

Breakthrough to Holiness
Results of a Life Submitted to Christ
Blueprint for Breakthrough Series – Part 12
Romans 6:15-23
June 6-7, 2026

Introduction

- Last Week's Baptism Service – 75 (6 impromptu)
- What practical benefits have you seen from living for the Lord? – I know that we talk about eternal life and future blessings, but **let's get more practical today. Let's talk about what difference it makes to live our lives according to God's way vs. the way of selfishness or sin.** If we are a fruit tree, what fruit have we been producing since we've connected into the Lord? **What fruit is emerging in our lives?** What **outcomes** are we seeing? What's **different?** What's **healthy?** What's **good?**
 - What have you seen? **Call it out**
 - What I've seen in my life: with my personality? It could have been 'not good' my friends. Yikes!
 - Marriage - I met Suzi, May 8th, 1993, married her on January 7th, 1995 and been faithful to her every day since I met her. **That is NOT the legacy that was left to me.**
 - Anxiety & Self-Medication - I didn't self-medicate my anxiety disorder with drugs or alcohol, because **I was taught by the Lord to walk it out with Him as brutal as it has been.** I got meds through a **doctor with accountability.**
 - Bridgeway - I started teaching here in October of 1997 and have **never intentionally harmed this church,** I have always put my best effort in, and it has allowed a **beautiful relationship** to exist (and my bills getting paid) for all this time. **Our church is rising even after 29 years! Scandal is the norm,** I'm trying every day to buck that system.
 - Daughters - **The Word of God tells me that despite my own needs and feelings, that I'm supposed to put the needs of others around me ahead of my own, especially my children.** I have invested in them, supported them, and loved them consistently, and I still have a deep connected relationship with both my daughters to this day.
 - The other option – y'all. **I'm quite capable of making stupid decisions.** I can lose my ministry in one night. I have had temptation after temptation to choose ME over the Lord and those around me. I had a legacy given to me of blowing up relationships, and choosing selfish ways. I have the innate desire to party and sell it all for a bowl of porridge. I have an addictive personality I have to guard constantly. But as I have followed the Lord, He has rescued me from myself time and time again. And at least at this point, my life is hallmarked by a healthy marriage, healthy family, a healthy job, healthy friendships, healthy finances, and a healthy conscience. That would never be my outcome if I chose my own path.

Holy living leads to **GOOD FRUIT**

- God is interested in our health and wholeness – God is always looking at the big picture. God knows what He built in humanity and how it can go wrong so quickly. Too often we allow the enemy to lie to us and convince us that God is limiting us and that the world has so much to offer and we are missing out. But here's the thing: God knows the cost. He's not interested in hindering fun, He built fun. He isn't interested in hindering anything good, if it was good He would have designed a way to integrate it. He's trying to stop us from hurting ourselves. The instructions and rules in Scripture are not because God is afraid of us having too much fun, it's that He's concerned about us having too much devastation. God is trying to minimize our suffering.
- Sin is like junk food – we like the dopamine hit and the immediate benefit, but it's going to cost you down the road. Maybe I should have said sin is like street tacos in Tijuana...
- Where we are at in the series – Today we are rejoining our series walking through the book of Romans in the New Testament. And for the foreseeable future we are going to study this letter Paul wrote to the church in Rome. The last three parts of this series have been taught by 2 guest speakers and 1 by our very own high school pastor, Cliff. I am so thankful that Jake Taylor from The Father's House, and Pastor Samuel Gordon of Trinity Life Church were willing to come and bless us with preaching to us such amazing messages. Those are friends of mine and I'm so thankful that you get to know them too.
 - Pastor Jake taught us – when we become Christians we are justified through that faith, meaning we are cleansed from our sin and made right in the eyes of God, which means we do not have to fear God or death. We begin to walk in a new reality of grace in Christ Jesus, transformed from enemies of God to children of God, with room to grow and make mistakes. We may not be free from difficulty yet but God promises us to get us through and make us better on the other side.
 - Pastor Cliff taught us – our sin situation was terrible and impossible, affecting all of humanity, but Jesus Christ died on the cross to solve that problem and give us an opportunity to be rescued. Just as Adam's bad choice in the Garden of Eden doomed us, Jesus' choice on the cross allowed us to live again.
 - Pastor Samuel taught us – Just because we live in perpetual grace as children of God doesn't mean that we are freed to go live in sin. We aren't those people anymore. We have died to that old way of thinking and living and have been raised with Jesus to a new way – just like baptism shows us with the lowering down and raising back up from the water. We have been set free from sin and death no longer has dominion over us. Now, we have been set free from sin to live for Jesus Christ every day and in every way.
 - Pastor Samuel Gordon message – notes I took:
 - Biblical definition for grace – "Grace is the unearned favor, love and kindness of God that is freely given to you and me, not because we deserve it, but because of his mercy and because of His goodness." You can't get more.
 - We are free from sin's penalty and power.
 - The power of grace and what it brings

