

Whose Slave Are You?

Romans 6:15-23

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The point of the text that we are going to undertake tonight is that there is no such thing as absolute freedom for anyone. Now, that may seem like a bizarre statement to come from a preacher, but I'll explain it. No absolute freedom for any human beings. Let me clarify that. No human being is absolutely free. We are limited. No one is absolutely free. We're crying and crying for freedom, yet we can't really be free. I can't fly without the aid of an airplane. I can't live underwater without the aid of scuba tanks or a submarine. There are certain things I can't do because I'm not omnipotent. There are places I can't go because I'm not omnipresent. There are things I don't know because I'm not omniscient, I don't know all things. Even in a very practical sense, I'd love to have a beach house, you know, but I'm not going to have a beach house because I'm limited. I can't afford a beach house unless you want to give a little more tonight or something. I'm kidding! Totally kidding! As I'm saying that I'm thinking, "What am I saying?!" You know, there are things I can't have. There are things I can't do. I am not absolutely free. The only person or being, so to speak, that is absolutely free is God. God is absolutely free to do whatever He wants, whenever He wants, however He wants. The only limitation God puts on Himself is that He will never violate His own nature. He will never do anything contrary to His own nature. There are things that God can't do. He can't forgive sin apart from repentance. The Bible says God cannot lie. The Bible actually says God cannot lie, something God cannot do. In a different sense, God is absolutely free and is unlimited.

The question tonight is: Who are you in bondage to? Who are you a slave to? In Romans 6 and 7, to introduce our subject, we're looking at the subject of sanctification. Sanctification is the lifelong process of the Christian being changed into the image of Jesus Christ. We have covered the doctrine of justification, the act of God where He declares the believing sinner to be righteous based on the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross. That happens instantaneously and is not progressional. You don't get any more justified five years after you've been justified. It starts a process (underline the word process), and that process is the teaching of sanctification. Now, the words "saint," "sanctify" and "holy" all come from the same root word in the New Testament which means to be holy. It means to be set apart. It means to be dedicated unto God. God wants to make us holy. In justification, He declares us righteous. In sanctification, He makes us righteous. God saves you to be holy. He doesn't save you so you can continue to live a slave to bondage and sin. We are going to see tonight that sin leads to death. Sin leads to bondage.

In the world, they are telling us that if you want to be free, do whatever you want. Live however you want. Just sleep around, get drunk, take drugs, lie, steal, buy things, accumulate possessions. I mean, the freedom of the world is actually bondage as far as God's Word is concerned, and we are going to see the contrasts between being a slave to God, which is true freedom, and being a slave to satan and sin, which is, in reality, great bondage.

The chapter, when it teaches on sanctification, revolves around two questions. The first question is in verse 1. Let's look at it real quickly. Paul says, "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?" Shall we continue, shall we live, shall we dwell in sin that grace may abound? Now, the reason he asks this question in verse 1 is because back in Romans 5:20, and I want you to look at these verses with me. I know the last couple of weeks I've been repeating what we've covered already, but it's essential that you get the context of this entire sixth chapter. He says in Romans 5:20, "Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound." Notice this statement, "But where sin abounded...", or overflowed, "... grace did much more abound." That "much more" can be translated "superabound." So, where sin abounded, grace superabounded. Having made this statement in Romans 5:20, that sin brings abounding grace, the argument that Paul anticipates would be something like, "Well, if sin magnifies the grace of God, then let's go out and sin so that God's grace can overflow!" Paul answers that question, "Shall we sin that grace may abound?" Notice the answer in Romans 6:2, "God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" Here is his answer to the question, "No way, Jose!" That's directly from the Greek. "Ain't gonna happen!" "Perish the thought!" He is just saying, "No way! You can't live in sin to bring the grace of God to be overflowing." The end does not justify the means. We can't do sinful things to bring good results. "I am going to sin to make God look good." Sometimes in churches, people have lied about their testimony. They have lied about the depths of sin they went into and become very popular because they are great sinners and God saved them. Then they have been exposed to be total frauds! They didn't live that kind of a life. They're thinking, "Well, people came to Christ and God was glorified, so it doesn't matter if I lie as long as good comes." No no no no no. We don't do that. We can't say, "Let us do evil that good may come." The end does not justify the means, and we don't go out and continue (present tense) habitually, live in, dwell in, and practice sin. He makes it clear.

