

## WHOSE SLAVE ARE YOU? (Romans 6:15-23)

### INTRODUCTION:

When we refer to an unpleasant or unpopular topic sometimes we use only the first letter to refer to it. Like around April 15th we may use the "T" word. In the presidential campaign the Republicans threaten the Democrats with the "L" word -- liberal. This morning I want to preach on the "O" word. It is OBEDIENCE.

*Everyday each one of us are confronted with choices about obedience. Take the speed limit for example. When we drive we choose whether or not to go the prescribed speed limit or choose to take our chances and go over the limit and risk an accident or injury or the arm of the of the law*

*We Choose – to listen or not to listen to the advice given to us by our parents or preachers, family or friends. Often when given the advice of others we weigh it and determine if it's the course of action we want to take.*

*The words of Eleanor Roosevelt ring true: One's philosophy is not best expressed in words. It is expressed in the choices one makes. In the long run, we shape our lives and we shape ourselves. The process never ends until we die. And the choices we make are ultimately our responsibility.*

In our passage this morning Paul mentions that we are confronted with the choice each day of either obeying sin or obeying righteousness. Recall he concluded in verse 14 with the hopeful statement “**For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.**” We are not under the condemnation of the law because through grace Jesus has taken that condemnation on the cross. We are not under the requirements of the law because through grace Jesus has met all the requirements by his sinless life. Therefore sin's power has been broken and we no long are under its dominion.

Now Paul asks a question in verse 15:

**(Rom 6:15 NKJV) What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? Certainly not!**

This is a similar question to the one asked in verse 1: **“What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?”** Grace never gives us the license to sin. This must be such an important point that Paul makes the statement twice that we are never to think we have the option to choose to sin and think that grace will cover it. Sin is never a good choice. The root of all our problems is sin. The focus of God’s salvation is to save us from sin. Therefore to choose to sin is to go against the eternal plan of God for us!

Paul in the rest of the passage uses the image of slavery to illustrate why we are to choose righteousness over sin.

## **OUR CHOICE OF WHOM TO OBEY DEMONSTRATES WHOSE SLAVE WE ARE**

First, our choice of whom to obey demonstrates whose slave we are. How do we know whose slave we are? It is by the choice you make. Listen to verse 16:

**(Rom 6:16 NKJV) 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?**

Slavery is an awful institution. To be a servant of someone whose interest is only in getting out of you something that they do not deserve or in keeping you from freedom is demoralizing, is demeaning, and deadly. This is what sin wants to do to you - to demoralize you, to demean you, to destroy you for its evil ends. If you choose to sin you are choosing that which leads to death. But if you choose to be God’s slave it will lead to righteousness, holiness, and eternal life.

Whom we choose to obey demonstrates whose slave we ready are. We are not to choose to serve sin, but to serve righteousness.

## **CHOOSING TO OBEY RIGHTEOUSNESS IS CHOOSING TO LIVE FREE**

Next, choosing to obey righteousness is choosing to live free.

**(Rom 6:17-18 NKJV) {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. {18} And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.**

Obedience to God is the key to freedom! Are you kidding, to be free is not to have to obey anyone, isn't it?

I believe that a big part of our problem with choosing to obey God is that we have the idea that obedience curtails my freedom. We need to see how freedom and obedience go together.

Our idea of freedom is living a life without living under outside of us control. This is a correct idea. Let's go with this as a definition of living free. Freedom is being able to live as you were intended to live, not according to something or someone foreign to you

*Freedom is living according to your natural or created environment. Is a fish free if it is cast upon the land to do as it pleases? Is a bird free if it is held under the water all its life? Freedom for a fish and a bird and a human being is to be free to live in the environment that it was created to live in. When the thing is put in a foreign environment, then its freedom is lost.*

What is man's intended environment? Is it not to live in the presence of God living a holy life? Is it not to live in the atmosphere of righteousness? Did not God create Adam and Eve without sin and in perfect fellowship with God? Yes, He did. But something foreign came in and that something foreign is sin. We all are living in an environment that was not what we were created to live in. We all begin our life on this earth in bondage to a foreign ruler: sin.

*In the Amazon there exists a variety of ants that makes slaves of other ants. Hundreds of these Amazonian ants periodically swarm out of their nest to capture neighboring colonies of weaker ants. After destroying resisting defenders, they seize and carry off cocoons containing the larvae of worker ants. When these "captured children" hatch, they assume that they are part of the family and launch into the tasks they were born to do. They never realize that they are forced-labor victims of the enemy.*

This illustrates our human situation. We are born as slaves of sin and many times do not realize that we are "forced-labor" victims of sin. As long as we are enslaved to sin, we are not free. There is a foreign agent who keeps us from functioning or living as we were intended. It is only as we "obey from the heart" the Gospel, we are set free from sin. Only the Christian is free. That is, the Christian who lives as a "slave" of righteousness truly live their freedom, because God created you to be righteous. Only in living for righteousness are you free!