- Real freedom – not cultural freedom, nor emotional freedom, but biblical freedom – *the power to live as God designed without bondage, control, and without domination.*
- Many believers are forgiven but not free. Saved but still struggling. Redeemed but still living beneath their privilege. The enemy always wants you to believe that you are less than. Some of us are held hostage. God never uses your past to dictate your future.
- Key question: shall we continue in sin so that grace may abound? – if Grace keeps forgiving me why should I change my lifestyle? By no means. Grace was never given to excuse sin but defeat it.
- Grace does not permit sin, it empowers change. Not 'I'm saved, so my obedience is optional.' Grace doesn't lower God's standards but raises our capacity to meet God's standards. You are no longer required to sin.
- Salvation was not, symbolic it was terminal – it's not trying harder. If we died to it (death on the cross with Christ – old self crucified). Once something dies it's jurisdiction ends. Devil still talks but you don't have to listen.
- Union with Christ defines authority – what does it mean to have union with Christ, relationship? It means when Christ died, you died, when Christ was buried, you were buried, when He arose, you got up. Freedom is not aspirational but positional. You aren't trying to become free, but already free and now operate as if it's true.
- Baptism marks identity transfer – baptism is a ritual, it represents a public proclamation – my life has been changed, buried and coming up. Burial represents terminal of that old life. Resurrection authorization of new life. We came up reclassified. Old identity closed; New identity activated. You can walk in newness of life, in authority, head held high.
- Death language is intentional – Paul uses that on purpose. Death is a final separation. Why if you are set free want to remain trap. It's not to improve conditions in bondage. Grace came to remove you from it entirely.
- Sin is a system of dominion – sin isn't just behavior, it's governance. When you are in sin it rules every decision you make. It rules desires. But when Christ died on the cross, the chains of sin fell off. The chains of authority collapsed. The control ended. Door is open, freedom requires movement.
- Exodus principle – Israel left Egypt in one day, but Egypt took years to leave Israel. Deliverance is instant. Transformation is learned. God didn't just remove them from slavery but had to retrain their thinking. 40 years of retraining. The same with believers. Freedom needs to be understood or it won't be experienced. When you experience freedom you never want bondage again.
- Identity proceeds behavior – dead to sin; alive to God. Consider = reckon, operate from it. You can't live beyond the identity that you accept. If you keep defining yourself by who you were, you will continue functioning below who you are today. God didn't just forgive you but repositioned you.
- Power flows from certainty – Jesus died once and will never die again. Death has no authority over Him, nor those who are united with Him. The resurrection is spiritual infrastructure. Using the name of Jesus
- Presentation is a choice – don't present yourselves to sin but to God. You have been transferred from death to live. Sin used to decide for you. Now you get to decide. God gave humanity freedom to respond to Him. Freedom to say yes. He doesn't remove our responsibility to choose. Under the law you are dominated by sin but under grace liberated from sin. We are called to be in alignment. Out of alignment to heaven comes manifestation. You are not fighting to gain freedom but to align yourself to the freedom you already have. Victory is already yours (It is finished).
- Declaration – verbally acknowledge – believe it and make the world and enemy to hear it – *“through Christ I am free from sin's penalty and free from sin's power. I am alive in God. I will walk in newness of life. Grace is transforming me in Jesus' name. Amen.”*
- Because of Grace – because God's grace is so **shocking and powerful**, Paul needs to go back through it again to **make sure that no one was mistaking God's grace for an excuse to sin**. Let's enter back into this conversation...

