

Servants of Righteousness

Romans 6:14-19 For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace. ¹⁵ What then? Are we to sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means! ¹⁶ Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness? ¹⁷ But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed (handed-over), ¹⁸ and, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness. ¹⁹ I am speaking in human terms, because of your natural limitations. For just as you once presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness leading to sanctification.

❖ Introduction

- **What are we doing here today? Why are we gathered?**
- **What is the purpose of a group of people gathering together to sing songs?**
 - And to listen to someone expound upon, or explain the Word of God
 - And to hang out together
 - And... why is the text we are considering today a practical way to help us reach that purpose?
 - What is it about this text that is so very important to you today from an eternal perspective?
- **The Purpose is: It helps us as created beings to fulfill our God given purpose**
 - Which is that we: Glorify God and Enjoy Him Forever...
- **Remember:** You were made to reflect the image of your creator.
 - God made us in His image
 - And He made us for friendship with Himself
 - Not because He Needed a friend.
 - But we were made to find friendship and enjoyment in our relationship with our Creator.
- **BUT: Adam's decision to disobey God marred God's image in man**
 - And it also made it more difficult for man to enjoy His relationship with God.
 - So God sent Jesus to help Reconcile that relationship... to restore it
 - And Jesus did that on the cross... through His life/death and resurrection...
 - And we as people... are joined back to God in Jesus when we access Grace by our Faith in Christ
 - Repeat:
- **The Goal for us as we gather here today is that we grow in:**
 - Finding God to be most enjoyable... most pleasurable.
 - JESUS IS THE GOAL...
 - **Paul prayed in Ephesians that we be filled with all the fullness of God...**
 - And if you follow the text... you see that knowing Jesus... Knowing His love
 - Helps us to be filled with all the fullness of God...
- **The issue at Hand here for Paul... is more than defending an argument**
 - The issue at hand for Paul is a big one...
 - **There are three main stages for the Christian:**
 - 1 Justification, 2 Sanctification and 3 Glorification
 - To put it in more simple and in easy to understand terms:
 - 1 Being Made Right with God, 2 Being Made Like God, and 3 Final Transformation of Ourselves to the Image of God
 - ◆ Please note: There is no teaching where we become God's ourselves...
 - 1 One is a Past Event, 2 One is presently ongoing, and 3 the other is to come
 - **The issue for Paul is a big one... it is the one that is presently ongoing...**

- the one that is happening now
 - **The Issue at hand is our Sanctification... or our Being Made Like God...**
 - **19 so now present your members as slaves to righteousness leading to sanctification.**
 - The Word literally means... to be made Holy... and Holy is what God alone is
 - This is that restoration of the image of God in man
 - Where we are being restored by God to how He made us
 - **As we Grow in this Sanctification we also grow in our ability to enjoy God**
 - So... today is very practical as Paul is truly trying to help us see what God is doing in us
 - **Your enjoyment is on the line here... what you find pleasurable in life is on the line**
 - ?Is it the fleeting pleasures of sin that leave you empty and unfulfilled?
 - ◆ It leaves us this way because we were not made for sin but for God
 - ?Is it giving yourselves over to the task master of sin to have his way with you?
 - **Or... will you find God to be most Important and Pleasurable in your Life?**
- ❖ **Remember He is Speaking to Saints**
- His audience is mainly people that have given themselves to Jesus Christ
- ❖ **Transition from Last Week: Sin Will Not Reign in You**
- **14 For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace.**
 - **For: This “for” is here as a bridge from the previous verses into these next thoughts by Paul...**
 - Previously he had said we are to Consider who we are now...
 - We are now followers of Jesus Christ...
 - Our baptism signified the death of who we used to be and the resurrection of a new person
 - We now Follow the Son of God Almighty... We are joined to Him...
 - **Then: We see... if this is true of us... What are we to do...? how are we to live...?**
 - We are to give ourselves to God...
 - He reminds us that sin still wants to have its way with us...
 - But... we must use our bodies in service of God...
 - We are to use our body parts as weapons for righteous living...
 - **For: Sin will have no dominion over you...**
 - Sin and its deceptions... its lies, its agenda, it's influencing of your body
 - To have...Wrong desires and affection...
 - **Sin now has no claim over you...**
 - Again... remember...
 - there is a sense where this will come to full fulfillment when we leave this body
 - But... Sin's claim to rule you has been broken by Jesus Christ...
 - **But... Based off of what? Why will sin have no dominion over you?**
 - Because you are not under law but under grace
 - **Why???? Why is this so important... Why is this the answer?**
 - Well... Understand what it means to be under law...
 - **To Be Under Law Means:**
 - **The law is the way in which you will attempt to stand before God as righteous**
 - That by following the rules of God... you will be judged worthy by God...
 - But, you must have complete obedience...
 - **Sin is very powerful here:**
 - Because sin comes along and tempts and wins... And guess what?
 - ◆ Your ability to keep the law has been destroyed and you are judged guilty
 - **So the person under law is caught in a terrible spot...**