Paul answers this question further in Romans 6:3-14, and we looked at it last Wednesday night, by saying a life lived in sin is not possible for the Christian because justification involves union with Christ. So, if I were to summarize verses 1-14 in one statement, it would be that. I want you to get the big picture. Continuing in sin is impossible because you have been justified, and when you were justified you were united to Jesus Christ in a living union. You were identified with Christ in His death and His resurrection, so now it is impossible for you to live a life of sin. Our union with Christ means we've died to sin. Our union with Christ means participation in Christ brings new life so we can't continue to live in sin, for sin is incompatible with my new life and my union with Jesus Christ.

Now we come to tonight's text, verse 15. In it we have the second question that Paul asks, which in a lot of ways is very similar, but it is also different. I want you to see it, verse 15. This is the second question. Paul says, "What then? shall we sin...", notice it is singular. In verse 1, it's continue in sin; in verse 15, it's sin. Why? "...because we are not under the law, but under grace?" In this question, Paul doesn't say, "that grace may abound," because we are not under law. So, since we are not under law because we died to the law, "Weeeee! We can go out and we can sin sin sin! Get your full of sin!" Paul says, "No way! God forbid." Notice the answer again in verse 15. He says, "No way! God forbid." Again, this is "Perish the thought!" This

question goes back to verse 14. Notice it. "For sin shall not have dominion over you..." and here's the statement, "...for ye are not under the law, but under grace." "Wow! Cool!"

People have a real hard time with grace. They believe that grace is a license to sin, that people have to have rules and regulations and guidelines. They have to have dress codes. We don't have a dress code at Revival. Look around the room and you can tell that immediately, right? We don't tell you how you have to dress at Revival Christian Fellowship. We leave that up to the Holy Spirit to speak to your heart. I think in a Christian's life that the outward should reflect the inward. If God is in your heart, guess what your appearance should reflect? God in your heart. Amen? We're not going to go around and become the dress police or something and tell you what you're wearing isn't appropriate for the house of God. I may have my standards. I may have my convictions, but it's not right for me to foster them upon you. That's what's called liberty, but we don't use our liberty for an occasion to serve the flesh.

He asks the question, verse 15, and it goes back to verse 14, "...for ye are not under the law..." so that we might sin. As I pointed out, the word sin in verse 15 is in the singular, and in verse 1 it's in the plural present context kind of thing, "Shall we continue in sin..." live habitually in sin. In verse 15 it's, "Well, I can sin." Some feel that in verse 1 he's saying we live and dwell and abide and continue in sin. In verse 15, it's "Alright, since we are not under the law then it's okay to indulge in a little sin once in a while. God will forgive me." You should never as a Christian have that mentality. Do you know how many times I've counseled people that have said, "I know it's wrong, but God will forgive me." It's a real dangerous attitude. You're going to presume upon the grace of God? The Bible says, "Thou shalt not test the Lord thy God." That's putting God to a foolish test. You're presuming that I can willingly, deliberately go out and sin, "Oh that's fine! God's grace. God will forgive me." That's the wrong attitude to have. So, he asks the question and gives the answer. The first question in verse 1 was answered by the theme of union with Christ unto the baptism of the Holy Spirit, verses 3-4. We were taken out of Adam and we were placed into Christ, which our water baptism symbolized, and because of our union with Christ, sin is incompatible with the Christian life.

