

Obedient from the Heart

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[0 : 00] I didn't get a chance to do a sound check before so I was running around. We're all good. Good morning. My name is Matthew Capone and I'm one of the pastors here at Cheyenne Mountain Presbyterian Church.

And it's my joy to bring God's word to you today. And we're continuing this morning our series in the book of Romans. And if you've been with us you'll remember that this book is a letter written by the Apostle Paul.

In the 50s AD and it is called Romans for a simple reason which is that it is written to the churches in the city of Rome. And it is about the gospel. It's about the good news of Jesus, death, and resurrection.

I've mentioned this to you before and I'll mention it to you again and I'll mention it to you later. Page 7 of your worship guide, the quote I keep coming back to, that Paul's letter to the Romans is arguably the single most important piece of literature.

In the history of the world. A modest claim. I keep reminding you all of that because there is a sense in which Romans is kind of hard. And maybe you've noticed that as we've dug into it.

[1 : 11] There's times when Paul repeats himself and you're trying to figure out, okay, what's new? What's old? The good news in all of that though is that Romans may be hard but it is also great. Romans may be hard but it is also worth it.

And as we may have the temptation to get lost a little bit in Paul's arguments, I want to make sure that you know exactly where we're at as we start this morning. So we are in Romans chapter 6 and Romans chapter 6 asks one and only one question.

If God's grace is real, we might say since God's grace is real, why do I still have to obey?

Since God's grace is real, why does it matter what I do? If Jesus lived the perfect life that I should have lived if he took the punishment for my sins, why can't I do whatever I want?

That would seem to be maybe the conclusion of that. Okay, so that's the question of chapter 6. To that one question, Paul has at least three answers.

[2 : 22] And that's what we have been working through the last number of weeks, okay? Answer 1. This is what we looked at verses 1 through 14. It doesn't make sense to continue in sin because you can't be both dead and alive at the same time.

You're alive because of your union with Christ, that what's true of Christ is true of you. When Christ died in his death, you died to the power of sin. In Christ's resurrection, you experience newness of life, life empowered by the Holy Spirit.

So that's answer 1. Answer 2 is our answer for today. It doesn't make sense to continue in sin. Why would a freed slave go back to his master?

Slavery is already introduced. We looked at it in verse 6, which was two weeks ago, so we've talked about it some. And then next week, we're going to see the third argument. It doesn't make sense.

Why would you do something that kills you? And we'll see some of that this week as well in verse 16. So the three answers again are this. Answer 1, we don't continue in sin because of our union with Christ.

[3 : 35] Answer 2, we don't continue in sin because we're no longer a slave to sin. Answer 3, sin leads to death. Why would you do something that kills you?

So the question of this passage, this passage this morning, again, is this. Why would I? Why should I obey? So with that, I invite you to join me in reading Romans chapter 6.

We are going to start at verse 15 and go to verse 19. You can turn in your Bible. You can turn in your worship guide to page 7. Wherever you turn, remember that this is God's word.

Jeremiah chapter 23 tells us that God's word is like a hammer that breaks a rock into pieces. Which is to say, there is nothing so powerful that it can stand in the way of God's word.

So that's why we read now Romans chapter 6, starting at verse 15. What then? Are we to sin because we are not under law but under grace?

[4 : 43] By no means. 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.

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.

And having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness. 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. I invite you to pray with me as we come to this portion of God's word. Our Father in heaven, we do thank you again for your word, which is good and right and true.

It's more precious than gold, even the finest gold. Sweeter than honey. Even honey that comes straight from the honeycomb. We ask that you would make it precious and sweet to us this morning.

[6 : 08] That you would use it to show us your mercy and your grace once again. That we'd be reminded of the great love that you have for us in Jesus Christ.

The freedom that comes to us in the gospel. Most of all, we ask that you would show us Jesus. We'd see his glory and his beauty and his power.

His mercy, his grace, his love. We ask all of these things in his name. Amen. I have mentioned to you before, there's a great principle in life, which is this.

If you are starting learning a new topic and you want a great introduction, one of the best things you can do is find a children's book.

And it's one of the best things you can do because children's books, by definition, are meant to be simple and clear and basic. And so you're trying to get at what is the kernel of truth here?

