes to every believer. But then Paul reiterates that principle again, *"23...the wages of sin is death, (And that's a unmovable principle. The wages of sin is always death. Okay.) but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."*