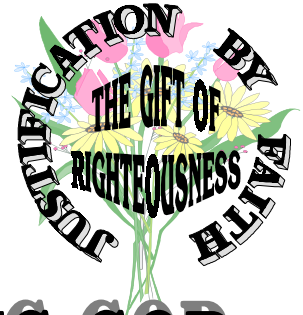




The Epistle to the Romans

Lesson Number 20



FROM SERVING SIN TO SERVING GOD

6:15 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. – Romans 6:15-23 ^{NKJV}

INTRODUCTION

The revelations of this section of Scripture are some of the most arresting in all of Scripture. Throughout history, few believers have been able to apprehend them. There have even been lengthy periods of time where they have been almost totally obscured. It is evident that Satan has done his utmost to remove these proclamations from man's consideration.

However, whenever the focus of believers has been placed on these things, renewal has taken place, and vast bastions of false thought have been cast down. The power of the Reformation Movement, for example, is seen in the way in which it toppled false theology that had dominated

the Christian world for over 1,000 years. **When men can see the truth of the Gospel, Satan can no longer hold them.** The Gospel proclaims deliverance to the captives and the setting at liberty of those who are bruised (Lk 4:18). There is no bondage as fierce and unrelenting as religious bondage, and no bruise so grievous as that inflicted by spurious religion. Throughout history, only the faithful and powerful proclamation of the Gospel has been able to bring freedom to such souls.

A BRIEF SUMMARY

Because of the strength of this section of Scripture, I want to labor to keep before you the wonderful revelations

contained in it. Our faith will be as solid as our apprehension of these realities.

- RIGHTEOUSNESS ANNOUNCED.** The announcement of a righteousness from God is made by the Gospel of Christ (1:16-17).
- NEED DECLARED.** The need for this righteousness is proclaimed in 1:19-3:20.
- MEANS PROCLAIMED.** The means of appropriating this righteousness is faith, as affirmed in 3:21-4:25.
- EFFECTS DECLARED.** The effects of righteousness are powerfully delineated in 5:1-11.
- THE SOURCE IS AFFIRMED.** Righteousness, just as sin and death,

In Regeneration, the Entirety of Life is changed as we become willing Servants of God--by Given O. Blakely

LESSON OUTLINE

- I. SHALL WE SIN? (6:15)
- II. DO YOU NOT KNOW? (6:16)
- III. GOD BE THANKED! (6:17)
- IV. SET FREE TO BECOME SLAVES (6:18)
- V. SPEAKING ACCOMMODATINGLY (6:19)
- VI. WHEN WE WERE FREE FROM RIGHTEOUSNESS (6:20)
- VII. WHAT FRUIT DID YOU HAVE THEN? (6:21)
- VIII. NOW THAT YOU HAVE FRUIT (6:22)
- IX. WAGES AND THE GIFT (6:23)

came through one—the Man Christ Jesus (5:12-19).

- ❑ **THE ROLE OF THE LAW.** The Law entered that *“sin might increase,”* confirming the absolute need of the remission of sin and the possession of a righteousness from God (5:20).
- ❑ **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GRACE.** Counteracting the devastating effects of Adam’s

transgression, the grace that comes through Jesus Christ reigns *“through righteousness to bring eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord”* (5:21).

- ❑ **SIN NOT ENCOURAGED BY GRACE.** The grace of God does not encourage, excuse, or condone sin in any way (6:1-2).
- ❑ **DEATH TO SIN.** A death to sin occurred when we were baptized into Christ’s death (6:3-14). We began life in Christ with our *“old man”* crucified, owing it nothing, and no longer under the dominion of the sinful nature.

Because men tend to speculate and philosophize about grace rather than embrace it, the Spirit will now teach us extensively about its effects. His teaching will assist in freeing us from the shackles of impersonal and impractical theology, which are blights of our time.

These corruptions have been popularized in our time by an emphasis on academic approaches to the things of God. A significant percentage of the church is being held captive by professed scholars

and analysts. Their hold, however, can be broken by apprehending the message before us.

There will be no question about the effectiveness of grace to enable the believer to live triumphantly. **Grace must be ignored and despised in order to sin.** It will become apparent that God hates sin. It is contrary to His nature, and He cannot abide it. He has gone to an unimaginable extent to free us of the guilt and power of sin. His provisions are effective against sin.

The thought that men would seek to justify or excuse their involvement in sin is unthinkable. Yet, men have even created theologies that permit sin to continue in them. The Spirit will now strike down their spurious reasoning with Divine power. He will powerfully confirm that not being *“under the Law”* makes absolutely no provision for sin in any form. **Salvation gets rid of sin, and makes no allowance for it to remain.** The knowledge of this brings comfort to us. It also empowers us to fight the good fight of faith.

SHALL WE SIN?

“ 6:15 What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? Certainly not!” It is the nature of *“flesh”* to justify sin. If it can do so at the expense of the grace of God, it is so much the better for it. Under the seductive influence of demons and their doctrines (1 Tim 4:1), men actually justify their sin by their theology. This is a reprehensible practice. Thus men view God as so loving, He tolerates the indulgence of His children. He is seen to be One who loves men in spite of their insolence and disobedience, even though no such representation is found in Scripture. Also, God is understood to never reject those whom He has accepted, even though there are numerous examples in Scripture that sharply conflict with that delusion: i.e., Esau (Heb 12:16-17), Saul (1 Sam 16:1), Israel (Psa 106:40), Judas (Acts 1:17-22), and etc.

The above cases represent sins of commission—of doing what was wrong.

There are others who simply do not do what is right. They fail to put on the whole armor of God (Eph 6:10-18), be sober and vigilant (1 Pet 5:8-9), and set their affection on things above (Col 3:1-3). Their lukewarmness is of little concern to them, because they entertain the notion that God is pleased enough with their profession. Their neglect is also sin, and is an attempt to exploit the grace of God, whether they are aware of it or not.

WHAT THEN?

The words *“What then”* mean *“What is the implication?”* The NLT reads, *“So since God’s grace has set us free from the law, does this mean we can go on sinning?”* Remember, the Spirit has affirmed, *“For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law, but under grace.”* Does this imply there is more of a tolerance of sin under grace than under Law? Are we free from any obligation to the Law. Does the fact that nothing is able to separate believers from

the love of God (Rom 9:37-39) mean that sin is no longer of any consequence?

Does personal iniquity no longer have the power to separate men from God (Isa 59:2)? Some doctrines teach this is true. However, the Spirit will now show us this is NOT true. First, the Spirit will declare that sin is totally unreasonable. Second, He will confirm it is not necessary. Third, He will reveal that those who live in sin **are** the servants of sin, just as surely as those who do not live in sin are servants of righteousness. **What we do reveals what we are and whom we serve!**

Again, the Spirit forbids us to entertain the thought that grace will allow for, or encourage, sin: *“God forbid!”* **The redemption that is in Christ Jesus makes no room for sin, only for the removal of sin!** What is even more, when sin is removed, or forgiven, we are also *“cleansed from all unrighteousness”* by the blood of Christ (1 John 1:9). That

deals with the matter of our character, and further conformity to the image of God's Son (Rom 8:29). Grace will not allow the entrance of what is removed.

SHALL WE SIN BECAUSE WE ARE NOT UNDER LAW?

Precisely in what sense are we "NOT under the law?" Does this mean we are no longer responsible to Divine law? Does it mean we have no interest in it, or that the Law has, so to speak, died? Indeed not! **WE are the ones who have died, not the Law!** We have become "dead to the Law through the body of Christ" (7:4). As already declared in this chapter, we are "dead with Christ," having been buried into His death through baptism (6:8).

In our death with Christ, we were moved into the realm of the Spirit. The Law that once condemned us was written upon our hearts and put into our minds (Heb 8:10; 10:16). We were brought into harmony with the Law because of the separation of the "body of sin" from us (6:6). In Christ our BASIC nature is that of the "new man" (Eph 4:24; Col 3:10). That is why we are "not under the law." The Law has no jurisdiction in the realm of the New Creation, for sin has no place there.

We are not under the "letter" of the Law, which kills, and gives no life (2 Cor 3:6). That is, the Law, by its spiritual and accurate code, cannot change the individual. It cannot get rid of sin or the

desire to sin. To put it another way, man cannot be changed by means of a Law he carries out in his own strength. Therefore, we become a new creation in Christ, with the "body of sin" being cut away from us through the "circumcision of Christ" (Col 2:11-12). That condition has removed us from the administration of the Law.

As our text will show, we have become slaves of Another, and He makes no provision for continuance in sin.