[7 : 10] What is the main thing? You want to master the basics before you move on to the things that are advanced. If you don't master the basics, the advanced will not make sense.

It turns out there is actually a children's book on the book of Romans. It's called The Sword by a man named Marty Mikowski. I brought it with me. You can see there's two little Roman soldiers on the front.

It is for ages 8 through 12. Now, I have to confess, it's been a couple years since I was ages 8 through 12. But I enjoy it nonetheless. And in illustrating Romans chapter 6, Marty does it this way.

It says, imagine that there's a paintbrush. All of us know what a paintbrush is, right? Paintbrush is just an instrument. So if you put the paintbrush in the hands of a master artist, what's going to happen?

You're going to get a masterpiece. And then he says, but what if you take that paintbrush and you put it in the hands of a toddler? What will you get?

[8 : 14] He says, well, you will likely get a mess on the wall. Same paintbrush. Two different people holding it.

And he says this. This is on the back of your worship guide. When we walk through life with God as our master, he can use us to create unmatched beauty.

On the contrary, if we allow sin to rule our lives, we can be in a terrible mess.

Paul wants us to consider these questions. Who is controlling your life? Who is your master?

And that's one of the major questions here of chapter six. Who will hold the paintbrush of your life?

[9 : 18] If you give it to God and you obey God, he will take your life and he will make it a masterpiece.

If you give it to sin and you obey sin, sin will take your life and there will be a mess.

That actually helps us understand not just this week, but also last week. You'll remember Andy last week discussed verse 13 of chapter six, which says this.

Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life and your members to God as instruments for righteousness.

You could just take the word paintbrush, replace instrument. Do not present your paintbrush as a paintbrush for unrighteousness, but present yourself as a paintbrush to God for righteousness.

[10 : 26] Then this week it helps us understand verse 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.

So Paul's telling us there's another principle here. Whoever holds your paintbrush, that is your master.

If you obey someone, you are their slave. There's another truth here, which is this.

You will have a master. You will serve someone. Freedom from religion will not make you free.

You will serve either sin or God. There is, in fact, no independent freedom in this world.

[11 : 51] That is a fiction. There are only two slaveries. There's only two ways to live. There's a way to live that leads to death.

And there's a way to live that leads to life. Some of you may remember Bob Dylan's song from 1979 called, You Gotta Serve Somebody.

He says this, You may be an ambassador to England or France. You may like to gamble. You may like to dance.

You may be the heavyweight champion of the world. You may be a socialite with a long string of pearls.

But you're going to have to serve somebody. It may be the devil. Or it may be the Lord.

[12 : 57] But you're going to have to serve somebody. What Paul's telling us here is whatever you serve, it will rule you.

If you serve money, you will be a slave to it. It will consume your thoughts and your time, and your mind will not rest.

You won't be able to not check the stock market. If you serve pleasure and comfort, it will rule you.

And one day, someday in the future, you will be very, very uncomfortable. If you serve accomplishments, you will find that there is never an end and that it's never enough.

There is always something more, and there will always be someone who is stronger and smarter and faster than you.

[14 : 16] If you serve approval, you will always do what other people want and not what is right.

You'll be a slave. If you serve independence, if that is more important to you than anything else, you may experience a cruel joke. You will get it.

You also won't have the deep connection that makes life worth living. Actually, it might be better to be a slave.

Slaves actually have friendships sometimes. If you make those things or anything your God, you will serve it.

it will be your master. You will be its slave. Why not just sin all the more?

[15 : 26] For under law and not under grace, why not sin whenever we want? Paul tells us this, because it's miserable.

Because it's slavery. Because those masters are hard and cruel. Now, you may be wondering, okay, we talked about slavery two weeks ago.

What's the difference between Paul's point about slavery then and his point now? His point two weeks ago in verses 5 through 11 was this, you don't have to obey sin anymore because you're not enslaved to it.

Okay, that's verse 6. You don't have to obey sin anymore because you're not enslaved to it. This week, verses 15 through 19, he's saying this, but if you do obey it, you are bound to it.

if you do obey it, it will enslave you. That's what he's saying in verse 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 : 05] Now, how did we, how did we get here? We're picking up from last week. You'll remember last week ended with verse 14, which says this, for sin will have no dominion over you since you are not under law, but under grace.