- ◆ Never able to live up to the standard of the law...
- ◆ This is a Very Difficult Spot for the Person
 - Sin has found an advantage of using the perfect law of God against the person

▪ **But... Paul says we are not under law but under Grace...**

➤ **Reminder: Why is it that sin will not have dominion over the Christian?**

▪ Because we are not under law but under Grace...

➤ **Let Me Illustrate this to you this way:**

▪ It is like living under two different sets of rules...

- You can live under the hard and unattainable rules that depend on you
- Or Rules that do not depend on your abilities but on the abilities of someone better

▪ **It is like the difference b/w living in two different countries...**

- You can live under the harsh laws that govern some countries
 - ◆ Where you live enslaved to the harshness of the government
 - ◆ Where you have very few rights as a person... and you are arrested for simply disagreeing
 - ◆ Where you have no right to vote or follow your dreams as an individual

▪ **Or you can live in America... where your rights are protected**

- And you can live in freedom every single day
- And you do not live in fear of death or imprisonment daily
 - ◆ Two very different sets of rules to live under...

➤ **Paul says... the Christian is not Under Law... where He must follow it perfectly to be right with God**

➤ **Rather: The Christian is under Grace...**

- Meaning... to be right with God... You must have access to His grace
- By Faith in Jesus Christ... and if you have faith in Jesus...
- His(Jesus) law keeping becomes your law keeping... His perfection becomes your perfection
- His righteous nature is credited to your account...
- **So... you stand before God as right with Him...**
 - Why? Because you are under the umbrella of His Grace
 - That you found access to: by Faith in Jesus Christ

❖ **Simply a Common Sense Statement:**

▪ ¹⁵ **What then? Are we to sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means!**

➤ **What then?**

▪ **Now He asks this questions because He has been heralding the depths of God's grace...**

- And there is an objection that someone has made. Someone real...

▪ **And He makes this objection because the grace that God has given...**

- Is almost unbelievable... too good to be true almost...
- It cuts the legs out from under law keeping as a means of right standing before God

▪ **So, when he hears Paul teach:** Your faith **alone** makes you Righteous in God's eyes

- **Romans 5:1 "Therefore, since we have been justified by **faith**, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."**

▪ And, when he hears that we can Access this grace by Faith alone...

- **Romans 5:2 "Through him we have also obtained access by **faith** into this grace"**

▪ And that where sin increased, Grace abounded all the more...

- **Romans 5:20 Now the law came in to increase the trespass, but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more**

▪ **Well... this guy has an objection...**

- Should we sin because we are not under law but under grace...

➤ **Paul's Answer reveals this is foreign to what God Has Done...**

- **By no means!**
 - Essentially... He is saying... let's use some common sense here... Don't twist anything...
 - He reminds them... this is not what God has done in You...
- **The moment you came under grace...**
 - God began a work in you... A work in He will complete...
 - You have entered the Phase of the Christian Walk called Sanctification...
 - Some call it Progressive Sanctification... The progressive part is not needed...
 - Because the nature of sanctification is that it is progressive...
 - But... we need to understand it better, so we use the word Progressive to help
 - ◆ Progressive simply means that "WE ARE A WORK IN PROGRESS"
 - ◆ Right? Aren't We?