It is foolish to excuse sin by saying we are "not under the Law," for we ARE under the Lord Jesus Himself, who came to "magnify the Law and make it honorable" (Isa 42:21). The One who gave

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We are **not**, however, **without law**. We are now subject to a higher law that is powerful against sin, as well as condemning of it. This is the condition to which Paul refers in First Corinthians 9:21: "... though not being without the law of God but under the law of Christ." Under Christ we hate what the law condemns and love what it commends.

Himself for our sins will not overlook continuance in sin. If we thought the Law was demanding, what shall we say of the Lord Jesus, who is leading us to glory. He is bringing us to the realm where sin CANNOT exist, and total purity and holiness are found. Shall He abide indulgences in sin among His people along the way? Indeed, He will not!

Those in Christ Jesus are subject to Him, and obliged to obey Him. No anarchy is allowed in His Kingdom, and sin IS anarchy and rebellion. Thus, "not under the Law" does not mean without Law, or without responsibility to another.

The following verses will show the utter stupidity of such a notion. Sin will not in any way be condoned by Jesus. The entirety of His salvation is set against sin, determined to utterly destroy it. Those to come to Jesus come away from sin!

DO YOU NOT KNOW?

"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?" Now we come to the crux of the matter. Neither sin nor righteousness can issue from the Christian without the individual presenting himself to obey it. Both sin and righteousness demand that we **yield** to them. **Life in Christ** does not provide for either sin or righteousness to overpower us, or be imposed upon us against our will. We must "yield" to one or the other.

DO YOU NOT KNOW?

The expression beginning this line of reasoning is in the third verse: "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?" By saying, "Do you not know," the Spirit is showing how unreasonable it is to continue in sin. It requires a sort of spiritual insanity to sin after we have been forgiven of it and delivered from its power. This is not to say such a condition never arises, for provision has been made for the forgiveness of those who are already in Christ (1 John 1:7,9; 2:1). **Yet, when sin takes place, delusion and distorted thought preceded it.** It was

an act of foolishness, and must therefore be acknowledged and confessed before the Lord.

"Between the yoke of Christ and that of sin there is so much contrariety, that no one can bear them both; if we sin, we give ourselves up to the service of sin; but the faithful, on the contrary have been redeemed from the tyranny of sin, that they may serve Christ: it is therefore impossible for them to be remain bound to sin."
- John Calvin

This is not a mere technicality. Sin is not allowed in the presence of the Lord. Those who insist on clinging to it will be excluded from His presence. Either their

sin goes, or they will do! Thus, by saying, *“Do you not know,”* the Spirit is reminding us of what our *“inner man”* already knows. He is gently leading us back to the only acceptable manner of thought. At the same time, He is answering the foolish reasoning of men who continue to delight in sin, yet choose to be identified with Christ.

Living by faith will **NEVER** lead a person to sin (Rom 1:17)! Fellowship with Christ will **NEVER** lead a person to sin (1 Cor 1:9). Walking in the Spirit will **NEVER** lead a person to sin (Gal 5:17). Walking in the light will **NEVER** lead a person to sin (1 John 1:7). Being led by the Spirit will **NEVER** lead to sin (Rom 8:14). Men sin when they are *“drawn away”* by their own *“lust, and enticed,”* and yield to that enticement (James 1:14). They sin when they cease to walk by faith. They sin when they turn from fellowship with Christ. They sin when they are not walking in the Spirit. They sin when they are not walking in the light.

It is no wonder we are admonished, *“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness”* (1 John 1:9). Far be it for anyone to imagine that life in Christ reserves a place for transgression, and for involvement in the very thing from which Jesus frees us.

The Spirit will now reason with us about this matter. He will be forthright with us so that we may gain confidence to resist the devil on every quarter.

PRESENTING OURSELVES

“... to whom you present yourselves.” Here, the picture of being a slave differs from the ordinary perception. Slavery is here perceived as something that is willing—something preferred. To *“present yourselves”* is to choose the one to whom you prefer to be a slave. It is to step forward and say to the chosen master, *“What do you want me to do?”*

Willing Submission

Presenting ourselves is an act of willing submission. This is a unique view of those who are in Christ Jesus—they are free to pick their master! This is **NOT**

true of those outside of Christ. They are not free, but are in *“bondage”* (Gal 4:3,9,25). Thus, prior to our baptism into Christ’s death, we were *“slaves of sin”* (6:20). While technically we chose sin, from another viewpoint we had no choice, for we were *“by nature children of wrath”* (Eph 2:1). We had to be alerted by the call of the Gospel before we could even desire accord with our Creator and Redeemer.

SLAVES TO OBEY

The point being made is simply this: **our conduct reveals which master we are under.** That is a startling thought, to be sure. But it will serve to awaken lethargic souls who are, like Eve, being deceived by the wicked one.

In a sense, all of life is really presenting ourselves to do the will of another. It is stepping forward to our chosen master and saying, *“What wilt thou have me to do?”* Like it or not, *“you are slaves to the one whom you obey.”*^{NIV} The NLT reads, *“whatever you choose to obey becomes your master?”* The NJB reads, *“you are the slave of him you obey.”* The BBE extends the thought, *“you are the servants of him to whom you give yourselves to do his desire.”*

Slavery to the master is contingent on presenting ourselves to him. It occurs when we make allowance to do the will of that master, whoever or whatever it is. In other words, we WILL become obedient to the one to whom we subject ourselves.

Notice the wording of this text. It serves to alert us to the seriousness of sin, yet not crush the tender heart. Slavery to the master is contingent on **presenting ourselves** to him. It occurs when we make allowance to do the will of that master, whoever or whatever it is. In other words, **we WILL become obedient to the one to whom we**

subject ourselves. We are the slaves of the one whose work we do, and whose cause we promote. Those who do the devil’s will are not God’s servants! Conversely, those who do the Father’s will are not Satan’s servants.

This is a rather technical point, but it must be grasped by faith. Men tend to overestimate their ability, thinking they can extricate themselves from the effects of bad decisions through the exercise of their will. But this is not at all the case! **The will of man is impacted by the one to whom he presents himself.** When we make ourselves available to either Satan or God, certain results will follow. Neither God nor Satan will ignore our willingness to be subject to them.

When we present ourselves to the Lord as *“a living sacrifice”* (Rom 12:1-2), this proves to be a great blessing. However, when we make place for the devil (Eph 4:27), we bring upon ourselves a most grievous situation.

No Guarantee

Scripture offers no guarantee that we can recover from such foolishness. It is true, God can give such poor and ignorant souls repentance, but it is a *“perhaps,”* or *“perchance”* matter (Acts 8:22; 2 Tim 2:25). **Men cannot flirt with sin without paying the consequences!**

Viewed retrospectively, this is yet another way of saying, *“You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles? Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit”* (Matt 7:16-18).

This is to be common knowledge among us: i.e., *“Do you not know?”* It is not only wrong to be ignorant of this reality, it out of harmony with the nature of the New Covenant. Keep in mind, *“No man can serve two masters”* (Matt 6:24).

SIN LEADING TO DEATH

“. . . whether of sin leading to death . . .” Other versions read, *“sin resulting in death,”*^{NASB} *“sin, which leads*

to death,^{2NIV} “if to sin, the end being death.”^{2BBE}

There is an outcome to all action! If men choose to sin—and sin must be chosen—they must know that sin leads to, or results in, death. Other versions read, “sin leading to death,”^{2NKJV} “sin resulting in death.”^{2NASB}

The Seriousness of Sin

Sin thrusts one into “the sleep of death” (Psa 13:3). It dulls the heart, putting it to sleep, and sears the conscience so that the individual no longer desires the things of God. Sin is like a bludgeon that pounds the heart into a state of unconsciousness. The will is weakened by sin, and spiritual understanding begins to wane. It is not long until the things of God are not loved or sought, and soon they are forgotten. Because of this, sin drives a wedge between the individual and God.

Men must not allow themselves to embrace a theology that rejects this Divine utterance. If “sin leads to death,” it is certainly not inconsequential. The degree of death is not the point here, as though there was no hope for the child of God who sins. The point is that sin **always** leads to death. Death is unavoidable unless men cease to serve sin. How, then, can anyone treat lightly the matter of transgression? Who can justify a light regard for sin, or a casual approach to it? Sin surely leads to death!

OBEDIENCE LEADING TO RIGHTEOUSNESS

“... or of obedience leading to righteousness.” This is a most powerful affirmation, revealing the true nature of life in Christ Jesus. Other versions read, “obedience resulting in righteousness,”^{2NASB} “obedience, which leads to righteousness,”^{2NIV} “to do the desire of God, the end being righteousness,”^{2BBE} “you can choose to obey God and receive his approval.”^{2NLT}

Here is an expression that conflicts with some theology. It may at first appear self-contradictory, for righteousness has been declared as “imputed” and “without the law” (4:6-8, 11, 22-24). **If**

righteousness is imputed to us upon the basis of our faith, how is it that obedience leads to righteousness?