Lesson

- Stupid Questions
 - Does Grace mean we should sin more?
 - **Romans 6:15 – “What then? Are we to sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means!”**
 - What then? – Paul is recapping his last long argument, with the same question all over again...
 - Are we to sin because we are not under law but under grace? – Paul is presenting the question again¹ because the reality of perpetual grace lends to a temptation to abuse it. Does freedom from the Mosaic law give

¹ “In both vv. 1 and 15 Paul asks whether the grace of God should lead to sin. However, in 6:1 it is a question of sinning in order to gain more grace, while in 6:15 it is a question of sinning because of grace.” Douglas Moo, NICNT Commentary

us carte blanche to do whatever we want to do without consequence?
Does grace remove consequence or accountability?

- By no means! – this is Paul’s way of saying, ‘ABSOLUTELY NOT!’
 - Pastor Samuel Gordon’s Insights: The power of grace and what it brings – there is no point in reinventing the wheel. Pastor Sam Gordon crushed his message to us last time and I’m going to call it out exactly like he said it because **I can’t say it better.**
 - **Grace brings real freedom** – not cultural freedom, nor emotional freedom, but biblical freedom = *“the power to live as God designed without bondage, control, and without domination.”*
 - **Grace does not permit sin, it empowers change.** *Not ‘I’m saved, so my obedience is optional.’ Grace doesn’t lower God’s standards but raises our capacity to meet God’s standards. You are no longer required to sin.*
- Defining Identities
 - We are slaves to those we obey
 - **Romans 6:16** – *“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?”*
 - Do you not know² – This is Paul’s ways of saying, ‘you all know this, right? It’s not rocket science. It’s pretty obvious.’
 - All of us serve something/someone³ - and **none of us are independent. We can either serve sin or serve Christ.** It’s similar to going **anywhere in the world**, and you are going to be in **some nation’s territory**. There is no more just ‘open land’. You answer to someone.
 - **God vs. Self - In the end the two competing sides are usually: God vs. SELF. At least that’s how it looks.** It’s really God vs. Destruction because Satan is in charge of the other side and he doesn’t get any benefit from us following Him into the lake of fire (other than hurting God which seems to be his motivation). **Satan usually cloaks himself in getting us to believe we are choosing SELF, when in fact he just wants rebellion and disconnect from God.** Think about how the **Garden of Eden** scenario went down. Satan didn’t say: worship me, he said, I think **God’s holding out on you and you should step up and take what’s yours.** The result was separation

² “Do you not know” introduces, as is customary in Paul, a fact that he assumes is known to his readers. In this case, the fact is one with which his readers would have been familiar even before their conversion: habitually “presenting” oneself to something or someone makes one a slave of that something or someone.⁸ For people in the ancient world would often sell themselves into slavery as a way of avoiding financial disaster. It is not completely clear whether Paul means by this that habitual obedience manifests a condition of slavery or that habitual obedience constitutes or leads to a condition of slavery. In light of the context, where the verb “present” again occurs in the imperative (v. 19; and cf. v. 13), the latter, with its implicit exhortation, is more likely.” NICNT

³ “Either one is a slave of sin¹² or a slave of “obedience.” Paul makes it clear in this “either ... or” that there is no “possibility of neutrality” (Käsemann). One is never “free” from a master, and those non-Christians who think that they are “free” are under an illusion created and sustained by Satan. The choice with which people are faced is not “Should I retain my freedom or give it up and submit to God?” but “Should I serve sin or should I serve God?” NICNT

from God through a temptation of self. The only time that Satan/devil went full-disclosure is with Jesus' desert temptation because Jesus was going to see through all of that. Yes, the devil tried the selfish route, but at the end of the day he did tip his hat and tell Jesus to bow down and worship him to get the kingdoms of the world (without the cross).

