

Romans: The Crown Jewel of Salvation

22 - Are You Really Free?

Romans 6:14-23

Grace Fellowship Church / Pastor Brad Bigney / February 9, 2014

We're all a slave to someone or something. It's just a question of WHO or WHAT.

I. You Only Have Two Options as to Who You're Going to Serve

Romans 6:16 "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 to death, or of obedience to righteousness?"

You're either serving sin right now or you're serving God. If you think there's a middle ground, you're deluded.

John 8:32-34 "... you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. They answered Him, 'We are Abraham's descendents, and have never been in bondage to anyone. How can you say, 'You will be made free?' Jesus answered and said to them, 'Most assuredly I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin.'"

Just like the Jews in Christ's day, we think we're the Captain and Master of our own soul and destiny. But the shocking and offensive truth of the matter is that sin owns us while deceiving us into thinking that WE are in control.

It's estimated that the 1st century population in Rome was about 1/3 slaves. The city of Rome had such a huge population of slaves that someone suggested all the slaves should be made to wear a distinctive style of clothing to mark them... but the idea was abandoned because they were afraid it would show the slaves just how many of them there were – and how strong they were in numbers. On top of that, a lot of the free men and women in the city of Rome had once been slaves themselves... so it's likely that more than half the Christians at the church in Rome were slaves, or had been slaves at one time. So everyone reading Paul's letter for the first time was keenly aware of the implications of what Paul is saying in v. 16 about slavery. They lived in a culture steeped with slavery. *Romans*, R. Kent Hughes, p. 130

One thing they knew for sure is that obedience was the universal hallmark of slavery; it is the litmus test for ownership.

- Who do you really obey? Sin or righteousness?

Luke 6:46 "Why do you call me 'Lord, Lord' and do not do the things which I say?"

Matthew 7:21, 24 "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who **does** the will of My Father in heaven... Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and **does** them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock."

A. Some of You Are Serving Sin Right Now – You're a Slave to Sin

"True, we have, in our country, abolished the institutionalized forms of slavery and all but eliminated a servant class, but the experience of servitude is still among us and is as oppressive as ever. Freedom is on everyone's lips... But not many feel or act free... We live in a nation of complainers and a society of addicts. Everywhere we turn we hear complaints: I can't spend my money the way I want; I can't spend my time the way I want; I can't be myself; I'm under the control of others all the time. And everywhere we meet the addicts – addiction to alcohol and drugs, to compulsive work habits and to obsessive consumption." *Now listen to what he says...* "The Christian is a person who recognizes that our real problem is not in achieving freedom but in learning service under a better master. The Christian realizes that every relationship that excludes God becomes oppressive. Recognizing and realizing that, we urgently want to live under the mastery of God." *A Long Obedience in the Same Direction: Discipleship in an Instant Society*, Eugene H. Peterson, p. 61

II. You're Already Facing the Inevitable Consequences of What You've Been Choosing

A. Your Slavery to Sin is Leading You Deeper and Deeper into Sin – at a Greater and Greater Cost

Romans 6:19 "... 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."

As you head down this path of sin thinking you're free, keep in mind that sin will always take you FURTHER than you wanted to go, keep you LONGER than you wanted to stay, and make you pay MORE than you ever wanted to pay! Sin is a terrible master.

"...an ever-increasing craving for an ever-diminishing pleasure is the formula... to get the man's soul and give Him nothing in return – that is what really gladdens [Satan's] heart." *The Screwtape Letters*, C. S. Lewis, p. 39-40

Whenever sin is your master, your PAIN becomes greater, your WORLD becomes smaller, and your CHOICES become fewer and fewer while you think you're living in freedom!

B. Your Slavery to Righteousness Can Lead You into More and More Freedom – with a Corresponding Peace

That's the good news: You really don't have to keep doing what you want to do. You can start living under a new master who loves you and gave His life for you and has completely different designs for your life.

v. 18 "And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness"

v. 19 "... **just as** you presented your members as slaves of uncleanness... **so now** present your members as slaves of righteousness for holiness."

Isaiah 32:17-18 "The work of righteousness will be peace, and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance forever."

III. There Are Only Two Ultimate Destinations as to Where You're Going to End Up

The two different Masters lead to radically different ends.

A. Some of You Are Headed for an Eternal Destruction in Hell

v. 21 "... for the end of those things is death."

v. 23 "For the wages of sin is death..."

Not just your funeral and physical death. An eternal death and separation from a holy God and all that is good.

B. Some of You Are Headed for Eternal Life in Heaven

v. 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."

IV. You've Only Got One Hope for Eternal Life

Your only hope has to come from God!

Romans 6:17 “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.”

Your rescue starts and ends with God. He’s your only hope. What Christ did on the cross in payment for sin is your only hope of being ransomed and bought back from your cruel slave master– Satan.

Come to Christ. He’s a much better Master.