Different Expressions

Notice the difference in the expressions concerning sin and obedience. Sin leads to “death,” but obedience leads to “righteousness.” It might appear that obedience should lead to “life,” as compared to sin leading to “death.” There are two critical matters to be considered. How we view them impacts on this text.

- **The type of obedience.** This is not obedience as viewed under the Law.

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The Spirit has already identified obedience with faith: “obedience to the faith,”^{2KJV} “the obedience of faith,”^{2NASB} or “the obedience that comes from faith”^{2NIV} (1:5). This is the obedience that springs from faith—obedience from the heart (6:17).

- **What leads to spiritual life.** Life does not come from obedience, but is “the gift of God” (6:23). Therefore, with care, the Spirit does not affirm that obedience leads to life, but that it leads to righteousness.

The “righteousness” that results from the obedience coming from faith is a godly life. This is the “righteousness” to which believers are to awaken, and is the opposite of sinning. As it is written, “Awake to righteousness, and sin” (1 Cor 15:34). It is the “righteousness” which is **DONE** by the person born of God (1 John

2:29). Here, in the matter of righteous living, is where the children of God are manifested, or made known. As it is written, “Little children, let no one deceive you; the one who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous . . . By this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious: anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor the one who does not love his brother”^{2NASB} (1 John 3:7,10).

Conduct Is Important

This passage is emphasizing the importance of our personal acts, or behavior. **The Spirit will not permit the truth to be divorced from conduct.** We daily face contradicting influences which we cannot ignore. In fact, we will invariably yield to one of the other. We cannot remain neutral, imagining that we are governing our own lives. There really is no condition in which we are the masters. We are always under the mastery of another. That is how we have been created. **Our text affirms our master is the one to whom we yield.**

There are only two manners in which yielding is evidenced: **sin or obedience.** That is a remarkable statement of the case, and conducive to sobriety and profitable thought. The person who sins has already yielded to his master. Conversely, the one who obeys has also yielded previously to his Master.

The character of every person is bent toward death or toward righteousness. It is attracted primarily to either good or evil. In this regard, disobedience is anything in which God is **not** served—any condition in which we do not yield ourselves to obey God. Disobedience can be a **manner of life** as well as a particular thought or deed. It always is the result of failing to yield to God, and choosing to yield to the devil. Disobedience is never inadvertent.

Faulty thinking

Here, we also come to grips with the faulty thinking of the natural man. Flesh views obedience to God as depriving one of the enjoyment of some benefit. It is seen

as primarily restrictive, with no real profit realized for the individual.

There is not a grain of truth to all of these imaginations. You see, however, how successful Satan was in deceiving Eve on this very matter. He reasoned with her, *“For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil”* (Gen 3:5). When *“the woman saw that the*

tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise” (Gen 3:6), she did not see the tree as it really was, but through the filter of Satan’s words. Her disobedience, together with that of Adam, led to death, just as our text affirms.

Obedience is Best

Obedience, on the other hand, yields a righteous life, characterized by holiness,

and filled with *“all joy and peace in believing”* (Rom 14:17). All the children of God can *“yield,”* or *“present”* themselves as slaves to obedience. This is made possible when righteousness is imputed to us because of our faith. It only remains for those who receive this righteousness to be stirred up by the truth of it, and walk by faith. Then practical righteousness will be found in them as they eagerly seek to do the will of their Lord.

GOD BE THANKED!

“¹⁷But 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.” With comforting power, the Holy Spirit assesses the condition of those in Christ Jesus. He has already declared their baptism to have effectively united them with Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection. Now He will further comment on their baptism, showing it to be a pivotal expression of their faith, and the point at which they participated in the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

GOD BE THANKED!

God is thanked for things in which He Himself is perceived as being active. The Lord is present in every aspect of salvation, and He is to be thanked and praised for that circumstance.

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Active in Every Aspect of Regeneration

☐ The Father gave the Son *“power over all flesh,”* so the Son could *“give eternal life”* to *“as many as”* the Father gave to Him (John 17:2).

- ☐ Jesus *“found”* us when we were lost (Lk 19:10).
- ☐ We were drawn to Jesus by the Father (John 6:44,65).
- ☐ God gave us *“ministers by whom we believed”* (1 Cor 3:5).
- ☐ The Gospel was preached to us *“with the Holy Spirit send down from heaven”* (1 Pet 1:12).
- ☐ The Holy Spirit convicted us of *“sin, righteousness, and judgment”* (John 16:8-11).
- ☐ God opened our hearts so we could respond to the Gospel (Acts 16:14).
- ☐ We *“believed through grace”* (Acts 18:27).
- ☐ God the Father and the exalted Christ gave us repentance (Acts 11:18; 5:31).
- ☐ The Father revealed Jesus was His son, thereby provoking our confession of Him (Matt 16:16-17).
- ☐ We confessed Jesus was Lord by the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 12:3).
- ☐ By one Spirit, we were baptized into one body (1 Cor 12:13).
- ☐ Our hearts were circumcised by Jesus (Col 2:11-12).
- ☐ God made us alive when we were *“dead in trespasses and sins”* (Eph 2:1).
- ☐ We were raised up from baptism by faith in the *“operation of God”* (Col 2:12).
- ☐ We were raised up *“by the glory of the Father”* (Rom 6:4).
- ☐ Our *“old man”* was *“crucified”* for us when we died with Jesus (Rom 6:6).
- ☐ We were *“born of the Spirit”* (John

- 3:8).
- ☐ God the Father has *“begotten us again to a lively hope”* (1 Pet 1:3).
- ☐ God, of His own will, *“begat He us with the word of truth”* (James 1:18).
- ☐ The Lord removed our stony heart (Ezek 11:9).
- ☐ We were given a new heart of flesh (Ezek 36:26).
- ☐ We are God’s *“workmanship,”* created in Christ Jesus (Eph 2:10).
- ☐ God has put His laws into our hearts and written them upon our minds (Heb 10:16).
- ☐ We were *“added to the church”* by the Lord Himself (Acts 2:47).
- ☐ Our sins were personally remitted by God, who *“forgave us all trespasses”* (Col 2:13).

You can no doubt think of many more Divine involvements in our regeneration. I have just listed twenty-six of them. These only have to do with our **initial** conversion. The work continues to an even greater degree once we are in Christ and living by faith.

Deity continues to be prominent in our lives as we advance to glory. There is no point in spiritual life where Divine involvement is not required. A mere sampling of such activity will confirm its prominence.

- ☐ **God the Father** is working in us to will and to do (Phil 2:13), teaching us to love one another (1 Thess 4:9), sending *“every good and perfect gift”* (James 1;17), and giving us the *“spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him”* (Eph 1:17).
- ☐ **Jesus the Son** is teaching us (Eph

4:20), interceding for us (Heb 7:25) bringing us to glory (Heb 2:10), and manifesting Himself to us (John 14:23).

□ **The Holy Spirit** is changing us from glory to glory (2 Cor 3:18), strengthening our inner man (Eph 3:15-17), leading us (Rom 8:13), and making intercession for us (Rom 8:26).

The proclamation of Divine involvement in every aspect of salvation is so unmistakably clear throughout Scripture, one wonders how it can be missed. In my judgment, the conspicuous absence of these realities in much of the preaching of our day reveals a most serious condition.

When the Apostle cries out **"GOD BE THANKED!"** it is with all of this, and more, in mind. It is tragic beyond description that multitudes of believers rarely hear of these realities. They are brought to associate their conversion with their own decisions. This circumstance is one of the reasons for the text before us. In it, the Holy Spirit rips from our thinking any view that would minimize sin, or move us to excuse it. **The presence of sin is evidence of the absence of God.** To the degree that sin dominates us, God is not with us.

THOUGH YOU WERE SLAVES

Here is a vivid description of our former lives: "slaves," or "servants," of sin!" **Sin ruled us!** We "obeyed" its dictates, and were shackled to it. The word "slaves" or "servants"^{KJV} describes a servile or subservient condition. It is a state where the purpose of another is being served—in the case of our former lives, it is Satan. A synonym is "bondman," which emphasizes a twofold condition. First, the individual is formally enslaved, and is not free to serve another. Second, there is shackling or restraint, so that the person is forced to serve the one to whom he is bound.

When we were "slaves to sin," we were "children of disobedience," and the "prince of the power of the air" worked in us (Eph 2:2). We were "taken captive" by him "to do his will" (2 Tim 2:26). This was a helpless state from which we could not

extricate ourselves. We had to have a Savior, One who would deliver us from the devil and from sin.