- that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey,⁴ - If you are doing what someone else tells you to do on a consistent basis, you are in practical effect, a slave to that thing or person. If SELF is your constant director, then you are a slave to self.
- either of sin, which leads to death,⁵ - obeying sin means doing your own thing and not doing God's thing. What's the practical result? Death.
 - The Garden of Eden Example (again) – Again, I take us back to the Garden of Eden. The warning to them about the Tree of the knowledge of Good and Evil. It was 'you will surely die.' But Satan was able to say, 'you won't die' and after eating the fruit they didn't die. Was Satan right? No. God was warning about a death far more serious than physical death, eternal death, spiritual death. They couldn't and wouldn't see it. But it was true. Here we have the same thing: Sin leads to death and yet the world is constantly sinning around us (and we are sinning) and we aren't dying so we believe that there is no consequence to sin. But there is and it's severe.
- Or of obedience, which leads to righteousness?⁶ – Jesus Christ demonstrated that a life of obedience to the Father is righteousness. Righteousness, in case we forgot, is God-purity good things, choices, lifestyle, living, actions, behaviors, thoughts. It's God-level good. When we live a life of obedience (what are His commands today? Love the Lord your God with all your heart, mind, soul and strength and love your neighbor as yourself. AND, believe in the ONE He sent: Jesus Christ the Messiah – those are the New Testament commands). A life of obedience to those commands not only changes our lives in the here and now, but even more so we are changed and altered and transformed supernaturally when we are purified by the blood of Christ shed on the

⁴ Schreiner summarizes it well: "One is either God's slave or sin's slave. Those who think that freedom is attained by jettisoning obedience to God opt for sin as their lord." Bird, M. F. (2016). *Romans* (S. McKnight, Ed.; p. 210). Zondervan.

⁵ "Death" may include reference to physical death and present spiritual death, but in this context it means mainly "eternal" death: the final and eternal exclusion from God's presence that is the ultimate result of sin." NICNT

⁶ "Since it is contrasted with death, 'righteousness' could refer to 'final' justification: that ultimate acquittal from sins and introduction to eternal life that come to the believer in the last day. And this interpretation is bolstered by the fact that 'eternal life' appears to occupy a parallel place to righteousness in vv. 22 and 23. However, Paul never clearly uses the word 'righteousness' to refer to this eschatological verdict (Gal. 5:5 is the only possible exception; cf. 'justify' in 2:13), and in Romans thus far, 'righteousness' is not equivalent to 'life' but is the means to 'life' (cf. 5:21). Since righteousness is the result of obedience, it could designate initial justification only if obedience were interpreted as 'the obedience of faith.' But, as we have seen, this is unlikely. Another option is to view righteousness more comprehensively, either as encompassing both moral living and final vindication, or, in keeping with the inclusive interpretation of the 'Käsemann' school, as the 'power' in which the justified believer lives.¹⁸ But, in light of vv. 13, 17–20, the best option is to understand righteousness to refer to 'moral' righteousness, conduct pleasing to God. The objection that this does not make a natural contrast with 'death' is not a telling one, since the contrast 'sin' and 'obedience' has already disrupted a precise antithesis." NICNT

cross and declared 'righteous' in the eyes of God. Saved by Grace, through Faith.

- Not independence - We find freedom not in declaring our total independence, but in serving the right master. Again, independence in this world is a misnomer. It's not possible. There are too many power players and we are too fragile to stand on our own. We are serving something or someone. We cannot stand alone. Therefore the goal is never independence, but alignment with the right source.
- Swapping Masters
 - From slaves to sin to slaves to righteousness
 - Romans 6:17-20 – *"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, 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. ²⁰ For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness."*
 - But thanks be to God, - whatever is about to follow is going to be a gift or act of God and it's not going to come from us. Whatever comes next will be because of His kindness and power. Whatever comes next demands that we give Him glory and praise for it.
 - that you who were once slaves of sin – We had no other option but to do things we thought of, for our own motives, to our own benefit. That is missing the mark (definition of sin) of what we were created for. We had no other choice. It's all we knew. We were 'slaves' of sin.
 - have become obedient from the heart⁷ – But once we realized that God is true and real and wants a connection with us, and allowed Him to rescue us, our eyes were opened. We now knew that God was the center of it all and we aligned ourselves with Him. As all of our systems came online we were able to resist sin, turn from a downward path, and choose to be obedient to God's ways, not because we were forced to but because we saw the benefit, the realistic nature of it, and WANTED to please the Lord. We became obedience, from the heart.

⁷ Wholeheartedly obeyed – "Christian obedience is not force or legalistic, but willing." (NIV Commentary).