Paul then repeats that in verse 15, and so basically what he's saying, what he's reminding us of is this, there are two ways to get to heaven. You can get to heaven under law, or you can get to heaven under grace.

If you're under law and you want to get to heaven, you must perfectly obey every single one of God's commands, and never sin.

Now, if you've been with us, you know that's not an option. Romans chapter 3 says this, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. So being under law, bad deal. If you are under grace, that means you trust in Christ.

Believe he died the death that you deserve. He lived the perfect life that you did not. And that's good. Because you actually cannot earn heaven from the law.

[18 : 27] You can't, and you won't. You're no longer justified by your obedience. You are justified by Christ's obedience.

And so that's the distinction, that distinction from verses 14 and 15 that leads to the question of verse 15, which now we've already answered. The good news is now you're actually free to obey God.

Not just that you've been freed from the slavery to sin, you actually have kind of a new slavery here. You're actually free to follow God as your true and real master.

That's what Paul's saying in verses 17 and 18. 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.

And having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness. Obedient from the heart, that phrase there gets to what we talked about at the beginning of chapter 6.

[19 : 38] That the very power center of your heart has changed. We discussed this when we talked about the three different ways of talking about sin. The power, the presence, and the penalty.

And you remember that when Christ died, if you're a Christian, you died to the power of sin. You don't have to obey sin anymore. sin no longer controls your heart.

And so that's why in verse 4 we talked about newness of life. Life that is characterized by resurrection power. As I've mentioned to you many times now, Ephesians chapter 1 tells us the same power that raised Jesus Christ from the dead is at work in you.

That's the newness of life. That's what allows us to obey from the heart. In other words, serving God sets you free to do the right thing for the right reason.

Serving God sets you free to do the right thing for the right reason.

[20 : 57] You raise your children now and you love them not so that they can make you look good or so they can prove something about you.

That's its own type of slavery. But so that they can go out and spread God's glory even more. You can make money for God's purposes.

To provide for yourself and your family and to show the same generosity that God has shown to you. You can demonstrate sexual integrity in your life because you love from your heart God's gift of marriage.

And you want to use your body to bless other people rather than to destroy and use them. and when you experience success which I hope that you do you can give glory to God and you can actually enjoy it because you have the right perspective.

Brothers and sisters that's what real freedom looks like feels like tastes like. Remember I've told you this old quote from David Gibson in the created world you can only truly enjoy what you do not worship.

[22 : 46] In the created world you can only truly enjoy what you do not worship because if you worship it it will rule you. If you worship it it will be your master and you will be its slave.

I've told you before and I'll tell you again Romans is the fifth gospel and Romans is called the fifth gospel because what Paul teaches Jesus taught first.

Jesus is talking to the Jewish leaders in John chapter 8 and he says this truly truly I say to you everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin.

The slave does not remain in the house forever the son remains forever. so if the son sets you free you are free indeed.

A few verses earlier he says this also John chapter 8 if you abide in my word you are truly my disciples and you will know the truth and the truth will set you free.

[24 : 24] Man I wonder where Paul got this idea of slavery. I think he got it from Jesus. I think he knows that Jesus sets us free from slavery to sin by his death and his resurrection.

That's what Paul's been saying over and over again in this chapter when Jesus died you died. Now that does raise a question for us.

How can we say that Jesus sets us free if we're a slave to him? That doesn't sound like freedom. That sounds kind of odd that Paul's using different words than Jesus is.

Well Paul I think is getting at this in verse 19. he says I'm speaking in human terms because of your natural limitations. What Paul's saying is this.

Hey I realize this may strike you as a little bit odd to talk about being God's slave. I'm just trying to use an illustration that you can understand. It may be imperfect but it is true.

[25 : 35] Following Jesus is the only way to life and freedom.

If the son sets you free you will be free indeed. We might put it this way to our God be the glory to our God be the praise he alone the name above all names.

I will boast ever only in the Lord my God for I know his glory is my good.

Serving him is real and true freedom. let's pray. Our father in heaven we do thank you that you set us free from the slavery to sin.

Set us free to actually enjoy what you've given us in this world because we worship you above everything else. We ask that that would be true of us that you would continue to grow and shape and form our hearts that we would love your freedom we would run away from the slavery of sin.

[27 : 10] We ask these things in Jesus name. Amen.