The glory of our text is that we "**WERE slaves to sin**"—it is a state that formerly existed, but does not now! This is much like the expression describing the Corinthian believers: "And such **were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God**" (1 Cor 6:10).

An Important Point

Although I have said this before, I am constrained to say it again. Our preaching and teaching must assist people

Our preaching and teaching must assist people in seeing who they WERE outside of Christ and who they ARE in Him. They are not to be addressed as though they were still servants of sin. Nor, indeed, are they to be approached as though they never were slaves to sin.

in seeing who they **WERE** outside of Christ and who they **ARE** in Him. They are not to be addressed as though they were still servants of sin. Nor, indeed, are they to be approached as though they never were slaves to sin. If men and women are to gain the victory in life, they must be made acutely aware of the greatness of their deliverance from servitude to sin. They must be convinced their very conversion is evidence of the powerful working of God Almighty.

OBEDIENCE FROM THE HEART

"... you obeyed from the heart." Other versions read, "you became obedient from the heart,"^{NASB} "you wholeheartedly obeyed,"^{NIV} "you have obeyed with all your heart,"^{NLT} "You have given whole-hearted obedience."^{NJB}

Obedience Under the Law

A lot is involved in obedience from

the heart. This obedience is compared with submission under the Law. In that case, men were motivated by fear and dread, for the Law held constant threats over their heads. The thundercloud of death hovered over the people: "the soul that sinneth, it shall die" (Ezek 18:4,20).

Thus Jesus came to "free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death" (Heb 2:15). Even though men failed in their efforts to perfectly keep the Law, yet these words sounded in their ears: "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them" (Gal 3:10; Deut 27:26; Jer 11:3).

Obedience under the Law was not wholehearted. This was largely owing to the fact that the people did not have a new heart, and thus could only be moved by fear. It was a slavish obedience that thought more of the reappraisals of disobeying than the advantages of obedience.

A New Kind of Obedience

How different obedience is in the New Covenant. The prophets declared a day was coming when men would be forward to obey God, and would not need to be threatened. "And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh: **that they may walk in my statutes, and keep mine ordinances, and do them: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God**" (Ezek 11:19-20). "And I will put my spirit within you, and **cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them**" (Ezek 36:27). "And David my servant shall be king over them; and they all shall have one shepherd: **they shall also walk in my judgments, and observe my statutes, and do them**" (Ezek 37:24).

Obeying "from the heart" is being motivated by a "new heart" rather than an old law. It is having a preference for the will of God, and being aggressive to seek it out and conform to it. This is the very thing Moses promised would happen. How strange it must have sounded to Israel of old, yet how it must have captured the attention of those who

believed. *“And the LORD thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live”* (Deut 30:6). Those promises are fulfilled in Christ Jesus.

Willing Obedience

Throughout the book of Acts, the result of a stony heart being removed is revealed. Upon hearing the word of the Gospel, people became aggressive to do the will of God. Do you not remember some of their expressions? *“Men and brethren, what shall we do?”* (Acts 2:37). *“See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?”* (Acts 8:36). *“Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?”* (Acts 9:6). *“Sirs, what must I do to be saved?”* (Acts 16:31).

Obedience Motivated by Faith

This is obedience motivated by the belief of the Gospel of Christ. People become *“willing in the day”* of God’s power (Psa 110:3), something rarely found during the administration of the Old Covenant. Faith exercises a powerful constraint upon the soul. As it is written, *“But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women”* (Acts 8:12). *“And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagoge, believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized”* (Acts 18:8). *“When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus”* (Acts 19:5).

It is not our business to talk people into being baptized, using arguments from language or threats of future condemnation. It IS our business to preach the Gospel with power, that men may be constrained to believe. Then they will obey! Ponder how blessed the Gospel is. *“Then Peter said to them, ‘Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit’”* (Acts 2:38). *“God, having raised up His Son Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every*

one of you from his iniquities” (Acts 3:26). *“And by Him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses”* (Acts 13:39). In the wake of such powerful proclamations, people can become willing!

Gladly Obeying

Obedying from the heart involves a certain gladness. Obedience is cheerfully rendered to God because His Gospel is perceived and believed. Thus it is written, *“Then they that gladly received his word were baptized”* (Acts 2:41). *“And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did. . . . And there was great joy in that city”* (Acts 8:6-8). *“And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed”* (Acts 13:48).

What About Our Day?

When the Lord is working, a jailor can believe in the midst of an earthquake aftermath, while about to take his life with a sword. Gentiles can rejoice and believe while subjected to the opposition of Jewish leaders. An Ethiopian eunuch can believe in the middle of a desert.

It is possible for obedience to be joyfully rendered in this day! This is, after all, *“the day of salvation”* (2 Cor 6:2), and we ought to expect obedience to be *“from the heart.”* The current prevalence of psychological preaching, “seeker-friendly” environments, and marketing the Gospel with carnal salesmanship, are anything but admirable. It is all too artificial, and the responses produced by these circumstances are anything but commendable.

When the Lord is working, a jailor can believe in the midst of an earthquake

aftermath, while about to take his life with a sword. Gentiles can rejoice and believe while subjected to the opposition of Jewish leaders. An Ethiopian eunuch can believe in the middle of a desert. Surroundings and methods are not the appointed means of producing heartfelt obedience. It is the proclamation of the Gospel, which is God’s unique *“power unto salvation”* (1:16).

The believers in Rome had heard that *“glorious Gospel”* (2 Cor 4:4; 1 Tim 1:11), believed it with joy, and eagerly obeyed from their hearts.

THE FORM OF THE DOCTRINE

“. . . you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed.” (doctrine)^{NASB} Obedience has a beginning point—i.e., *“you BECAME obedient.”* In Scripture, that beginning point is identified with our baptism into Christ; i.e., *“buried with Him through baptism into death”* (6:4). Thus responses to the Gospel are expressed as follows: *“when they believed . . . they were baptized.”* Other references are provided under *“Willing Obedience.”*

Our initial obedience was not a mere formality, like fulfilling a technical requirement. It was motivated by a heart that had been *“purified by faith”* (Acts 15:9). That obedience also involved the *“form of the doctrine,”* which was baptism itself. This sacred ordinance, much disputed in the Christian community, is the only ordinance given to men that can be called *“the FORM of the doctrine.”* In this case, the doctrine is the Gospel. In its essence, or at its foundation, the Gospel is the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus, as affirmed in First Corinthians 15:1-4. In our baptism we die, are buried, and are raised with Jesus. We were baptized **“into His death,”** **“buried with Him,”** and *“raised”* to walk in the newness of life (6:3-4).

This was a very real participation in the Gospel of Christ, in which we were united with Jesus in every aspect of the Gospel. We became dead to sin, put away the old man, and were given new life. Is it not uplifting to ponder our union with Jesus in death, burial, and resurrection?

There should be no question about the manner in which we are baptized. If baptism is the *“form of the doctrine,”* its appearance must agree with the doctrine of which is it the *“form,”* or likeness. Thus, we go down into the water, and are raised up out of the water.

WHICH WAS DELIVERED YOU

what was delivered, but the believers. **They were delivered to the doctrine.** Both the *“doctrine”* (the Gospel of Christ) and the *“form of the doctrine”* (baptism) are teachers. Believers are delivered, or handed over, to them in confidence they will be effectively taught by them.

If the Law was an effective

In this case, the doctrine is not what was delivered, but the believers. They were delivered to the doctrine. Both the “doctrine” (the Gospel of Christ) and the “form of the doctrine” (baptism) are teachers. Believers are delivered, or handed over, to them in confidence they will be effectively taught by them.

The wording of the text is peculiar: *“that form of doctrine which was delivered you.”*^{KJV} Other versions read, *“that form of doctrine to which you were delivered,”*^{NKJV} *“that form of teaching whereunto ye were delivered,”*^{ASV} *“that form of teaching to which you were committed,”*^{NASB} *“the form of teaching to which you were entrusted,”*^{NIV} and *“the form of teaching into which ye were instructed.”*^{BBE}

Men Delivered to Doctrine

Ordinarily, one would think of the doctrine as being delivered to men. **Here, however, men are delivered to the doctrine.** In this case, the doctrine is not

“schoolmaster” to prepare us for Christ (Gal 3:24), **how much more will the Gospel illuminate us concerning God’s great salvation?** If the *“copy and shadow of heavenly things”* found under the Law (Heb 8:5; 10:1) was instructive concerning what was coming, **how much more will the “form” of the Gospel open great things to us.**

In this text, the Spirit is affirming the powerful effects of both the Gospel and our baptism into Christ. By God’s grace, we have been handed over to them both, to learn from them and be instructed more perfectly in the ways of the Lord.

