

Whose Slave Are You?

Rom 6:14-23

14 For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.

15 What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? Certainly not! 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. 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.

20 For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. 21 What fruit did you have then in the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death. 22 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. 23 For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. NKJV

Jesus said that a man cannot serve two masters at the same time. For he will have to side with one or the other. So it is. We are either slaves of sin unto death or we are slave of righteousness unto eternal life. We cannot be both, but we are one or the other.

John 8:32-36 (NKJV) 32 And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." 33 They answered Him, "We are Abraham's descendants, and have never been in bondage to anyone. How can you say, 'You will be made free'?" 34 Jesus answered them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, **whoever commits sin is a slave of sin.** 35 And a slave does not abide in the house forever, but a son abides forever. 36 Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.

Jesus came to bring us freedom. He died so that we might be freed from sin. John 8:32-34 (NKJV) 32 And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." 33 They answered Him, "We are Abraham's descendants, and have never been in bondage to anyone. How can you say, 'You will be made free'?" 34 Jesus answered them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin.

Paul uses this illustration of slaves and masters to show us our relationship to our old life of sin and our new life of righteousness. But we see that he got it from Jesus, in John 8:32-36.

It is a very basic story. Once upon a time, each and everyone of us was in bondage to sin. Sin held us captive not against our will, but we willingly submitted to it. We could not release ourselves, neither did we want to be freed from sin. Until Jesus came into our lives. When we believed in Him, He did a grand and marvelous work in us. He transferred us from the kingdom of darkness into his own glorious kingdom of light. The Holy Spirit quickened us and made us alive unto God and gave us a new nature. He gave us a desire to be free from sin. He also gave us the ability to resist temptation and to live righteously. Each and every day, the Christian chooses which master to serve. We can serve our Savior who set us free or we can labor under

the cruel hand of sin to our own detriment. Let us look at this passage this morning.

I. For sin shall not have dominion over you

A. The word dominion here comes from the word king, lord, or master.

B. The idea is that sin can never be a Christian's lord or master again.

1. It is not that a Christian cannot sin, for the Bible continually discusses that.

a. . . . as they carry about them the relics of the flesh, they cannot do otherwise than walk somewhat lamely. Calvin

2. But it is that the Christian will never come under its dominion again.

a. Otherwise God would not continue to work in the believer.

(1) Phil 2:12-13 work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; 13 for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure. NKJV

b. Otherwise they would need to be unsealed by the Holy Spirit.

(1) Eph 1:13-14 In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, 14 who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory. NKJV

(2) 2 Cor 1:21-22 Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and has anointed us is God, 22 who also has sealed us and given us the Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee. NKJV

c. Otherwise they would need be snatched from the hand of the Son as well as the Father.

(1) John 10:27 My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. 28 And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand . 29 My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father's hand . 30 I and My Father are one." NKJV

d. Otherwise the Holy Spirit in them would need to be overpowered.

(1) 1 John 3:9-10 Those who have been born into God's family do not sin, because God's life is in them. So they can't keep

on sinning, because they have been born of God. 10 So now we can tell who are children of God and who are children of the Devil. Anyone who does not obey God's commands and does not love other Christians does not belong to God. NLT

II. **For you are not under law but under grace.**

A. Paul is not saying that for the Christian there is no law.

1. In this reference, it cannot be said of any man or angel that he is not under law. But, as trusting in Christ's atonement,—as those who in and with Christ have died an expiatory death for sin,—they are not under law viewed as retributive and punitive. By means of Christ's death, believers have discharged their obligation to satisfy the law by their own death, and are no longer under it, in this particular. Shedd
2. Again, believers are not "under the law" in regard to their title to eternal blessedness. The law promises this future reward, upon the condition that a perfect personal obedience has been rendered. The believer is not discouraged by this condition, so impossible of fulfilment by him. Shedd
3. We see many commands given by Jesus, Paul and others that Christians are expected to follow.
4. In that the law represents the will of God it will be binding on all His creation forever.
5. But we are no longer under the law with its consequences of death for those who do not measure up.
6. Jesus has met the demands of the law on our behalf and has paid the penalty for our transgressions.