Here is the theme in verse 15 down to the end in verse 23, that is, you can't sin because you are a slave to Jesus Christ. I love that! Now, we could stop right here for the rest of the night. That should be enough. You can't sin, two reasons. First, you have been united to Jesus Christ. The second reason is you are a slave of Jesus Christ, and being a slave of Jesus Christ demands exclusive and total obedience and commitment. Remember when Jesus said it like this. He said, "No man can serve two masters." If you are a Christian, you have a master. Do you know who that master is? It's Jesus Christ. That master is Jesus Christ. That master is God, and if He is my master and I am His slave, and Paul was writing to believers in Rome that knew about slaves, half of the Roman empire were slaves and many of the believers in the church at Rome were no doubt slaves. They understood what it was to be the property of a master and have to be obedient unto their master. If you are a slave of Jesus Christ, a slave to God, then you owe Him your allegiance and your obedience, and you owe Him your dedication in walking in holiness. That's what he is saying in these wonderful verses. Again, as I pointed out in verse 15, he asks the question. The question is, "Shall we sin because we are not under

law?"

We are not saved by the law. The law cannot save you. The law is powerless to save you. The law can show you your sin, but it cannot save you from sin. The second point I want to make is you cannot be sanctified by the law. No one, in God's sight, is going to be holy because of rules and law and regulation. This is why churches do a disservice to individual Christians when they give them standards of holiness and righteousness that are not clearly Biblical, that aren't the fruit of the Spirit, that aren't the liberty of the Spirit. This is what we are going to get in chapter 8. We are not sanctified by the law, chapter 6, we are free from the law, chapter 7, and we walk in the Spirit in Romans 8.

There are two dangers that Christians fall into. One is called the libertines and the other is called the legalists. The word libertine means that we're free. We aren't under any law. We can live however we want so you exercise your liberty in a wrong way to sin. Grace and grace alone is a proper motivation for living a holy life. The other extreme is the legalist, where they have rules, laws and the regulations much like the Pharisees, Sadducees and the scribes of Jesus' day where He said, "You're like whitewashed tombs. You may clean the outside of the tomb, but inside you're full of dead man's bones." He said, "You're like a cup. You clean the outside, but the inside is still dirty." Now, if you were drinking a glass or eating a bowl of cereal and you finished it. You washed only the outside of the bowl and put it back in the cupboard, that wouldn't be good. Right? You know, a lot of people just kind of clean the outside of the bowl. What does God look at? He looks at your heart. He doesn't look at your clothes. He looks at your heart. For some of you it's a good thing He doesn't look at your clothes. He looks at your heart. Praise God! Amen? The Pharisees and the Sadducees were those where Isaiah cried out, "You draw near to Me with your lips and you lift your hands to Me, but your hearts are far from Me." God is looking at your heart tonight, and God wants your heart tonight. You can have all the outward attire of a religious person or a holy person or a Christian, but if your heart is far from God, it doesn't mean anything. Someone put it like this, "The old nature knows no law. The new nature needs no law." I love that. The old nature knows no law, and the new nature needs no law, so we don't want to be libertine's. We don't want to be legalists, but like Paul said to the Galatians, "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage." We are not saved by the law, and we're not sanctified by the law. We are sanctified by the Holy Spirit working in our hearts and our lives.

Paul moves into his answer given very simply like the first question was answered in verse 15, "God forbid." It's a very powerful phrase in the Greek. It means abandon the thought or forget the thought. There is no way that this could ever happen. Then, in verse 16, he begins to give his answer as he breaks it down. This is where I want you to take notes, and I won't tarry. There are going to be four steps that Paul is going to use to answer this question in verse 15. He starts with just a flat out, "No way! Perish the thought," and then he breaks it down into four steps. The first is the principle (write this down). Self surrender leads to slavery; surrender to sin leads to slavery to sin, surrender to God leads to surrender to righteousness. Now, remember last Wednesday I pointed out three important words. The first was "know," verse 3.

The second was “reckon,” verse 11. The third was “yield,” verse 13. From verses 15-23, you are going to find this concept of yield yield yield yield yield. So, we know something. We were united with Christ, we died with Christ, and we’re risen with Christ. We believe something, or we reckon it to be true. Here’s the third step, and the most important in living a spiritual, sanctified holy life, we must yield to it. Be not hearers of the Word only but doers of the Word. Unless you know something and believe it, it will be circumvented if you don’t do it, or you don’t put it into practice, or yield to it and that means placing yourself completely at the disposal of God. Notice verse 16, He says, “Know ye not...,” interesting, in verse 3, after he asks and answered the question, he said, “Know ye not.” He comes back to the same theme, verse 16, “Know ye not, that to whom ye yield...,” there’s that word, yield, “...yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?” Here he says that you surrender to sin—it leads to death; you surrender to obedience—it leads to righteousness. You’re obeying God. You’re keeping His Word. The number one way by which God sanctifies you as a Christian is through His Word.