❖ **Paul is Like: Let Me Break it Down to You... So You Can Understand:**

- **¹⁹ I am speaking in human terms, because of your natural limitations.**
- **I am skipping ahead a few verses... cause I want you to see what is happening**
 - Paul is gonna use the illustration of slavery to explain what is happening
 - He is saying... let me make it simple for you to understand... Ill speak in human terms
 - Ill do this because you have some natural limitations to understand Spiritual truths
- **So He uses Slavery:**
 - Which was a very understandable concept for the people of his day...
- **Slavery:**
 - **There are many forms of slavery from History...**
 - In the Roman Empire... which is the Empire under which Paul was living...
 - There were different forms of slavery... and it had transformed over the years.
 - **In its early stages... most slaves were slaves through war... As Rome expanded**
 - Many of the defeated peoples became slaves...
 - Over time... slaves became slaves because they were born into it...
 - But along the way slavery changed in Rome... and many many slaves were freed
 - **By the time of Paul... there were still people born into slavery...**
 - But there was also a large portion of slaves that had become slaves because:
 - ◆ They offered themselves up for slavery...
 - ◆ For whatever reason... there were people that did this...
 - ◆ And when they did that... they gave up their rights as a person...
 - ◆ They were bond servants... they were slaves... to do as their master told them
 - **It seems to me... that this is the type of slavery that Paul has in mind here**
 - And He is using slavery to illustrate the two Paths one could be on in this life...
 - And... depending on which Path you are one... there are huge ramifications for the person!

❖ **1) What Kind of Slave Are You?**

- **¹⁶ Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness?**
- **We see Paul doing two things here...**
 - 1) Saying... let's use some common sense here please
 - **Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey**
 - 2) There is a way that leads to death and a way that leads to life
 - let's consider this second thought here

➤ **2) Two Paths:**

- 1) Sin leads to death
- 2) Obedience leads to righteousness
- **Jesus illustrates this perfectly when He teaches us that there are two roads we can travel**
 - **Matthew 7:13-14** ¹³ “Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. ¹⁴ For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few.

➤ **1) You May Think You Are Free:**

- When a person lives his life to sin as he pleases... He may think he is free
- But in reality he is enslaved to his sin... it has its way with him... and can totally destroy him...
- I have personally seen this happen time and time again with those who are caught up in their sin
- And it looks differently in each person.... And destruction comes at different times for each

➤ **2) Freedom is in Christ Alone... Jesus says:**

- **John 8:34-36** Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin. ³⁵ The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son remains forever. ³⁶ So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.
- **True Freedom is having the right and ability to be who you are! Repeat**
 - And our true self finds that it was made in the image of God
 - True freedom is a return to who we were created to be
- **Know the Song: “I am free to do what I want and have a good time...”**
 - This song is actually by Pit Bull... (what a name btw)
 - ◆ And it is about the freedom that money, fame and success has given him...
- **But... We need to know... we are only free to do what we want and have a good time...**
 - Only if we have been set free by Christ...
 - **Because there is no GOOD TIME outside of God...**
 - ◆ That is a misnomer... How can one have a good time without
 - ◆ The good grace of God Almighty? Truly Good... Satan can blind us to what is Good
 - I have had both... I have had Sin’s idea of Good, and God’s idea of Good...
 - God’s plan for good is far superior!

➤ **1) Sin leads to Death**

- Paul will go on to say in verse 23 **“the wages of sin is death”**
- That is the natural end to being enslaved to sin... But

➤ **2) Obedience leads to Righteousness...**

- And how does obedience lead to righteousness...
- Well... he hashes that out in the next 2 verses...

❖ **2) Transformation: Obedience Leads to Righteousness**

- ¹⁷ But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed (handed-over), ¹⁸ and, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness.