Our Baptism Confirmed This

Our baptism into Christ confirmed this to be true. It was the result of the effective working of the Gospel within us: the Gospel which is the power of God unto salvation. In a very real sense, true Gospel preachers deliver the people who hear them into the care of the powerful glad tidings of Christ.

Through the ministry of the Holy Spirit, that Gospel will work within the people, effectively teaching and leading them. There is a remarkable liberty to be realized in believing that. Hearers can be handed over to the Gospel of Christ with great confidence. This is no doubt involved in the following texts: *“having confidence in you all . . . I have confidence in you . . . the great confidence which I have in you . . . I have confidence in you through the Lord . . . we have confidence in the Lord touching you . . . Having confidence in thy obedience”* (2 Cor 2:3; 7:16; 8:22; Gal 5:10; 2 Thess 3:4; Phile 1:21).

It is comforting to associate your obedience in being baptized with the powerful effects of the Gospel of Christ. It was no coincidence that the good news of Christ worked effectually within your heart. In a very real sense, you were **led** into obedience, escorted, as it were, out of the realm of darkness and into God’s marvelous light. Your obedience confirmed Divine working.

SET FREE TO BECOME SLAVES

“¹⁸ And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.” Notice the confidence with which this announcement is made. There is **no** Sinaitic tone here; i.e., you **SHOULD** have been set free, and you **SHOULD** have become slaves to righteousness. All too often, words like this are shouted at believers as though nothing really happened to them when they were *“baptized into Christ.”* How differently the Spirit speaks to us.

HAVING BEEN SET FREE

The point of reference is our baptism. It is not our feeling, not our theological persuasion, but our baptism

into Christ. We were identified with Jesus’ death *“BY baptism”* (6:3-4). There is where we were *“planted together in the likeness of His death”* (6:5). There is where our *“old man”* was *“crucified”* with Jesus (6:6).

Upon the basis of these realities, the affirmation was made, *“For he who has died has been freed from sin”* (6:7). In view of this believers are told, *“reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin”* (6:11). The glad announcement is then made, *“For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace”* (6:14). In Christ there is strength to have our thinking

conformed to these proclamations.

Those in Christ have **“been set free from sin.”** While it is true we have been freed from the guilt of sin in justification, that is **not** the sense of this verse. This verses declares those in Christ have been freed from the **DOMINION** of sin! Sin can no longer rule them as a tyrant, dragging them down into perdition!

Let me be more precise. This text does not affirm we are free from the influence of sin, but from the **domination** of sin. We have not been freed from the sinful nature, which

remains with us. We do have to struggle with sin, but we are no longer slaves to it. The glory of this is seen when we remember we **WERE** slaves to sin (6:17), but now we are no longer.

We have been “*delivered from the power of darkness*” (Col 1:13), which can no longer hold us against our will. Under the teaching of the grace of God, we can “*say ‘NO’ to ungodliness and worldly passions*”^{NIV} (Tit 2:12).

This is the “*freedom*” declared in Galatians 5:1. “*It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery.*”^{NASB} The phrase “*Christ set us free*” equates to the words “*having been set free*” in our text.

In view of this, not only is it right for us to turn away from sin, it is gloriously possible! However, if the saints are deprived of this understanding, Satan will more easily deceive them, bringing them into bondage once again. For this reason, the Spirit nails this truth into our conscience, convincing us of what really happened when we were “*baptized into Jesus Christ.*”

YOU BECAME SLAVES

Here, we rise higher than the flesh or natural mind can reach. **We were set free in order to become slaves!** Unless a person is convinced of the graciousness of God and the gentleness of Christ, this does not sound good. But it IS good, for men have no choice but to be slaves to someone. Before we were in Jesus, we were “*slaves to sin.*” How much better it is to now be serving righteousness.

What does it mean to be a “*servant of righteousness?*” It should be obvious this does not mean we are unwilling slaves of righteousness, forced by Divine coercion to do what is right. **This refers**

to the manner of the new creation. It is the condition described in Ephesians 2:10. “*For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.*”^{NASB} These

pierce his ear with an awl; and he shall serve him permanently” (Ex 21:5-6).

This precise passage is applied to Jesus in the fortieth Psalm. There the Savior is pictured as delighting to do

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“*ordained*”^{KJV} works are the expressions of righteousness, which is served by believers. Not only were these works “*prepared in advance for us to do,*”^{NIV} the new creation is wonderfully adapted for, and inclined to, those works. Thus, it is written, “*put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness*” (Eph 4:24). This is the result of having a “*clean heart*” created within us and a “*right spirit*” renewed within (Psa 51:10). When “*all things become new*” (2 Cor 5:17), righteousness becomes our preference, and we eagerly and willingly serve it.

Slaves Like Jesus

We are “*slaves to righteousness*” like Jesus was the “*Servant*” of God (Isa 42:1). He chose to be a servant, as typified under the Law. The law specified that a freed slave had the option of remaining with his master. If that slave had acquired a wife and children while serving his master, he could opt to remain with them and be a permanent servant. The Law made this provision in these words. “*But if the slave plainly says, ‘I love my master, my wife and my children; I will not go out as a free man,’ then his master shall bring him to God, then he shall bring him to the door or the doorpost. And his master shall*

God’s will in offering Himself for the sins of the world. The words of the pre-incarnate Word are found in verses six through eight. “*Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, but my ears you have pierced ; burnt offerings and sin offerings You did not require. Then I said, ‘Here I am, I have come-- it is written about Me in the scroll. I desire to do Your will, O my God; Your law is within my heart.*”^{NIV} The tenth chapter of Hebrews makes clear that this Psalm applies to Jesus (Heb 10:5-10).

The parallel is seen in our own freedom from the tyranny of sin. Having been freed by the Lord Jesus, we joyfully declared we would serve none but Him. We then put our ears to the post of the door, so to speak, and received the confirming mark of willing servitude to God.

In a very real sense, this occurred at our baptism. It was there that we publically acknowledged our allegiance to God, rising from the waters to “*walk in the newness of life.*” Servitude to sin can only take place in a *Christian* when this truth is forgotten. Sin cannot dominate us while we hold this truth by faith, looking to the Author and Finisher of our faith.

SPEAKING ACCOMMODATINGLY

“¹⁹I 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.”

There is a significant point being

made by the Spirit here, and it is being made with careful deliberation. He is showing us the utter unreasonableness of sin, and the seriousness of trying to justify its presence. This is particularly true

when men use the grace of God as an excuse to sin, or as a means of making sin less serious than it really is.

Ponder how utterly preposterous it is to affirm that the liberty we have in Christ is actually LESS influential over men than the slavery they experienced to sin. Notwithstanding the apparent absurdity of such a postulate, it should not surprise you that throughout the centuries professed believers have sought to use grace as a soothing salve for sin rather than a Divine remedy for it. This tendency continues to this very day, making the passage before us of utmost relevance. It is the manner of the flesh to find an excuse for sin in the very grace provided by the God against whom sin is committed.

I SPEAK IN HUMAN TERMS

“I speak in human terms. . . .” Other versions read, *“I speak after the manner of men,”*^{KJV} *“I am putting it in human terms.”*^{NJB} On the surface, this may appear to contradict what Paul says elsewhere. *“Which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words”*^{NASB} (1 Cor 2:13).

The language of the text is unique. The expression *“after the manner of men,”* or *“in human terms”* comes from the Greek words *ἀνθρώπινον λέγω*. Literally, the phrase would read, *“I speak humanly,”* or *“I speak as a man would speak.”* In a sense, this is a form of apology, not because of any wrongness found in his words, but because the language used does not strictly describe our servitude to God. It is like he is saying, *“In saying we are slaves to righteousness, I am using limiting speech that does not fully describe our relationship to Christ.”* This he says because there is a sense in which we are NOT in bondage now, but have been liberated.

In my judgment, *“the manner of men”* is not the way the Romans would speak, but the manner in which the Law addressed the matter of serving (Ex 21:1-6). The language and manner of men does not allow for bondage and liberty to occur

simultaneously. In the flesh, these are antithetical words. Yet, in the Spirit we are slaves and free at the same time – precisely as described in the twenty-first chapter of Exodus, already referenced.

One further observation on this text. Since the salvation of God is for men, and not for angels, it is couched in terms that can be best understood by men. In this, God condescends, so to speak, in order to bring the truth within our reach.

Additionally, we should note that the reality of spiritual liberty is too large to be contained in the language of men. Yet enough of it can be seen to induce men to seek heartily after it.

