

Romans

Romans Chapter Six

Romans 6:16-19

May 9, 2010

This is lesson number 40 in our exposition of the Book of Romans.

The Theme of the Letter

“For I am not ashamed of **the gospel of Christ**, for it is the **power** of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. For in it the **righteousness of God** is **revealed** from faith to faith; as it is written, ‘The just shall live by faith.’ ” Romans 1:16-17

Title: “Slaves of Righteousness”

Romans 6:16-19

16 Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness? 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 {entrusted}.

18 And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness. 19 I speak in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members as slaves of uncleanness, and of lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves of righteousness for holiness.

In verse 17 we saw that all the glory {God be thanked...} for our salvation must be to God who takes a slave of sin and delivers or entrusts to his mind “that form of doctrine,” in such a way that he obeys from the heart.

We also saw that the will of man is not free in the sense that the will may function apart from some influence. In the case of making a “decision” to trust Jesus Christ, our will has been influenced by our intellect and by our emotions. And so when we exercise our will it is because our will has been so influenced and motivated. And the mystery is that it is an entirely free decision!

When a man’s profession of faith is genuine it is “God be thanked....”

But when a man believes that he is in control of his salvation, he is deceived and is still a slave of sin.

Romans

The objection raised to such divine intervention is that when God takes the initiative to move us to choose Him, “it makes man a robot.” While I do not pretend to understand the providence of God, I do know that apart from God the Holy Spirit setting His affection on a dead sinner, no one would ever choose God.

“And as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed.” Acts 13:48

Those who argue for a “free-will” in choosing to receive Christ, apart from God being the first cause, are those who do not know what the Bible means when it says that those who are saved were “dead in trespasses and sins.”

I further said that the phrase, “that form of doctrine,” was not a simple presentation or proposition such as some Four Step or Five Step evangelistic method, i.e. something offered to your “free-will.”

That form of doctrine is the Gospel in which your mind is convinced that you do indeed need a Savior. Only lost people need a Savior. Have you ever been convicted that you were condemned by God for your sin?

Then we have the phrase, “to which you were delivered or entrusted.”

That form of doctrine is not what you **accepted** but that to which you were **entrusted**.

Douglas Moo, in his commentary on Romans explains the word “entrusted” in this way. “This is a passive form of the verb *paradidomi*, and it means, ‘have been entrusted,’ or ‘have been handed over to.’ Jesus was ‘handed over,’ ‘delivered’ to the Romans authorities {Matthew 26:15-16; 27:2}.

Believers do not choose whether they will serve Christ as Lord or obey the teaching He has given us. God has already given us over to it.”

There are at least 131 places in the N.T. where this word “delivered” is used and in every instance the context is that the subject is **passive**, they are handed over to or entrusted.

Just a few examples:

Matthew 4:12

12 Now when Jesus had heard that John **was cast into** {delivered to} prison, he departed into Galilee;

Romans

Romans 4:25

25 Who was **delivered** for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.

Jude 3

3 Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once **delivered** unto the saints.

Do you see the significance of this word “delivered” as it is used in 6:17?

Obedience to righteousness necessarily follows having been delivered or handed over to that form of doctrine.

Yet this obedience is “from the heart,” not what we do in “order to be saved.”

This obedience from the heart is the **response** to and the **evidence** that God has worked grace in your soul.

Now we will look at verses 18 & 19.

First, I want you to see that a transfer of ownership has occurred.

Next we will discuss the illustration that Paul uses to make this point of transfer of ownership.

And **then** let’s see what is expected of us since this transaction has occurred. We are to be as ready to serve righteousness as we were to serve sin.

Well, verse 18 is a summary of verses 16-17.

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

Verse 18 is not an exhortation, or encouragement to action, it is simply a statement of fact. Verse 18 is true of every Christian.

Verse 19 includes an exhortation, but not verse 18.

“Having been set free from sin....” But not entirely free.

Not free in the sense that the critics of Paul were saying, that grace will lead to continuing in sin. But free from the reign of sin.

Romans

Not free from our sinful nature. The “old man” is dead to sin, but we are still able to sin and we will sin.

Go back to verse 6 where we made the distinction between the “old man” who we were in Adam, the “old man” who has died to sin, and the “body of sin,” which is our physical body in which we must strive against sin.

Sin is an external force that attacks our mortal body.