- to the standard⁸ of teaching⁹ to which you were committed,¹⁰ - There is a lot of commentary on the awkwardness of this phrase, so I'm not going to go into it but simply say this: I think that Paul's point is simply, we became willfully obedient to what we were taught by Christ and we committed our lives to it letting it transform us day to day.
- and, having been set free¹¹ from sin,¹² - Again and again, Paul says the same thing: we have been set free from sin. **What does that practically mean?**
 - Understanding how the hold of sin is broken – **We were designed to be WITH God and built to do things FOR God. It's our created design. But we cannot be WITH or do FOR God if we are kept apart from Him, which is what sin did to us. We think of our lives 'pre-Christ' as days when we were free to do whatever we wanted to do, but that is absolutely not true. We were NOT free to be with God. We were NOT free to do what God wanted us to do. When we were rescued and saved, our old life died and a new one began, a new life that was connected to God and able to hear His voice and see His will. This ALLOWED us to BECOME what we were built to be. Sin was no longer allowed to DOMINATE, or CONTROL what we did or who we were. Let's talk about this practically...**
 - The practical reality of sin domination in a human – There are **two layers of the reality of how we were dominated by sin** in our lives:

⁸ Form = Tupos – “type as a constituent element of a parable or model of some reality which has yet to appear, a prototype or that which was yet to be developed and evolved, e.g., the ordinances and institutions in the OT were, in their inward essence, types of the NT. The first era serves as a type of the second. A visible sign of what is invisible. A symbol is an outward manifestation of something inward, an emblem of what is higher.” (Lexical Aids to the NT, NASB).

⁹ Teaching = Didache – “in an active sense it means the art of teaching, instructing, tutoring. In a passive sense teaching which is given, that which anyone teaches. In an absolute sense, it denotes the teaching of Jesus, the Lord; the Apostles, etc.” (Lexical Aids to the NT, NASB).

¹⁰ “It is probably for this same reason that Paul chooses so unusual a way of describing the object of their obedience: “that pattern of teaching to which you were handed over.” The verb “hand over” might connote the transfer of a slave from one master to another—an image appropriate to this paragraph.²⁵ But perhaps more relevant in conjunction with a word like “teaching” are those places where, in probable dependence on Jewish concepts, Paul uses “hand over” to refer to the transmission of the early Christian teaching or tradition (cf. 1 Cor. 11:2, 23; 15:3). In this verse, however, it is not the teaching that is handed down to believers but the believers who are handed over to the teaching. This unusual way of putting the matter is intentional; Paul wants to make clear that becoming a Christian means being placed under the authority of Christian “teaching,” that expression of God’s will for NT believers. The new convert’s “obedience” to this teaching is the outgrowth of God’s action²⁷ in “handing us over” to that teaching when we were converted. But why does Paul say “pattern [typos] of teaching” rather than just “teaching”? Many interpreters think that Paul alludes to a “rule” or “pattern” of early Christian teaching.²⁹ There is good reason to think that this is the case, but he may also want to suggest a contrast with another “pattern” of teaching. Godet thinks Paul contrasts his own “gospel” with the pattern of teaching that the Romans had already heard. But a more likely contrast is that between the “form” of Christian teaching and the “form” of Jewish teaching. Paul would then imply that Christians, while no longer “under the [Mosaic] law,” are nevertheless bound by an authoritative code of teaching. And Paul may have an additional reason for using typos. Most of the Pauline occurrences of this word refer to believers as “examples” to other believers. In these verses, typos includes the active connotation of a pattern that “molds” others. Similarly, in this verse, it is likely that typos includes the idea that Christian teaching “molds” and “forms” those who have been handed over to it ... So unusual is the construction that a few interpreters have (quite unnecessarily) concluded that the verse is a later addition to Paul’s text; cf. Bultmann, who calls it a “stupid insertion” (“stupiden Zwischensatz”; cf. “Glossen,” p. 283); cf. also Furnish, *Theology and Ethics*, pp. 197–98; Gäumann, *Taufe und Ethik*, pp. 94–96; Schmithals, R. A. J. Gagnon (“Heart of Wax and a Teaching That Stamps: ΤΥΠΟΣ ΔΙΔΑΧΗΣ (Rom 6:17b) Once More,” *JBL* 112 [1994], 671–73) effectively criticizes these theories.” NICNT

¹¹ “we must remember that Paul’s concept of freedom is not that of autonomous self-direction but of deliverance from those enslaving powers that would prevent the human being from becoming what God intended. It is only by doing God’s will and thus knowing his truth that we can be “free indeed” (John 8:31–36). This is why, without paradox, Christian freedom is at the same time a kind of “slavery.” Being bound to God and his will enables the person to become “free”—to be what God wants that person to be.” NICNT