➤ **Notice what happens here in the text... (In the middle of these two verses)**

- How does obedience lead to righteousness?
- **have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed (handed-over),**
 - this is what is happening here... the person hears the **“standard of teaching”**
 - ◆ Meaning they have heard the **gospel**...
 - ◆ And they become obedient from the heart to the gospel...
 - ◆ The teaching of the gospel has taken control of the person...

- ◆ “to which you were committed” is a passive verb...
 - and essentially we see that the gospel has captured the person
 - Isn't it amazing how Paul uses the language...
- **Captured by the Gospel... and as you will see... to become slaves of something better...**
- **So... what has happened here?**
 - ◆ The gospel comes along and captures the person... they are obedient to the gospel...
 - And that obedience looks like this:
 - They believe.... They believe the teaching...
 - They repent of their sins and trust in Jesus Christ...
 - I do not think that is reading into the text at ALL!
 - That is the teaching of the gospel that He is referring to here...
- **Then: This Obedience to the Gospel Message... Leads to Righteousness...**
 - ◆ He is just restating what He has said many times before:
 - Romans 4:3 Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness.”
 - Romans 4:5 And to the one who does not work but believes in him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness
 - Romans 5:1 Therefore, since we have been justified by faith (justified means made righteous)
- **Paul offers Thanks to God... and a reminder for his readers...**
 - **But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient**
 - All of the credit goes to God... We are reminded... We were once slaves of sin...
 - But we have become obedient... obedient to the gospel...
 - But, our obedience is owed to God...
 - **Thanks are in order to God... that we have become obedient**
 - And the thanks is owed to God... because you see if you follow this text...
 - **God starts it and God ends it... and in the middle we have responded... (LOOK CLOSELY@17)**
 - **1 But thanks be to God... He is starting it...**
 - **2 We Respond: have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching**
 - **3 God Makes it Happen: to the standard of teaching to which you were committed**
 - ◆ *To which you were committed or handed over* is passive... and the word means delivered
 - ◆ Put it another way... God captured you with the gospel...
 - **and, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness.**
 - And now... we transition... we are now something different... slaves of righteousness

❖ 3) A New Kind of Slave

- **For just as you once presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness leading to sanctification.**
- **Practical Application Here:**
 - **Remember how you used to be**
 - **For just as you once presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness leading to more lawlessness**
 - I think for many of us... it does not take much to remember what we were like before Jesus
 - Some of you were captured by the grace of God at a young age...
 - **So God got you before you could go to far**
 - ◆ Let me tell you... that is a gracious gift from God
 - ◆ But let me assure you... you have not been delivered from less... God just got to you
 - Before you had a chance to walk a long road enslaved to sin

- For the people that Paul was writing to...
 - ◆ Its likely that all of them could remember very clearly their former sinful ways...
- **Paul says... you used to use the members of your body to do what was wrong in God's eyes...**
 - You Presented yourselves... remember... this means you made yourself available for ...
 - And this wrong led to more wrong...
 - But now... let's do something different...
 - Because you are a different person now...
- **Paul's Objective becomes Clear**
 - **so now present your members as slaves to righteousness leading to sanctification.**
 - In this sentence... Paul sums up what He is teaching here...
 - **Give yourselves to God... make yourselves available to God...**
 - As a slave... as a slave to doing what is right...
 - And this leads to your sanctification....
 - **This is what Paul had in mind the whole time...**
 - Sanctification... Growing in Christ-likeness
 - Being conformed to the image of Christ...
- **Paul answer's the objection that we should continue in sin b/c we are under grace...**
 - He says... No Way... You are being sanctified now... You are different now...
 - That completely goes against what God is doing in the person He saves...
- **Essentially... this can not be... Because God is at work in you...**

❖ **Invitation:**

- I end with that statement as a question... Is God at work in you...?
- The evidence that God is at work in you... is that you are making war against your sin...
 - Your responsibility to fight is real... are you fighting?