Look again at verses 12 and 13. If our sinful nature has been eradicated then we would not have to keep our members from being instruments of unrighteousness. Remember that our “members” include our thoughts as well as our physical body.

If my sinful nature is completely gone, I would be as pure as Jesus who did not have a sinful nature. He was tempted in all points, yet without sin. How is it that He did not sin? His human nature was not sinful. His temptations were real but He did not sin.

But there is a change in our being: we have died to sin.

Having been baptized into Christ Jesus {not water baptism}, having been born again by the Holy Spirit, we now have a power in us that is greater than that which is in the world.

This obedience is **not an option**. Having been justified, declared not guilty, we cannot put off or delay obedience {sanctification} until some future.

Notice that in verse 18 there is no period of neutrality, no time when we are not a slave. Set free from bondage to sin, but instantly a slave to righteousness.

This is not sinless perfection, the idea is not that we no longer sin at all.

There is still temptation to sin and still the danger that we might yield our members to unrighteousness and that is what verse 13 warns us not to do.

Lloyd-Jones says, “No man can believe the Gospel of Christ while he is a slave to sin, it is impossible.”

So if you believe that Jesus took your sin on Himself and paid the price of redemption with His own blood, you are freed from sin.

Romans

And since you are freed from sin you are now a slave of righteousness.

As a slave of obedience to righteousness you want to obey.

But how do we know what to obey?

John 8:30-32

30 As He spoke these words, many believed in Him. 31 Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. 32 And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

We will have a desire to meditate on God's word, to hear the word of God taught and preached. We are encouraged and taught and corrected by the word of God. In every gospel sermon you should feel some conviction.

What are the words of Jesus? "If you abide in **My word**, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

You need to understand that every word in the Bible is the Word of Christ.

Everything you know about God you know in His Word - Jesus Christ.

John's Gospel introduces the Word {*logos*}. John 1:1, 14

How do we communicate?

We express ourselves in words. What am I doing right now?

There are thoughts in my mind that I want to impart to your mind. Words.

Jesus is God's communication to His creation.

The "red letters" in your New Testament are not the only words of Christ. There is nothing wrong with a Red Letter edition to show the quotes of Jesus as He spoke them in His time of humiliation. But the entire Bible is about Christ.

Romans

Don't fall into the gross error of trying to make Jesus oppose Moses in the realm of moral law. Jesus said: **Matt 5:17-20**

17 "Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. 18 For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled. 19 Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. 20 For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.

Then Jesus taught that what the scribes and Pharisees were teaching was not the whole truth. What they were saying was not necessarily all wrong, it simply fell short of the intent of what God had given to Moses in the moral law.

For example, the scribes taught that if you had not literally murdered someone you were not a murderer. Jesus said that if you hated someone you were guilty of murder.

The scribes taught that if you had not actually committed the act of adultery you were not an adulterer. Jesus said that if you looked on someone with lust you were guilty of adultery.

John 5:45-47

45 Do not think that I shall accuse you to the Father; there is one who accuses you--Moses, in whom you trust. 46 For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote about Me. 47 But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?"

Jesus did not change what Moses wrote, He corrected what the scribes and Pharisees were teaching about what Moses wrote.

Romans

After Jesus rose from the dead He appears to two traveling to Emmaus:
Luke 24: 13-48 {selected parts}

This is one of the most important passages to show the continuity of the OT into the NT,

25 Then He said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! 26 Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?" 27 And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself. ...

32 And they said to one another, "Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us on the road, and while He opened the Scriptures to us?" ...

44 Then He said to them, "These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me." 45 And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures. 46 Then He said to them, "Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, 47 and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem....

While the sacrificial and civil laws are no longer binding, having been nailed to the cross, they are still instructive. "...All Scripture"

Genesis to Revelation is about Christ.

Don't fall into the error of trying to do away with the Old Testament.

The New Testament reveals what the Old Testament concealed.

The New in the Old Concealed; the Old in the New Revealed. {Augustine}

**"In the Old Testament God meant what He said;
in the New Testament God says what He meant."** John Wilmot

The Apostle John gave us a guide to let us know if we are a child of God.

Romans

In First John the apostle gives us at least nine things that will let us know if we are children of God.

John says in 1 John 5:13: "These things I have written unto you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may **know** that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God."