¹² “The freedom of the Christian is not freedom to do what one wants, but freedom to obey God—willingly, joyfully, naturally.” NICNT

1. We didn't know any better – When we don't know God, we only know self. If we don't know that we can be anything more than we are, we are doomed to live in that reality. **God built us for more but we were blinded. We only knew to do what we knew to do and why we did it.**
 2. We had an active engine that caused more sin – in addition to the ignorance and slavery, we actually had an **internal engine** that was **contrary to God. We had the FLESH in us that was wanting more selfishness.** We had the enemy making it worse and stirring it up to destroy itself. We were continually driven toward separation from God and it was all happening underneath the surface. Slaves.
- The supernatural power to fight sin – a critical component is that **before Christ we were powerless to fight our desires in that we would only leave a void where they had been. We were powerless to get rid of self because it's all we had.** We were powerless to rise up, outside of simply traditional morality standards (give up prostitutes to focus on the family, give up heroin to be stable to get a job, etc.). **Sin had it's way with us. But when we are emptied out of sin by Christ's blood, we are FILLED with the Holy Spirit that is not just a placeholder or a 'thing' that fills space, but the very PERSON of God who not only fills, but is actively empowering us to align with God and to live godly lives.** Whatever scenario we find ourselves in there is the presence of the Holy Spirit to help us through that scenario so that God is glorified (whether that be mundane, or temptation, or sin).
 - have become slaves of righteousness. – now, **in contrast** (through slave language) **to being slaves to sin (only able to sin, driven to sin), we are now slaves of God-ways (righteousness – able to do right, driven to do right).**
 - I am speaking in human terms, because of your natural limitations.¹³ – **Paul was brilliant at teaching in context.** He shifted his message based on who he was talking to and where he was communicating. **In Paul's day, slavery¹⁴ was roughly 25% or 1/5th of the population (50 million pop in 1st**

¹³ "Paul's claim that he is speaking "in a human way" may have a neutral⁴² or a negative significance, depending on how we interpret "because of the weakness of your flesh."⁴⁴ Three different interpretations are possible: (1) "because of the difficulty you have as human beings in understanding things" (2) "because of your insensitivity to spiritual things caused by the continuing influence of your fallen natures",⁴⁶ (3) "because of the temptation to live independently that is typical of your human nature." The first two are similar in viewing the problem as basically "intellectual"—Paul writes as he does to help them understand—while the third sees the problem to be basically "moral"—Paul writes what he does because his readers need to hear it. Paul's wording suggests that it is his manner of speaking that he refers to, so we should prefer one of the first two options. Of these two, the first is too weak and the second too strong. Both "weakness" and "flesh"⁵⁰ depict what it is to be human apart from God and his Spirit. As such, they are not always strictly negative, but neither are they simply "neutral." Here Paul's point would appear to be that human nature produces a weakness in understanding that can be overcome in this life only by the use of (imperfect) analogies. However, Paul is not withdrawing or "apologizing" for his slavery imagery. Indeed, he goes right ahead and uses it twice more in this passage with the same application (vv. 19, 22). It is just that Paul recognizes that his language could be interpreted to mean that Christian experience bears the same marks of degradation, fear, and confinement that were typical of secular slavery. But, while shorn of these characteristics, life in the new realm of righteousness and life does mean that a person is given over to a master who requires absolute and unquestioned obedience; and to make this point, the image of slavery is quite appropriate." NICNT

¹⁴ <https://www.britishmuseum.org/exhibitions/nero-man-behind-myth/slavery-ancient-rome>

century = 10 million slaves). It was a significant part of the basis of economy in the Roman Empire (forced labor). They tended to come from 4 sources, none of which were race-related: those born into slavery; prisoners of war; indentured servants who sold themselves to pay off debt; or criminals serving a sentence. The condition of your life as a slave depended specifically on your master. If you had a good, fair, and empowering master, you were paid a wage, given authority, allowed to be educated and earn degrees, status in society. If you didn't, the very nature that a slave was owned (property, not legal persons), allowed for terrible treatment with little justice and few rights. There were multiple pathways to become a freed person (freedmen through manumission), if your master allowed it. Slavery was something they all knew about so it was an easy metaphor.