On Sunday morning I talked about feeding on the Word to grow. Same thing, “As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby.” You cannot grow apart from the Bible. You can’t put your Bible on the shelf and say, “I’m gonna grow because I’m gonna go to church every night and sing. I’m gonna grow because I’m gonna go to church every night and I’m gonna pray and praise the Lord and clap my hands and jump up and down.” I think that’s great! Come to church, pray, clap your hands and jump up and down. You can even throw in a little roll on the ground if you want. That’s not going to make you more spiritual. If you jump high enough and long enough you might lose some weight and be a little more healthy, but you’re not going to be more spiritual. I’ve seen some church services where they jump around so much I don’t think I could do that. If you have to worship God that way, I’m disqualified. Again, where does God look when we worship? On our hearts. I’m all for shouting to the Lord. I’m all for being exuberant, expressing joy and emotion to the Lord, clapping your hands and raising your arms, but if your heart is not in it—if your heart is far from God, it doesn’t mean anything to the Lord. Through the Word, Jesus said in John 17, “Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth.” If you surrender in obedience, verse 16, then you will be living righteous lives, “...or of obedience unto righteousness.” You have two options. You can be servants of sin which leads to death or you become the slave of obedience to God which leads to righteousness.

Sin is actually slavery. Write that down. Sin is slavery. Obedience, when we hear that word obedience we think, “Oh man, I’m not free. I have to obey. I’m not free. I have to do what God says.” Obedience leads to freedom. Jesus said, “If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.” Amen? To be a slave of God is to be truly free but to commit sin is not freedom. This is not what the world is saying. The world is saying, “Do you wanna be free? Sleep around with anybody you want, anytime you want. Do you wanna be free? Just live however you want. Don’t let anyone tell you what to do. Don’t let anyone tell you how to live, and that includes God. I wanna be free, and we want to throw off the shackles that God puts upon us, these oppressive Christian mores and standards, and we wanna throw them off.” What happens? They lead to bondage in a big kind of social sense. When I watch the news, I see

Americans living in bondage and fear. People are murdered, raped, dying in our streets, drug and alcohol addiction, the psychological problems that we have, divorce, immorality. We wanted freedom? We wanted to be free of God and of His Word? We're getting what we want. We've gone into bondage. You can't get on an airplane anymore. You can't live anymore. We're not free because sin brings you into bondage. You're young and you think you're gonna have fun. You think, "Wow! I want to do what I wanna do." So, you get into alcohol or drugs or the party scene, and you think you're free. The next thing you know you're in absolute bondage.

We are going to see that the two of them have fruit. Righteousness has fruit and sin has fruit. The fruit of sin is guilt, shame, emptiness, and fear. The fruit of righteousness is freedom from guilt, joy, peace, love, and righteousness. You know what you were like before you were saved. You were living in bondage to your desires and your lusts and your greed and your sin and your emptiness and your hatred and your anger. They were holding you captive. When you came to know Jesus Christ, He set you free from those things. It was just a transference of your being a slave to sin and then you become a slave to righteousness and the fruit thereof. We need to surrender because surrendering to God leads to true freedom.

When satan came to Eve and tempted her in the garden of Eden, can you imagine how cool it would have been to live in the garden of Eden? I always fantasize as a surfer that the waves were perfect and no one was around. And, all the fruit—you didn't need to pay for it. It was all free! All the animals were nice. You could pet them. You could hang out with them. Even rats were fun. There were no dirty rats. Everything was cool! Everything was beautiful. Everything was awesome! You talk about free! Adam and Eve had everything! One act of disobedience—satan came to Eve and said, "Did God really say that? You don't need to do what God says. God knows the day you eat thereof you shall be as God, and you'll know good from evil. You know, God said don't eat of it, but man try it! Don't listen to God, do what you want to do. Eat whatever fruit you wanna eat. You know, who's God to tell you you can't eat from that tree in the midst of the garden?" We're so aware today of the consequences of that sin and that disobedience. It hasn't changed. "You shall not surely die," satan said. God said, "The day that you eat thereof you shall surely die." They were separated from God and driven out of the garden. By the sweat of his brow he had to work the earth with thorns and thistles it brought forth, and they all died.