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THE WEAKNESS OF YOUR FLESH

“ . . . because of the weakness of your flesh.” Other versions read, *“because of the infirmity of your flesh,”*^{KJV} *“because you are weak in your natural selves,”*^{NIV} *“because of your natural limitations,”*^{NRSV} *“on account of the weakness of your flesh,”*^{DARBY} *“because your flesh is feeble,”*^{BBE} *“because you are still weak human beings.”*^{NJB}

Our freedom in Christ is, in a sense, neutralized by our presence *“in the body.”* Having this *“treasure in earthen vessels”* requires a certain accommodation. This very situation is designed to emphasis that salvation is of God–i.e., through His power and grace. *“But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the surpassing greatness of the power may be of God and not from*

ourselves” (2 Cor 4:7).

Yet, this humiliating situation--of having a treasure in a weak and frail vessel--does not mean we cannot know much about it. This is why Paul speaks *“after the manner of men,”* in order to bring the truth of our situation as close to us as is possible. He will not chide us about our situation, but will seek to penetrate through it as deeply as is possible.

JUST AS YOU PRESENTED

“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.” Once again, the matter of our *“members”* is brought up. Verse thirteen admonished us to *“present”* our *“members as instruments of righteousness unto God.”* Our *“members”* involve our abilities of expression. They are also the means by which we make ourselves available for service to another. This includes the faculties of our soul (intellect, emotion, and will), and the parts of our bodies as well (eyes, ears, tongues, hands, feet, etc.).

Our Former Lives

Formerly, these capacities were given over to *“uncleanness,”* or impurity--things that defile and make one unsuitable to be in the presence of God. Under the Law, God tutored men concerning uncleanness, showing them there were involvements that excluded them from His presence (Lev 15:31; 16:16,19; 22:3,5-7). Prior to being in Christ, therefore, our entire lives were devoted to things that disqualified us from coming into the presence of the Lord.

The activities of reference may not have had an appearance of being *“lawlessness leading to more lawlessness.”* But we must not view our former lives according to appearance (John 7:24). The fact is that outside of Christ a steady declination takes place. Men become the more enslaved to godless living, so that they think nothing of purposing and working without the Lord in their minds. He is excluded from their purposes, and

they engage in no conscious effort to serve Him. Their primary interest is themselves, and thus they plummet downward in the cauldron of iniquity.

Our former lives are vividly described in Titus 3:3. *“For we ourselves were also once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another.”*^{NKJV} Our desires before we were in Christ are

This is not a mere technical point. We cannot be *“laborers together with God”* (1 Cor 3:9) unless we are devoted to His cause! If we have not presented our bodies *“a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God”* (Rom 12:1), we will not be profitably employed in His Kingdom.

While this may appear rather simplistic, there is a remarkable absence of this type of mentality in the professed church. Men have even developed

who craves the things that are above. The new must be sought with great zeal!

All of this involves a promptness, zeal, and a willingness to do *“the will of God from the heart”* (Eph 6:6). Those who are not advancing in the committal of themselves to the Lord have **not** presented themselves to Him. You may be sure, God will not turn away any who are eager to be utilized in His work!

THE REASONING USED

The reasoning employed in this passage is most powerful. We have been freed from bondage to sin, and transferred into the Kingdom of a beneficent and loving Lord. How, then, can anyone justify continuance in sin? What form of reasoning can be presented to justify lukewarmness or a lack of commitment to the Lord. We were not released from the dominion of sin to occupy a spiritual vacuum, living a life with no purpose or commitment. We have been called into activity—a work of faith. We have been re-created with capacities for that appointed work, and placed into an area where they may be done.

In view of this, sin becomes utterly absurd. When we stumble and sin, it causes shame, and thus it should. With dispatch we are to run to the Savior, appropriating forgiveness and experiencing cleansing (1 John 1:9). We will find that availing ourselves of these provisions will be conducive to a walk *“in the light, as He is in the light.”* That ever-increasing walk will bring glory to God and satisfaction to the soul.

The promise of God will be realized by those who wait upon the Lord—those who are eagerly looking to Him, to do His will. *“But those who wait on the LORD shall renew their strength; They shall mount up with wings like eagles, They shall run and not be weary, They shall walk and not faint”* (Isa 40:31). Yield your members to God and see if this is not the case. You will find His Word to be true, and will be the stronger for it.

Deliverance from sin presumes commitment to a more noble cause—the purpose of God. Freedom in Christ presumes being liberated to do something in service to the One who liberated us.

described as *“the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance”* (1 Pet 1:14). Our lives were marked by a certain eagerness to fulfill our corrupt appetites, and continue living with our own desires upon the throne of our hearts.

What About Now?

Now that we are in Christ, should we live with less commitment than when we were in sin? **Is it comely for Jesus to be given less of our persons that Satan received?** Indeed, it is not! It is not appropriate to serve the Lord with less energy than we served sin.

Just as sin led steadily downward, so true righteousness leads inexorably upward. The condition of *“lawlessness to lawlessness,”* is now replaced by presenting your members in *“slavery to righteousness leading to holiness.”*^{NIV} **The idea is that we become usable to God when we are devoted to righteousness.** Only then can we be entrusted with heavenly goods.

religious structures that allow for uncommitted people to seemingly serve God, while entertaining a fundamental desire for the things of this world. They labor in vain!

Practical Observations

Deliverance from sin presumes commitment to a more noble cause—the purpose of God. Freedom in Christ presumes being liberated to do something in service to the One who liberated us.

If ones eyes have been given to reading the things of this world, in Christ they are to be devoted to the reading of Scripture and things pertaining to life and godliness. If the individual was a person of appetite, giving himself over to wine, liquor, or some other form of stimulant or narcotic, all the more should he be devoted to being *“filled with the Spirit,”* and energized with the life of God. The one who eagerly sought to satisfy immoral fleshly desires, should more aggressively seek the gratification of the *“new man,”*

WHEN WE WERE FREE FROM RIGHTEOUSNESS

“²⁰ For when you were slaves of righteousness.” The Spirit will not condition in which the Lord found us. The recollection of that condition will assist us

In Regeneration, the Entirety of Life is changed as we become willing Servants of God--by Given O. Blakely

to recall with joy the great deliverance we have experienced. Motivated by that recollection, we will give ourselves more heartily to the pursuit of holy things.

A VIVID PICTURE

The fact that we were slaves to sin proved we were unrighteousness, and sorely stood in need of a righteousness from God. To put it yet another way, the fact that we lived without due regard for pleasing God confirmed that we were under the domination of sin—slaves to it.

Our circumstance was much like that of Israel of old. *“As for your nativity, on the day you were born your navel cord was not cut, nor were you washed in water to cleanse you; you were not rubbed with salt nor wrapped in swaddling cloths. No eye pitied you, to do any of these things for you, to have compassion on you; but you were thrown out into the open field, when you yourself were loathed on the day you were born. And when I passed by you and saw you struggling in your own blood, I said to you in your blood, ‘Live!’ Yes, I said to you in your blood, ‘Live!’ . . . when you were naked and bare, struggling in your blood”* (Ezek 16:6,20).

The picture is that of being born with a sinful nature—wed to the world, and of the lineage of Adam. From a human point of view, it was a hopeless situation. Had the Lord not sought us out and quickened us, we would have been shut out from His presence forever.

But He did not leave us as He found us! He said *“LIVE!”* He quickened us, or made us alive. As it is written, *“And you*

hath He quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins” (Eph 2:1). *“Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ”* (Eph 2:5). *“And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath*

He quickened together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses” (Col 2:13). Now, the Spirit will reason with us about our former lives.

FREE FROM RIGHTEOUSNESS

The flesh is not willing to concede it has no goodness and profits nothing (Rom 3:12; John 6:63). When pressed, it will admit life outside of Christ was not the best possible. Notwithstanding that humiliating circumstance, flesh will not acknowledge the total absence of righteousness.

Because this is not a peripheral matter, and because much hinges upon the acknowledgment of this truth, the Spirit will press this issue. He has already affirmed *“there is none righteous”* (Rom 3:10). The Gospel of Christ has also been declared as the vehicle through which a righteousness from God is made known. As though the devotion of sixty verses to the proof of a NEED for righteousness was not enough (1:20-3:18), the Spirit now clearly affirms our state regarding righteousness when we were without

Christ.

We were *“free in regard to righteousness.”* The KJV reads, *“free from righteousness.”* Other versions seem to muddy the waters by reading, *“free from the control of righteousness.”*^{NIV,NIB} *“You weren’t concerned with doing what was right,”*^{NLT} and *“you felt no obligation to uprightness.”*^{NJB} The expression contains more than conventional words can convey. **The idea is that we lived independently of righteousness, and thus were totally unaffected by it.** It is another way of saying we were unrighteous, or without any righteousness of our own.