- For just as you once presented your members as slaves – presenting your body is a fancy way of saying, 'choosing or committing to do something.'
- to impurity¹⁵ – this word means uncleanness. Whatever we would consider Godly and pure, this is the opposite. We once gave our lives, bodies, and choices over to doing selfish and sinful things.
- and to lawlessness¹⁶ leading to more lawlessness, - and we not only did general sinful things out of selfishness, but we actually transgressed, did things that we knew weren't right (broke obvious rules). When we did those things it opened up the possibility and drive to do more wrong things. It was a snowball effect.
- so now present your members as slaves to righteousness leading to sanctification^{17, 18} – Just as we allowed our natural bent to get us in trouble and actually chose to do bad things, now that we are free in Christ, we are to do the opposite. Now we allow the bent of having the Holy Spirit drive us toward righteousness without hindering it with sin and selfishness. When we used to choose to sin willfully, now we choose to do obedience willfully and on purpose. All of this leads to us becoming more like Christ (sanctified means being made more holy – set apart as God's).
- For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. – This is an awkward, albeit contextually and metaphorically consistent, way of saying, when we were ignorant in our sin and choosing to do wrong, we were removed from God-stuff. We

¹⁵ Impurity = Akatharsia – “from the neg. a, and kathairo, to cleanse. Uncleanness, filth, in a natural or physical sense; moral uncleanness, lewdness, incontinence in general.” (Lexical Aids to the NT, NASB).

¹⁶ Wickedness = Anomia – “transgression of the law, iniquity. As an adjective = lawless, not having, knowing, or acknowledging the law.” (Lexical Aids to the NT, NASB).

¹⁷ Holiness = Hagiasmos – “sanctification, translated ‘holiness.’ Separation unto God. The resultant state, the behavior befitting those so separated, this sanctification resulting in the abstaining from fornication. The state of being sanctified, sanctification not as a process, but as the results of a process. The result of justification upon the sinner in making him just, recognizing the rights of God on his life. It means not only the activity of the Holy Spirit to set man apart unto salvation but also enabling him to be holy even as God is holy. It is not only the transfer of a sinner into the ranks of the redeemed but he change in the character of the redeemed sinner to be holy even as God is.” (Lexical Aids to the NT, NASB).

¹⁸ “‘Sanctification’ may refer to the state of “holiness,” as the end product of a life of living in service of righteousness.⁵⁹ But most of Paul’s uses of this word have an active connotation: the process of “becoming holy.” This is probably the case here also.⁶¹ Committing ourselves as slaves to doing what is right before God (“righteousness”) results in living that is increasingly God-centered and world-renouncing.” NICNT

were separated from doing things that please God. We were 'free' (in comparison to enslaved) from godliness. It wasn't driving us. This of course, is talking about freedom in a negative way.

- Practical Analysis
 - Contrasting the outcome of sin vs. godly living
 - Romans 6:21-23 – *"But what fruit were you getting at that time from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death. ²² But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the fruit you get leads to sanctification and its end, eternal life. ²³ For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."*
 - But what fruit – fruit is used commonly in the bible as a metaphor of outcomes, outworkings, effects, results, implications, manifestations, all the things that COME FROM a source. Just as a fruit tree just makes fruit and it shows up, so too are many things showing up in our lives because of what's inside the root of us.
 - were you getting at that time from the things of which you are now ashamed? – What was the result of living apart from God? How did that work for ya? What were the ramifications of doing it our own way? Clearly there are things that we chose to do and be a part of that make us ashamed now that we know the truth and the reality of God being at the center.
 - The results of giving in to our sinful impulses
 - What are examples of results of sinful living? – Call it out! Broken marriages? STD's? Unwanted pregnancies? Addictions? Estrangement from family? Broken trust? Lost jobs? Financial ruin? Regret? PTSD? Prison record? Demonic bondage?
 - The problem with a 'Christian Nation' – We get a lot of the benefits of godly living without the relationship. The alleged Christian nation (we started our country with leaders who had a high value for Christian principles) we live in (actually I would call it a Christian Nation hangover) is laced with morality living demand. We are taught and our consciences are loaded with Judeo-Christian values. If Christianity is taught as mere sin-management or a means to morality, we will lose that game because most Americans are moral enough to play the game well. But they didn't do it FOR or WITH the Lord. They did it of their own power for their own purposes.
 - All GOOD is God – there's no such thing as good apart from God. God's nature defines what good is. It's a misnomer that unbelievers can do good things apart from God. They are actually ignorantly doing God-things, they just don't know it. Anything good, that blesses people or God, is a God-thing.