If you die in your sin, you'll be separated from God for all eternity. Sin is a very hard taskmaster. If you live for materialism, you no longer possess them they possess you. You're driven by your greed. "I've gotta have more!" You live by your lusts. If you yield to lust, it's not going to satisfy. It's gotta go deeper. It's gotta be stronger. It's gotta be greater. You're never going to be satisfied. No matter what you're pursuing, no matter what you're going after, it's a cruel taskmaster. It brings you into bondage. So what do we do? Romans 12:1. We'll get there in a few weeks. Paul the apostle said, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice..." here he uses the word "yield," in Romans 12:1 he uses the word "present." That is a once and for all, give your life completely to God. You accept Jesus Christ as your Savior, but I believe that you need to put your all upon the altar surrendering to Him as Lord of your life living every aspect of your life for one purpose and

that is to be obedient and to glorify Jesus Christ.

The application is given in verses 17-19. The application is that salvation involves an exchange of slaveries. When you were saved, you were not only united to Jesus, but you were also transferred from slavery to sin to slavery to the Savior. Notice verse 17. He says, "But..." here's the contrast, "...God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin..." Oh! How well we know that! Our BC days, before Christ. "...but ye have obeyed from the heart..." this is talking about your salvation, "...that form of doctrine which was delivered you. 18 Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness. 19 I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness." Now, Paul the apostle tells us that our salvation involved a change from slavery to sin to slavery to Jesus Christ—two different masters. I want you to notice in verse 17, "God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin..." past tense. Notice the tense there. It's past tense. You were a slave of sin, and we won't talk too much about that because it's a real bummer, right? If we said, "How many want to stand up right now and talk about your sinful past?" Let's not do that. Let's not wallow in the past. "Well, I was a bigger sinner than you were. I can top you." He says in the verse, "Those are the things we are ashamed of." Now, don't raise your hand and don't say it out loud, but you know that there were things in your pre-converted days that you are absolutely ashamed of, right? You're forgiven and you're free, and they're buried and gone, and we're not going to bring them back, but there were things in our past that we are ashamed of. Thank God we don't live there anymore! Thank God we have been freed from being servants of sin. Amen?

What Paul says there in verse 17 is, "...but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine..." the word "form" was used as a mold that metal was poured into and would take the shape of. It would be like a jello mold. Your life was poured into obedience to God, and actually when you repented and believed in Jesus Christ, that's likened unto an act of obedience. You believe that truth that Jesus died for you and that you were a sinner, and He could save you and you were delivered.

In verse 18, he says, "Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness." That's not saying you will never ever sin again. This is not teaching sinless perfection. It's not teaching that any Christian this side of heaven will be sinless. I've met Christians that believed that. They'll even argue that point with you until they are red in the face, get mad, and wanna punch you out. "I DO NOT SIN!" They get mad and freak out, and they get in the flesh. "I'm telling you...I DON'T SIN!" Really? "YES!" I'm not going to ask you what you're doing right now, Buckaroo. I had a woman in my church years ago that believed that. I don't know why she stuck around and listened to me every Sunday, but she actually believed that. She used to come up and argue with me all the time, and when I would teach from the epistles of Paul things she didn't like, she'd come up and say, "I don't agree with Paul." Really? Well, you can talk to him when you get to heaven then...if you make it to heaven. 'I don't agree with Paul.' All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, so don't misinterpret that and suppose that the sin nature is gone. Remember, he actually said earlier in this chapter, in verse

6, "Knowing...that the old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed..." the word "destroyed" there in the Greek is the word *katargeo*. It doesn't mean annihilated, it means rendered inoperative. I used the illustration of unplugging the vacuum. It's just rendered inoperative. It's not destroyed. So, he says here that we are slaves to sin but now we are free from sin and we become slaves to righteousness.

