

13. Slaves to God

Romans 6:15-23

No one is saved by Law keeping or by any other self-merit whatsoever. One is saved only by Christ's righteousness, which is through justification by faith alone. What purpose then does the Law play in the believer's life?

In the previous section Paul was concerned to show the incongruity of a professing Christian continuing in sin. In this section Paul is concerned with clearly showing by means of the same question the true state of one who continues in sin.

Please Read Romans 6:14-23

Verse 15: In verse 14 Paul has said that believers are not under Law but under grace. If this is so, what then? What are believers to do? Are believers now free to sin at will? Does the Law as an expression of God's will for our lives cease to have any hold on believers (cf 6:1), allowing us to sin with impunity?

Paul's answer is simply, certainly not! This is an answer which naturally flows from the first part of Roman six, for having died to sin in Christ, we have now risen to spiritual life which has no place for sin and is rather a sign that one has not experienced God's grace at all.

NOTE INDIVIDUAL DISCOVERY QUESTION HERE: What does a professing Christian who lives in sin show about himself? Explain.

Verse 16: This verse is very similar in construction to that of verse 13. To whomever a person gives himself to obey, that is to allow that person to become our master. Whom you serve is revealed by what you do. He who serves sin is the slave of sin (Jn 8:34) and this person brings himself physical, spiritual and everlasting death (6:23; 5:12; 8:13) as wages for his service.

The one who is united to Christ by faith and therefore obedient to God, reveals himself

to be a slave of obedience unto inward righteousness or holiness (Jam 2:20-24). This is of course the very opposite of slavery to sin and its result, and therefore this obviously will lead to eternal life and complete conformity to God.

The person has little choice, you are the slave, constrained to do the will of your master, in this case either sin or God. There are no third choices, for you either serve sin or Christ.

Verse 17: Previously believers were the slaves of sin, but God is to be thanked for He has delivered them from this bondage to sin (Eph 2:8,9; 1 Pet 2:9) unto the gospel and a right relationship with Him. Believers have wholeheartedly obeyed the gospel (2 Tim 1:13), finding in it a righteousness from God leading to righteousness of life.

Verse 18: Having been freed by the grace of God from sin through obedience to the gospel (6:17), believers are now slaves of righteousness. Therefore the conclusion of Romans 6:15 is wrong, for we have not the liberty to sin, but a liberty to follow a new master, wherein lies true liberty (Jn 8:36).

If, therefore, your life is one of continuing sin, you clearly reveal yourself to still be in slavery to sin. And if this is the case then you are not a Christian (Mt 7:21) and *'the wages of sin is death (6:23).'*

NOTE INDIVIDUAL DISCOVERY QUESTION HERE: How does a person present himself as a slave of righteousness?

Verse 19: Paul uses an illustration from human experience (cf 1 Cor 15:32), that of slavery (cf Gal 3:15), to more clearly explain the relationship between a believer and God. This he does because of the *'weakness of your flesh,'* a phrase referring to our corrupt sinful nature.

The argument is continued, expanding upon the point already made in Romans 6:18. Where previously believers had offered their bodily and mental faculties as implements or weapons (6:13) of unrighteousness, indeed as slaves of a corrupt nature, leading only to increased transgression, so now as those in Christ by faith, we are to present these same bodily and mental faculties as slaves of righteousness for holiness of life (1 Thess 3:13; 4:7).

Verse 20: This service unto righteousness for holiness of life is to be exclusive (Mt 6:24), for when sin was the believers' master we had nothing to do with righteousness. So now we are to have nothing to do with sin (Ps 119:1-3).

Verse 21: This verse has historically been subject to two interpretations; that of one, what sort of fruit did you produce; or rather two, what advantage did you gain in serving

sin? The latter is preferred (cf 1:13), suiting the context better (cf 6:22).

What advantage then was gained by serving sin? The answer is nothing, for the end of service to sin is death and that everlasting (1:32).

Verse 22: Believers are now freed from the dominion of sin and are now under the domain and reign of God. The fruit or advantage of this service is holiness and sanctification (6:1-8:39), concluding in eternal life.

Verse 23: The wages paid by serving sin is death, for that is the just punishment for sin. But the gift of God that believers receive, freely given by God is eternal life. This gift is earned, not by us, but by the Lord Jesus Christ.

INDIVIDUAL DISCOVERY

What is serving 'in the oldness of the letter (7:6)?'

How did the Law bring death?

© All Bible Studies by the author may be freely copied, printed and distributed. We ask only that they remain unedited (unless approved by Kevin Matthews) and contain the Aussie Outpost name and website URL: <http://particularbaptist.com> This Bible Study is by Kevin Matthews. It is asked that this notice be included as is. Thankyou.