B. But rather that grace is the basis of our acceptance with God.

1. Hence, not to be under the law means, not only that we are not under the letter which prescribes what involves us in guilt, as we are not able to perform it, but also that we are no longer subject to the law, as requiring perfect righteousness, and pronouncing death on all who deviate from it in any part. Calvin
2. He has a full title to this great reward, although his own personal obedience has been very imperfect, because Christ as his vicar (in this case also, as in that of the endurance of penalty) has rendered an absolutely perfect obedience for him. His conviction, therefore, that eternal reward is awaiting him, does not rest upon his own imperfect sanctification, but upon Christ's sinless obedience, and perfect righteousness. Shedd
3. Therefore sin cannot win over us.

4. The law no longer condemns us.
 5. The law no longer separates us from God for Jesus has meet every requirement.
 6. God will continue to work in the life of the believer in order to keep him from sin.
 7. Phil 1:6 being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ; NKJV
 8. God continues to work in them until they overcome the world.
 9. 1 John 4:4 You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world. NKJV
- C. To be "UNDER THE LAW," then, is first, to be 'under its claim to entire obedience on pain of death;' and so, secondly, to underlie the curse of the law as having violated its righteous demands (Gal 3:10). And since any power to fulfill the law can reach the sinner only through Grace-of which the law knows nothing-it follows, lastly, that to be "under the law" is to be shut up under an inability to keep it, and consequently to be the helpless slave of sin. On the other hand, to be "UNDER GRACE," is to be under the glorious canopy and saving effects of that "Grace which bringeth salvation" and reigns 'through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord' (see the notes at Rom 5:20-21). The curse of the law has been completely lifted from off them; they are made "the righteousness of God in Him," and they are "alive unto God through Jesus Christ." So that, as when they were "under the law," Sin could not but have dominion over them, so now that they are "under grace," Sin cannot but be subdued under them. If before, Sin resistlessly triumphed, Grace will now be more than conqueror. (from Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown Commentary, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 1997 by Biblesoft)

III. **What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace?**

- A. This is a rhetorical question with the obvious answer, **Certainly not!**
- B. **Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey**
 1. **Whether of sin leading to death**
 - a. 2 pet 2:19 While they promise them liberty, they themselves are slaves of corruption; for by whom a person is overcome, by him also he is brought into bondage.
 2. **Or of obedience leading to righteousness?**
 - a. Verse 16 It is the argument of Christ in Mat. vi. 24; vii. 18. No man can serve two masters, at one and the same moment. A good tree

cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. The connection of thought is as follows: "Because you have died with Christ for sin, and are delivered from condemnation, and have a full title to eternal reward, you are obligated, by such gracious treatment, not to yield yourselves to the lusts that still remain, but to yield yourselves to the holy law of God (verses 12, 13). This you have done. You are obeying from the heart (verse 17). Your wills are surrendered to Christ and righteousness. Such being the facts of the case, the proposition to (sin because we are not under law, but under grace' is self-contradictory. The nature of the will and of voluntary agency forbids it. Shedd

IV. But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin

A. **Yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered.**

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

1. The principle of holiness, in the believer, is mightier than the remnants of the principle of sin. Shedd

C. **I speak in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh.**

D. **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.**

1. This, upon the face of it, looks as if holiness were compulsion. It is not so; *"for (γαρ)* as you once willingly and entirely surrendered yourselves to sin, and were in *this* way slaves of sin, so now willingly and entirely surrender yourselves to righteousness, and be in *this same* voluntary manner slaves of righteousness." Shedd

V. For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness.

A. It is not free from holiness as matter of *right*, but as matter of *fact*: as when we say, "free from disease," or "free from pain." Shedd

B. **What fruit did you have then in the things of which you are now ashamed?**

C. **For the end of those things is death.**

VI. But now having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God,

A. But it means that the regenerate will is unable to sin in the manner of the unregenerate will: i. e., *impenitently* and *totally*. The good man cannot feel and act as he did in the days of impenitency. Shedd

B. He is "enslaved to righteousness." "Old things have passed away, and all things

have become new." And when the ultimate consequence of regeneration, namely, perfect sanctification, shall be reached in the heavenly state, the believer will be unable to sin, even in the manner in which he did while upon earth. Shedd

C. You have your fruit to holiness,

1. Freedom from sin is slavery to holiness. Shedd
2. Bias to holiness implies the absence of bias to sin; and vice versa. Shedd

D. And the end, everlasting life.

VII. For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.