What does he mean in verse 19 when he says, "I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh?" That phrase is a little hard to interpret, especially in my King James translation, so a modern translation would help a bit. Paul is basically saying, "I'm using a natural illustration." When he says, "I speak after men," he's saying, "I'm using a homely, literal illustration of slavery." Then he answers why he used that illustration in verse 19, "...because of the infirmity of your flesh." In other words, because it is hard for you to grasp. So he paints this picture of slavery so that they could get their minds around it and could get a handle on it. It might be a little harder for us to understand because we don't have slavery so much in our western culture in our day and age, but the concept is a homely natural illustration, and because of your weakness in your flesh, your humanness, you can't wrap your mind around it. That's why I share this with you. Notice what he goes on to say in verse 19. He says, "...as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness..." and we did that before we were saved, "...to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now..." here's the contrast, "...yield..." there's that key word, "...your members..." put yourself at the disposal of God as slaves or "...servants to righteousness unto holiness." He tells them now you switch from satan to God, and you become servants unto holiness.

Thirdly, this is the third step, a paradox. The paradox: Slavery is freedom and freedom is slavery. Let me repeat that. Slavery is freedom and freedom is slavery. What he means by that is slavery to sin means you're free from holiness. If you are a slave to sin, you can't live in holiness. If you are free from sin, then you are a slave to Christ. Follow with me, verses 20-22. He says, "For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness. 21 What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death. 22 But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life." He explains this paradox. All he's doing is answering the same question in verse 15. "Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace?" He is answering it from different angles. He is saying, "No. You're slaves to God. You can't sin anymore. You were slaves to sin, but now you are a slave of God and you need to yield your members unto God." The two contrasts, the first one, it is interesting, is in verse 21, the fruit. Notice, "What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death." The sinful lives that we used to live, they had their fruit, but now you're free from sin and you're the servants to God. You have fruit unto holiness, and the end is everlasting life. What a blessing! You were the servants of sin and you were free from righteousness. That's the paradox. You were a servant of sin and you were free from righteousness because you were a slave or servant of sin. The only true freedom is freedom from sin because I've yielded my members, my body, as instruments of righteousness.

Paul likens ourselves to our members, verse 19, our members, meaning our body. Do you

know that your body is neutral? Your body, your hands, your feet, your eyes, your mouth, your heart, can be used for sinful purposes or it can be used for good purposes. It can be used to dishonor God. It can be used to honor God. Now, before you were saved, what did you use your body for? Sinful purposes. You used your body for things that dishonored God. It brought you into bondage. You produced sin and you were in bondage to sin, so you yielded your hands and your mind and your feet, your body, to sin. Some of you were good at it. You were devoted to it. You'd stay up late and sin as much as you could. You'd spend time, energy, money and plan and plot and commit to sinning. You were pouring yourself into it. Now that you've become a Christian, are you putting the same energy, effort, commitment and time into living righteously? Isn't it funny when we were sinners, man we were big sinners! We were good sinners. We were on fire sinners! We were devoted sinners. Then we become Christians and it's like, "I'm too tired to go to church. Bible study? Do I have to? Prayer? Ugh! Count me out." I mean, when there was a party, I was there. When there was a time to have fun, you're there. You're on it, you know. You go to Vegas and you didn't sleep all weekend. Now, you go to church and you sleep through the whole sermon. What's happened to you?