The text is reasoning from effect back to cause. **The fact that we were slaves to sin proved we were unrighteousness,** and sorely stood in need of a righteousness from God. To put it yet another way, the fact that we lived without due regard for pleasing God confirmed that we were under the domination of sin—slaves to it. Righteousness can have no control over such individuals.

To put it another way, the promises of Romans 5:17 and 21 CANNOT be fulfilled in those who are *“free from righteousness.”* Behold what a different circumstance those promises represent. *“Those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ . . . even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”* Servitude to sin would be brought to a grinding halt in Christ Jesus!

WHAT FRUIT DID YOU HAVE THEN?

“ 21 What fruit did you have then in the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death.” Because the truth of God conforms to and promotes sound reasoning, the Spirit will call upon us to assess our former lives. Not only were we *“free from righteousness,”* living for self and with no regard for our Creator, our former lives are now a source of shame to us. It is with grief that we recall our former ignorance and manner of life.

WHAT FRUIT DID YOU HAVE?

What a telling question! *“What fruit did you have then in the things?”* Other versions read, *“Therefore what benefit were you then deriving?”*^{NASB} *“What benefit did you reap at that time?”*^{NIV} *“So what advantage did you then get?”*^{NRSV} *“But then what return did you get?”*^{RSV} *“and what did you gain from living like that?”*^{NJB}

Such strong reasoning is designed to

show us the lunacy of continuing in sin. No matter how reasonable temptation makes sin appear, we must ask ourselves this question: *“What kind of return did sin yield when we were under its control?”* What did it do for us? What was the harvest it produced?

Our ancient parents died *“in the day”* they gave themselves to sin! Cain received a mark from God that made him miserable the rest of his life. The world of

Noah's day reaped utter destruction. The people at Babel were confused in their language and dispersed throughout the world. Pharaoh and his armies drowned in the very sea crossed by the Israelites, whom they pursued. Achan and his entire family were stoned and burned because of his sin. The Israelites who failed to believe God, could not enter the promised land. Israel tasted the fruit of the Babylonian captivity for their sin in disregarding the land-sabbaths. These are some of the more conspicuous harvests of sin. They are sufficient to alert us to sin's harvest.

Sin has never yielded a good crop. It has never given a person the real advantage. Even *"the pleasures of sin"* are but *"for a season"* (Heb 11:25). Whatever may have appeared an advantage was found to be but an illusion.

Moses

There came a time in Moses' life when he had to acknowledge life in Egypt was not to his advantage. Thus it is written, *"By faith Moses, when he was come to yea, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward. By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing Him who is invisible"* (Heb 11:24-27).

Moses did not see that portion of his life (no less than one third of his 120 years) as productive, or having fruit. Once he left Egypt, you never again hear him referring to that time of his life. He never mentioned his life in the palace, or any benefits he may have received in the capacity of *"the son of Pharaoh's daughter."* This man of God never wrote of any education he received in Egypt, or any riches accumulated there. He *"forsook Egypt,"* and never returned to it until God sent him there to lead His people out of that nation. You never get the idea Moses missed what he had in Egypt.

Our former lives were like living in Egypt. It yielded no lasting fruit. Like

Moses we have to come to the point where we refused identity with the world at any cost, and gave our allegiance to the Lord.

Paul

Paul frequently mentioned his former life. From the fleshly point of view, like the life of Moses, it was a productive one. He acknowledged he was a Jew, a member of the only ethnic group every preferred by God. He was born in Tarsus, brought up at the feet of Gamaliel, a respected Jewish teacher. He was taught according to the *"perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was zealous toward*

were an advantage to him, and gives a perspective of them all. *"Yea doubtless, and I count **all things but loss** for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do **count them but dung**, that I may win Christ"* (Phil 3:8).

That is a very pungent confirmation of the power of our text. If there was NO fruit in the prior lives of Moses and Paul, who is the fool who will affirm there was an advantage in his life before being baptized into Christ's death.

Spiritual Caution

Caution must be taken not to say more than our text is saying. It is not saying the Lord was not leading and directing our paths in such a way as to bring us ultimately to Himself. **The question is whether we had fruit at the time we were out of Christ.** The answer is emphatically NO! Any advantage came AFTER we were in Christ.

YOU ARE NOW ASHAMED

Rather than being a source of glory, or a time of advantage, our former lives are a source of shame. Well into his Apostleship, Paul acknowledged, *"Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I **am** chief"* (1 Tim 1:15). His former life continued to be a source of shame, and not of glory.

There is a tendency in our time to glorify the past life of professed believers. Myriad books have been marketed about what well known Christians WERE, with little being said about what they ARE. It does not appear that contemporary religion promotes a sense of shame for life apart from Christ. Notwithstanding that condition, our former lives ARE a source of shame. We are ashamed we ever attempted to live without due regard for God and His great salvation. We are ashamed that we moved ahead with our own agenda, with a total disregard for the will of God.

THE END OF THOSE THINGS

As if it was not strong enough to point put the futility of our former lives, and the fact that they are a source of shame, the Spirit drives home one more pungent point. *"For the end of those*

Sin has never yielded a good crop. It has never given a person the real advantage. Even *"the pleasures of sin"* are but *"for a season"* (Heb 11:25). Whatever may have appeared an advantage was found to be but an illusion.

God" (Acts 22:3).

Paul also said he was *"Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless"* (Phil 3:5-6).

During that seemingly advantageous time, Paul *"persecuted"* the *"Way to the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women."* He also stood by at the stoning of Stephen, *"consenting to his death, and guarding the clothes of those who were killing him"* (Acts 22:20).

When accessing his former life, Paul did not give thanks that he had sat at the feet of Gamaliel, or that he had the advantage of being among the Pharisees. He sited no superiority gained in an education in Tarsus. He did, however, give his assessment of that former life, and it reflects the truth of our text. He takes all of the best things, so to speak, things that

things is death.” Other versions read, “For the outcome of those things is death,” ^{NASB} “Those things result in death!,” ^{NIV} “things that end in eternal doom,” ^{NLT} “that sort of behavior ends in death.” ^{NJB} The death was as real as the sin that led to it. Sin is no myth, and neither is the death resulting from it. The latter always comes from the former.

This is death from every vantage. It is moral death, where discernment of right and wrong is lost. It is spiritual death, where the soul is separated from God. Sin also results in the death of the body, when the human spirit is separated from it. This death is appointed to every person (Heb 9:27), and is a consequence of the entrance of sin into the world..

Death in all of its facets is the result of sinning—the effect of DOING things of which we are now ashamed. It is good for us to frequently consider these things. Due consideration of them will serve to make sin utterly unreasonable, and thus we will be able to avoid it. It is most difficult to continue doing what is hated, and proves painful to the soul.

NOW YOU DO HAVE FRUIT

“ 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.**” The language of this passage is arresting. It is so unlike the Christian jargon that is being spewed out by the contemporary church. The thought of being “free from sin” is rarely expressed. When did anyone last hear the phrase “slaves of God?” How about “your fruit unto holiness?” Or, “everlasting life” being associated with “your fruit” which leads to “holiness?”

FREE FROM SIN, SLAVES OF GOD

The repetition of our change underscores the importance of taking hold of this truth. **No person will be able to live an acceptable and satisfying life for God if this reality is not comprehended to a measurable degree.**

Suffice it to say, freedom from sin is in order to serving the Lord. If the word “slave” seems too harsh for the flesh, ponder the expression of Jesus Himself: “nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done” (Lk 22:42). That is the posture of a slave of God! It is willing servitude that is prompted by thanksgiving and sustained by faith. **There is no higher activity than serving God!** But it cannot be done without being freed from sin!

FRUIT UNTO HOLINESS

“Fruit,” in this case, is the benefit, or result, of being “enslaved to God.” ^{NASB} Other versions read, “you derive your benefit, resulting in sanctification,” ^{NASB} “the benefit you reap leads to holiness,” ^{NIV} “the advantage you get is

sanctification,” ^{NRSV} “the return you get is sanctification,” ^{RSV} and “your gain will be sanctification.” ^{NJB}

Holiness Is Not an Option

There is an important truth to be

The repetition of our change underscores the importance of taking hold of this truth. No person will be able to live an acceptable and satisfying life for God if this reality is not comprehended to a measurable degree.

seen here. Holiness, or sanctification is not an option in the Kingdom of God. Solemnly we are admonished, “Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord” (Heb 12:14). The word used is the same as in our text. Other versions also use the word “sanctification” ^{NASB} This word is like a threefold cord that includes purity, belonging to God, and upright behavior. As you can see, holiness is not nonobligatory. Unholy people will not dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

Not Achieved in the Flesh

A person can pursue holiness by human effort alone, struggling in the energy of the flesh to be acceptable to God. Such efforts, honorable though they may appear, will not make one holy, or suitable for Divine use.