There are at least nine of "these things" that may be identified that John gave us so that we may **know** that we have eternal life. From the NIV:

1. 1 John 2:3
"We know that we have come to know him if we obey his commands."
2. 1 John 2:9
"Anyone who claims to be in the light but hates his brother is still in the darkness."
3. 1 John 2:15
"Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him."
4. 1 John 2:19
"They went out from us, but they did not really belong to us. For if they had belonged to us, they would have remained with us; but their going showed that none of them belonged to us."
5. 1 John 2:22
"Who is the liar? It is the man who denies that Jesus is the Christ. Such a man is the antichrist -- he denies the Father and the Son."
6. 1 John 3:6
"No one who lives in him keeps on sinning. No one who continues to sin has either seen him or known him."
7. 1 John 4:7
"Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God."
8. 1 John 4:13
"We know that we live in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit."
9. 1 John 5:10
"Anyone who believes in the Son of God has this testimony in his heart. Anyone who does not believe God has made him out to be a liar, because he has not believed the testimony God has given about his Son."

Romans

Cf. Matt 7:13-14

13 "Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. 14 Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.

And so verse 18 of Romans 6 gives us no slack or “time out” in the matter of personal obedience, we are either slaves of sin or slaves of righteousness

You cannot separate justification and sanctification. The proposition that a man can be justified and not be in the process of being sanctified is impossible.

When we consider verse 19 we find an unusual statement made by Paul.

19 I speak in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members as slaves of uncleanness, and of lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves of righteousness for holiness.

Paul speaks in human terms. This does not mean that what he is saying is not inspired by the Holy Spirit. What he is doing is giving an illustration that anyone in that time would easily understand.

Paul uses the illustration of slavery.

Slavery was part of their culture, especially in Roman culture.

So Paul gives this illustration of a slave being transferred from one owner or master to another. You were a slave to sin, now you are a slave of righteousness.

The “weakness of the flesh” here is not the mind or intellect.

The “flesh” includes all the faculties of the body as perverted and dominated by sin. It is not the physical body itself.

The “flesh” is the natural human faculties **without** the Holy Spirit.

The reason “the flesh” is not the intellect is because we do not understand the Gospel with natural intellect. In fact, many times the most intelligent men and women reject the Gospel as moronic. And the one with simple faith receives the truth. We must be as little children, simple trust.

Romans

And so he is not saying “I am trying to dumb this down so you can get it.”

This is not like “Windows for Dummies,” and such.
Paul is not writing “Slavery for Dummies.”

No, because of “the weakness of the flesh,” we can never “get it,” unless “that form of doctrine is entrusted to our mind.”

Let’s consider two passages of Scripture.

1 Corinthians 2

1 And I, brethren, when I came to you, did not come with excellence of speech or of wisdom declaring to you the testimony of God. 2 For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. 3 I was with you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling. 4 And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, 5 that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.

6 However, we speak wisdom among those who are mature, yet not the wisdom of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. 7 But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory, 8 which none of the rulers of this age knew; for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. 9 But as it is written:

"Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man The things which God has prepared for those who love Him."

10 But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. 11 For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God. 12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God. 13 These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. 14 But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. 15 But he who is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is rightly judged by no one. 16 For "who has known the mind of the LORD that he may instruct Him?" But we have the mind of Christ.

Romans

2 Corinthians 4

4:1 Therefore, since we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we do not lose heart. 2 But we have renounced the hidden things of shame, not walking in craftiness nor handling the word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. 3 But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, 4 whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them. 5 For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your bondservants for Jesus' sake. 6 For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. 7 But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us.

So you see, no one, smart or stupid, can understand the truth of the Gospel apart from being born again. That is why no one can boast about being saved. We had nothing to do with our being born again. But having been justified and having been born again we become willing slaves of righteousness.

In verse 19 Paul gives us another of his “Just as ... even so....” comparisons.
Cf. 5:12, 18

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.

Be as eager to serve righteousness as you were to serve sin. Cf. verse 13.

In the same way we progressed in lawlessness, getting worse and worse; we will progress in holiness {sanctification} under our new owner.

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

There is an irony here. The person who is a slave to sin, doesn't believe that he is a slave to sin and doesn't see the danger of sin unto death.

The person who is a slave to righteousness is not ashamed to be called a slave of Jesus Christ and seeks to serve his Master.

Whose slave are you?

Jesus Christ is worthy to serve, sin is a cruel master.