Do you know that Paul is actually saying in these verses, "Give as much energy and effort and devotion to the Savior as you did to sin. Be as good a saint as you were a sinner." Like Paul the apostle said, "I'm the chief, big sinner. I'm the chief of sinners. I'm the greatest of sinners." Then Paul said, "I forget those things which are behind and I press toward that goal of the prize before me, and I run the race that is set before me." He committed himself to pursuing God with all that he had. He was on fire for Jesus Christ. That's what Paul is saying to us tonight. He is saying, "Be committed to following Jesus." Jesus said, "If you seek to find your life, you will lose it. If you lose your life for My sake and the gospel you will find it." There's that same paradox, slavery to sin means freedom from holiness. He said when you were a slave of sin, you were free from righteousness, verse 20, and the fruit of that again was guilt, shame, loneliness, emptiness, fear, and bondage leading to death. But now you're free, verse 22, from sin and you become the slaves or the servants of God, and your fruit is unto holiness and the end is everlasting life. Jesus said, "You'll know the truth and the truth will make you free." "Whom the Son sets free is free indeed!" Aren't you glad you're free in Jesus Christ tonight? That you're not living in guilt and shame and darkness and bondage and blackness? Remember how horrible that pit was that you lived in before you were born again? Why would you want to go back? Why would you want to be in bondage?

The conclusion is in verse 23. The conclusion is the ultimate antithesis. I want you to see it. You all know it. Many people memorized it. "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." I want you to notice the contrast here. Two masters, sin or God; two methods, wages or free gift; two results, death or eternal life. You make the choice. Two masters, sin or God; two methods, wages or the free gift; two results, death or eternal life. Notice where eternal life comes to us—through Jesus Christ. Amen? There are only two roads. There are only two gates. There are only two masters, and every human being on planet earth is either a master to satan and sin which leads to death, or God is your master because you have obeyed the truth. You've surrendered your life to God and you're walking in true godliness and true holiness, and whom the Son sets free is free indeed!

Sin has wages, he personifies sin. You work hard, what do you get? The wages, death. Pretty bad, but not the wages. You can't earn it. You can't deserve it. You can't merit it. The gift of God is eternal life. So, one is a wage, that is, death, for all your sin—you get paid. The other is a gift, God gives it as a gift, that's eternal life. Did you know that salvation is a gift from God? Did you know that you get to go to heaven, free? Jesus paid it all. He died on the cross for your sins? You don't have to work for it. You don't have to deserve it. You don't have to merit it. Did you know that? Did you know you can't be good enough to get to heaven? The Bible says, "All have sinned and all have fallen short of the glory of God. There is no one righteous, no not one." God wants to give you a gift, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Salvation is a free gift, but you need to be careful even as a Christian. I believe that this verse applies not only to unbelievers, it applies to Christians. If you're a Christian and you're continuing in sin, verse 1, and if you're a Christian and you're dabbling in sin, verse 15, the wages of sin is death. I actually believe the Bible teaches that God sometimes allows a Christian to die rather than continue in sin. He takes you home. It's called the sin unto death. You're saved but by the skin of your teeth. You're saved, you're going to go to heaven, but you're not sanctified. You're not serving the Lord. You have no rewards in the Lord. You have nothing to look forward to. Don't, as a Christian, think in any way that you can do whatever you want.

To summarize this sixth chapter, I would say it like this. Shall we continue in sin? No.

You cannot because you are united to Christ

You need not because sin's dominion has been broken by grace

You must not because it would bring sin again as your master

You had better not for it would end in disaster—death

The entire chapter is answering really one question. If we've been justified by the grace of God, can we go out and sin? No. We want to live to the glory of God. We want to live to the praise of God. We want to live unto righteousness.

If you're here tonight, and you haven't repented of your sins, you haven't trusted in Jesus Christ, you haven't turned from your sin and you haven't received Him as your Savior, I don't want anyone to leave here tonight without giving you an opportunity. I'm going to give you an opportunity tonight to say, "Pastor John, I want Jesus Christ to come into my heart and forgive my sins. I want Him to be my Savior. I want to know that when I die, I'm going to go to heaven. I want to make sure that I'm a child of God." If there is any doubt or question in your mind, if you find yourself still being held captive by sin tonight, yield your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. Your eyes, your hands, your feet, your heart, your mind, everything should be on the altar laid in God's hands. If you know tonight that you're not a Christian, if you haven't repented and believed in Jesus Christ, salvation is a free gift. I want to give you an

opportunity tonight to invite Christ to come into your heart, to forgive your sins, so that when you die you'll know you'll go to heaven, but heaven will also come to you right now, and all the guilt and the shame and all the fear and all the darkness of your life can be gone. You can have new life, a new love, and a new righteousness. Let's pray.