Therefore, to live as God intended us to live, to live in true freedom means that we are to see ourselves as created to serve righteousness. Choosing to obey righteousness is the same as choosing freedom.

## **CHOOSING TO OBEY RIGHTEOUSNESS SHOWS OUR LOVE FOR GOD**

Next, we see that choosing to obey righteousness shows our love for God's character - holiness.

**(Rom 6:19 NKJV) 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.**

Obedience to something shows our love for that person or thing. Obedience is simply carrying out the will of another. It is not just any other, but it is the will of the one in proper authority over us and of the one who looks out for our best interest.

When we think of obeying God we must remember that the ultimate authority in our life by virtue of Him being our Creator. But he also is the One who care for us. He loves us and would only ask us to do those things that are for our best interest. Even when we have questions and resist obedience, the knowledge of his love for us will keep us close to Him.

*The 5-year-old boy became angry with his mother and decided to run away from home. He walked out of his house with a small suitcase and trudged around the block again and again. Finally, when it was beginning to grow dark, the policeman stopped him, "What's going on?" The little boy answered, "I'm running away." The officer smiled as he said, "Look, I've had my eye on you, and you've been doing nothing but walking around the block. You call that running away?" The little fellow burst into tears, "Well, what do you want me to do? I'm not allowed to cross the street." The youngster obviously respected his parents and knew that they loved him. He couldn't really run away.*

Obedience is our response to the One who loves us. And Jesus tells us that when we obey out of love, He makes his love more real to us.

**(John 14:21 NKJV) "He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him."**

Obedience is the way to keep our spiritual relationship with God fresh and dynamic. Obedience is the key to freedom. Obedience is the key to love.

**CHOOSING TO OBEY RIGHTEOUSNESS GUARANTEES THAT YOU WILL HAVE A FRUITFUL END TO YOUR LIFE.**

Choosing to obey righteousness guarantees that you will have a fruitful end to your life.

Verses 20-22:

**For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regards to righteousness. What fruit did you have then in the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death. 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.**

Paul is talking about the 'end' product of your choices. One ends in death, the other ends in eternal life.

It is natural for a parent to want their children to be happy and successful in life. What a tragedy it is when children bring shame to their parents through a disobedient life. God certainly wants his children to be happy, successful, and fruitful. As we turn our hearts to God with a desire to obey, He will guarantee the fruit.

*A rather simple and uneducated minister, while preaching to a handful of folks one day, pointed to his Bible and declared, "Brethren, whatever the Lord tells me in this Book I'll do! In fact," he continued, "if He ordered me to jump through a brick wall 2 feet thick, I'd attempt it. You see," he explained, "going through it is God's responsibility; jumping at it is mine!"*

He has a point! God will assume the responsibility for enabling us to do whatever He has asked us to do.

Now God won't ask you to jump through a brick wall, but he does ask you to present yourself to righteousness to obey it. And he will give you grace to do it. God guarantees the fruit of holiness and your ultimate destiny of eternal life.

He can guarantee it because He gives eternal life as a free gift by grace. Sin can only give what you deserve – death as its wage. God can give you the free gift of eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

**(Rom 6:23 NKJV) For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.**

Therefore choose to be a slave to righteousness because it is the guarantee that you will have a fruitful end to your life.

### **CONCLUSION:**

Whose slave are you? Are you still the slave of sin? Or have you been freed from sin through faith in Christ and in his victory over sin for you? If it is the latter, then you are to choose to be the slave of righteousness each day. It is not a day that goes by that you won't be called upon to make the choice of yield to sin as it's slave or to righteousness as God's slave.

*When Queen Victoria was a child, she didn't know she was in line for the throne of England. Her instructors, trying to prepare her for the future, were frustrated because they couldn't motivate her. She just didn't take her studies seriously. Finally, her teachers decided to tell her that one day she would become the queen of England. Upon hearing this, Victoria quietly said, "Then I will be good." The realization that she had inherited this high calling gave her a sense of responsibility that profoundly affected her conduct from then on.*

We all have received the high calling of knowing that we are united to Christ in his death and his resurrection. We have the high calling of reckoning on this in life. We have the high calling of presenting ourselves to God each day. We have the high calling of choosing righteousness over sin each time we are confronted with that choice.

Whose slave are you? The choice is yours.

Amen? Amen!