

Set Free to be a Slave

Text: Romans 6:12-23

Introduction:

1. This chapter commences next major section of the Epistle – Sanctification
2. Previous lesson: Our severance from the dominion of sin through union with Christ in His death, burial and resurrection. Key word was 'know'.
3. This lesson: Practical exhortations based on the knowledge of our position in Christ. Key word is 'yield', appearing 5 times. In the previous verses, the Apostle argued that the believer does not persist in a life of habitual sin due to his union with Christ. In these verses, a similar theme is explored but under the figure of the slave & master relationship.

We will examine these verses under 3 headings:

I. **The Principle of Submission Exhorted (Vs. 12-13)**

A. **Denial of sin – what we must NOT yield to (Vs. 12-13a)**

1. The Body generally (Vs. 12)
 - a. 'therefore' = based on the previous teaching. The reckoning of Vs. 11 now finds specific application
 - b. 'reign' = sin is personified and viewed as a king which seeks to bring us under its authority. "To exercise kingly power. The believer has a responsibility to keep it from mounting the throne of his heart." (Wuest)
 - c. 'mortal' = that which is subject to death. It is in this frail and sinful body that we experience the battle against sinful desires (lusts)
2. The Members specifically (Vs. 13a)
 - a. 'yield' = to present, to put at one's disposal
 - b. 'instruments' = tools or weapons.

B. **Dedication to God – who we MUST yield to (Vs. 13b)**

1. "unto God" = phrase occurs twice. We are to be at the disposal of our God to obey His commands and honor Him
2. "as those that are alive from the dead" = reminder of our position as those who possess resurrection life. We are to use the members of our body in a way that is consistent with our new position in Christ.
3. 1 Corinthians 6:15-20 *"Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid. What? know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? for two, saith he, shall be one flesh. But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit. Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own*

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body. What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."

4. The Yielded Christian is one who has a mind yielded to the mind of Christ to think His thoughts, a heart yielded to know His love, hands to serve and do His bidding, feet to follow His leading, a tongue to speak His Word and sing His praises, eyes to read His Word and behold His glory, knees to kneel and seek Him, a life yielded completely to Christ.

II. The Power of Servanthood Explained (Vs. 14-16)

A. A Promise to empower (Vs. 14)

1. 'dominion' = lordship. Same word translated "exercise lordship over" in Luke 22:25. Noun form is a title of Christ.
2. 'for' = explains why the promise is true. The believer is now 'under' the dominion of grace, not law. My yielding to be an instrument of holiness for God is empowered by grace within, not law without.
3. Note: Often the second part of this verse is quoted by compromised Christians who want to justify indulgence in a sinful habit. But the verse is teaching the exact opposite! Grace does not empower us to sin but to be sanctified! This is abundantly clear from both the verse that precedes and the verse that follows after.
4. Titus 2:11-12 *"For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men..."*
5. Galatians 5:13 *"For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another."*
6. "Do this and live, the law commands, but gives me neither feet nor hands. A better word the gospel brings. It bids me fly and gives me wings."

B. A Principle to remember (Vs. 15-16)

1. Paul answers the question by showing that the believer has changed masters. A slave must of necessity submit to the rule of his master!
2. "The believer does sin at times, but he does not provide in his life plans for occasional acts of sin. He hates sin and endeavors to keep it out of his life." (Wuest)
3. 'servant' = the word refers to one who is born into a condition of slavery with bands so strong that only death can break them. The will of this slave would be swallowed up in the will of his master and he would serve to the disregard of his own interests.

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4. We were born into this world slaves to sin and Satan. Our will was consumed with fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind (Eph. 2:3). Despite the tragic results of sin, we served it to the disregard of our own good. But praise God there came a day when I was born again to be a slave to Jesus Christ. Now it is a joy for my will to be captive to His perfect will and to serve him to the disregard of my natural desires.
5. Note: Satan is a master deceiver to present a life of sin as a life of freedom. In our day, the media is the devils paintbrush that he uses to depict sin in bright and attractive colors.

III. The Perspective of Salvation Entreated (Vs. 17-23)

A. Conversion in the Past (Vs. 17-18)

1. Thanksgiving to God: “But God be thanked” = Focus turns to the work of God in salvation. He alone can receive the glory for the miracle of conversion.
2. Submission to Truth
 - a. “obeyed from the heart” = surrender of the heart
 - b. “form of doctrine” = ‘form’ is the Greek word ‘type’. Word was used to describe melted metals transferred to a mold which conform exactly to the mold. Also used to describe wax, clay or any soft material that took the form of a wax or seal. They received and submitted in heart to the divinely crafted doctrine of salvation. The command of the Gospel is to repent and believe.

B. Command for the Present (Vs. 19)

1. Command similar to Vs. 13. Now impressed afresh upon the reader in light of His conversion.
2. ‘uncleanness’ = impurity, particularly of an immoral nature.
3. “iniquity unto iniquity” = the downward spiral of sin. Rebellion leads to further rebellion.
4. “even so now” = the believer is to pursue holiness with the same fervor and dedication with which he used to serve sin.
5. “righteousness unto holiness” = practical progress in sanctification (life long process)

C. Contrast of the two Positions (Vs. 20-23)

1. Two Fruits (Vs. 20-22)
 - a. The Fruit of Sin (20-21)
 - i. Sins that enslaved (Vs. 20)
 - ii. Sins that ashamed (Vs. 21a)
 - iii. Sins that damned (Vs. 21b)
 - b. The Fruit of Righteousness (Vs. 22)
 - i. Liberation (22a)

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- ii. Servanthood (22b)
 - iii. Holiness (22c)
 - iv. Eternal life (22d)
2. Two Futures (Vs. 23)
- a. Death – the wages of sin
 - i. Eternal death primarily in view
 - ii. Described as the “second death” – Rev. 20:11-15 “And I saw a great white throne...” Rev. 21:8 “But the fearful...”
 - b. Eternal life – the gift of God
 - i. Note contrast between wages earned and gift received.
 - ii. This gift comes to us through the Mediatorial ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ
 - c. Deut. 30:19 *“I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: **therefore choose life**, that both thou and thy seed may live:”*

Conclusion:

1. Are you a slave to sin or a slave to Christ? Have you been saved?
2. As believers, are we consciously yielding all that we have to be used in the service of our Heavenly Master?