Sinners do good stuff all the time, but we just need to recognize it's a God-thing and not just a neutral good thing.

- The problem with praying grandmas – we get blessings when we shouldn't. We hear God and see Him moving in our lives when our behavior shouldn't see any of that. People think they 'just get out of stuff', when in fact it is either the mercy of God (because He loves them) or the prayers of the saints rescuing them from themselves and their situations.
- The result = people don't think they need God because many times they have the things they need, they 'feel' like they are blessed by God, and they are likely more moral than some of their Christian neighbors.
 - The WHY (of morality) matters – the reason, the motivations, the lens through which we believe and think matters a lot. Why? Because Christianity is primarily relational and therefore the heart matters most. For example: let's say I never cheated on my wife because we lived on a deserted island and there were no other people. That's different than living in a busy city with a lot of temptation options and choosing to remain faithful to my wife. The results are the same but I don't get credit for the first one. The WHY matters. When non-believers do good things, they are doing it for a variety of reasons, none of which is obedience to God for His pleasure and glory. They may do the same things but not for the same reasons. They may be more moral but they may do so to avoid conscience issues, or to better society, or to 'be a good person' (feeling proud of themselves). The result is moral living. The reason is self. That type of goodness, godliness, morality, doesn't count in God's eyes the same way as a believer doing it. Ours is relational. Our hearts are engaged and He is the focus.
 - The scary part – although I mentioned it above, I think it's worth mentioning again: the scary part is that Americans are left believing that they don't need God in their lives to be 'good people' and don't see any benefit different in being a Christian. We, as the Church, have done a terrible job describing the differences.
- For the end of those things is death. – the ultimate end of living apart from God is eternal separation and spiritual death. Practically speaking when we sin (anything outside of God-choice is sin) we break stuff and kill stuff.
- But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, - NOW, for True Believers, that you have been set free from sin and become slaves of God – committed, consistently obedient to God (remember Paul's definition is when you consistently commit yourself to someone you are a slave to that person).

- the fruit you get – the results of doing it God's way are...
- leads to sanctification – We are transformed into the image of Christ. We are made more alive. We become who we were built to be (created intent). We are formed more and more into holiness (set apart for God's special purpose).
- and its end, eternal life. – the ultimate end of doing it God's way is eternal life. Eternal life is not just quantity but also quality. It's God-type life. That begins for us now and only gets stronger.
- For the wages¹⁹ of sin is death²⁰ - the outcome, the result, what we are owed at the end of a lifestyle of sin (contrary behavior to God) is death (eternal and spiritual). It's what sin earns us.
- but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.²¹ – on the flipside of that is the free gift of God (not earned) is eternal life in Christ Jesus our master (lord). Death is earned; life is given. Hell is earned; Heaven is given. Why? Sin is 'natural to humanity'. It's what happens when God doesn't rescue us.

Conclusion

- Getting what we don't deserve - If the wages of sin is death, then that's what we earned, but what do we get because of Jesus Christ? Eternal Life – give Him praise!

¹⁹ ὀψώνιον is not common in the New Testament, occurring once in each of five books. Derived from ὄψον, "cooked food", and ὠνέομαι, "to buy", it was used of "ration money" paid to soldiers. From this it came to be used of "pay" or "wages" in general, though its most frequent use remained that for the pay of soldiers. LSJ attest a use for an allowance given to a slave, but this was not common. H. W. Heidland says it is used "occasionally" outside the military sphere (TDNT, V, p. 591).

²⁰ "Death is no arbitrary sentence, but the inevitable consequence of their sin." Morris, L. (1988). The Epistle to the Romans (p. 267). W.B. Eerdmans; Inter-Varsity Press.

²¹ "We may summarize the verse by noting, with Lloyd-Jones, its three contrasts: the master that is served—sin versus God; the outcome of that service—death versus eternal life; and the means by which this outcome is attained—a "wage" earned versus a gift received." NICNT