The Secret

Our text gives the secret to holiness, or purity of life. It is found in being “free from sin and servants to God.” ^{KJV} **When we do not serve sin, but consent to serve the Lord, we will become holy!** Holiness is the fruit, or result, of such a life. The Holy Spirit is free to work in such persons, producing Divine qualities within them.

Our text is speaking of the spiritual maturity that comes when we live for the Lord. It is expressed in Second Corinthians 7:1. “Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, **perfecting holiness** in the fear of God.” God has called us to such a life, and will not receive those who continue to live in sin. That is the meaning of 1 Thessalonians 4:4 and 7. “That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in **sanctification and honor** . . . For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto **holiness**.”

None can effectively argue that this requirement is beyond their capability. God has re-created us with the capacity to be holy. As it is written, “And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in **righteousness and true holiness**” (Eph 4:24). But this cannot happen if we do not present ourselves as servants to God!

Those who live primarily for themselves, with no regard for God, have put themselves beyond the reach of holiness, without which they cannot see God. That is a most sober consideration!

THE END, EVERLASTING LIFE

The outcome of sanctification, or holiness, is *“everlasting life.”* Again, this does not comport with some theology. Some would argue that everlasting life in no way depends upon us being holy. But the Spirit says it is the outcome of *“fruit unto holiness.”* Fruit that yields the harvest of holiness is the result of freedom from sin. Eternal life is the result of that holiness—*“the end”* of it.

There is a progressive nature to spiritual life. As we yield to God, holiness

begins to grow within us. As holiness advances, eternal life is more fully realized, for eternal life is knowing God and Jesus Christ whom He has sent (John 17:3). That knowledge is not static, but is one of vitality and advancement. It is marvelous to see how this all grows out of being freed from sin and becoming servants, or willing slaves, to God.

There is an especially pungent word concerning this text I would like to share with you—one expressed over 400 years

ago. “These things, unless we are beyond measure stupid, ought to generate in our minds, a hatred and horror for sin, and also a love and desire for righteousness.” JOHN CALVIN

It is enough to say, there is no salvation without holiness, and no holiness without willing servitude to God. Let us devote ourselves heartily and expectantly to the service of our Lord! It will prove to be a most joyous pursuit, and will prepare us for employment in the eternal purpose of God.

WAGES AND THE GIFT

“²³ For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Here is the final explanation of the case. The Spirit here summarizes the rationale He has presented. In these words He shows us why sin is altogether unreasonable, and righteousness is absolutely logical. It is always insane to yield our members to sin, and it is always the highest and most flawless form of logic to yield our whole person to God.

THE WAGES OF SIN

Sin is here personified, as though it were a great monarch who rewards those who serve it. It is the nature of this dark monarch to give death to those who serve him. The imagery, in my understanding, presents death as the natural consequence of sin—something that cannot be avoided. Men do not sin in order that they may gain these wages.

Mortals do not think of the consequences of sin when they yield to it. Rather, they are seduced into thinking of the momentary pleasure they may gain from it. However, they gain the wages of sin because they commit sin, whether they want them or not. **Sin hires us so it can kill us!**

The word *“wages”* comes from the Greek word *μισθόνια*, and refers to military wages, or the allotment received to buy food and subsistence. It is the same word used by John the Baptist in his counsel to the soldiers. They asked him, *“And what*

shall we do? And he said unto them, Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely; and be content with your wages” (Lk 3:14). The other place the word is used also refers to military wages. It is First Corinthians 9:7. *“Who goeth a warfare any time at his own charges [expense]?”*

Sin is here personified, as though it were a great monarch who rewards those who serve it. It is the nature of this dark monarch to give death to those who serve him. The imagery, in my understanding, presents death as the natural consequence of sin—something that cannot be avoided.

The imagery is not that of an abundant salary, to be spent on luxurious living. Rather, it is of a soldier given a meager allowance for the bare necessities of life. And what does sin pay those who serve it—yea, those who are enslaved and shackled by it? It gives them death: separation from God in outer darkness, without ray of hope or a drop of comfort to assuage eternal grief. God is greatly to be praised for delivering us from such wages!

THE GIFT OF GOD

How differently the Spirit speaks of our lot in Christ Jesus. God has brought us to a most pleasant place!

A Sense in which we Receive Wages

There is a sense in which we receive wages. Jesus said, *“And he who reaps receives wages, and gathers fruit for eternal life, that both he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together.”* NKJV (John 4:36). The wages in this case are more eating the first fruits than receiving a salary—like the ox that treads out the corn (1 Cor 9:9-10). As the Spirit says elsewhere, *“The hard-working farmer ought to be the first to receive his share of the crops”* NASB (2 Tim 2:8). What gracious wages are found in these tastes!

Everlasting life, however, is in a different category, and thus it is referred to in a different manner.

“Eternal life” is *“the gift of God.”* Some versions, capturing the full sense of the word, say *“FREE gift of God.”* NASB The New Jerusalem Bible reads, *“the gift freely given by God is eternal life.”* Unlike *“wages,”* eternal life is not a temporary provision to be expended according to the fleshly appetites of those receiving it. It is not given to us because of what we have done, but *“through Jesus Christ our Lord.”* It is **His** toil that has brought us the gift! It is granted in **His** behalf, and on account of **His** labors.

Notice, He does **not** say, “The wages

of sin is death, but the wages of righteousness is eternal **life**.” The comparison is between death and righteousness, not death and life. Wages are a just due, but a gift is freely granted

(John 3:36; 6:47). Gracious words have been written to us that we might “*know*” we “**have eternal life**” (1 John 5:13). But this is “*ETERNAL life*,” and thus cannot be fully received while we occupy these

It is a gift, to be sure, but gifts must be received—particularly the gift of eternal life!

All of this becomes more clear when we realize “*eternal life*” is an intimate relation with God rather than an impersonal possession. To have eternal life is to “*know*” the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom He has sent (John 17:3). That is not a right you earn, but a gift you receive THROUGH Jesus Christ our Lord.

Knowing God does not result from academic study. It is a gift from God, and is realized by all who believe on His Son. That life is realized to the degree that we present ourselves and our “members” as instruments of righteousness. In the crucible of that presentation we come to know the Lord.

by one who has a heart for us. The ultimate promise is eternal life, and thus it is the ultimate comparison (1 John 2:25).

Eternal life is an exceedingly large gift. Mortals are totally incapable of entertaining an adequate conception of this marvelous gift. It begins now, while we are yet in the body, for “*He who believes in the Son has everlasting life*”

frail bodies. There is more to come.

Jesus spoke of “*inheriting*” eternal life (Matt 19:29). He said those who abandoned all for Him (thus becoming willing slaves to God) would be compensated “*a hundredfold now in this time*.” But in “*the world to come*,” they would receive “*eternal life*” (Mk 10:30). Until we receive the fulness of it, we are to “*lay hold on eternal life*,” ensuring that we have a firm grasp upon it (1 Tim 6:12).

Knowing God is not the result of mere academic study. It is a gift from God, and is realized by all who believe on His Son. That life is realized to the degree that we present ourselves and our “*members*” as instruments of righteousness. **In the crucible of that presentation we come to know the Lord.** Those who so live know the blessedness of this gift! It is never vain to serve the Lord, but always productive, invigorating, and joyous. Truly, our labor is not vain in the Lord (1 Cor 15:58).

CONCLUSION

We have been confronted with some of the most profound reasoning in all of Scripture. It is spiritual reasoning, and totally unlike the manner of men. The Holy Spirit throws down carnal reasoning as though it were nothing more than a frail barrier of paper. He takes the very arguments that have shackled men to sin, and dashes them into pieces.

This reasoning is profound in the sense of being incontrovertible, not in the sense of being beyond our grasp. Concerning the attempt to justify sin, there is no aspect of flawed thought that is not addressed and conquered in this text. He does not wait for flesh to raise its objections, but anticipates what it will say, and shows their utter foolishness.

The Spirit has dealt a devastating blow to the reasoning of the flesh, and well He should. Men continue to concoct teachings that permit them to sin with impunity. They continue to go to great extent to justify continuing to sin. But the Spirit will have none of it. He has shown

us there is no place for sin in Jesus. Grace will not permit its presence. Wherever sin is found, it must be remitted, forgiven, and washed away, else the person cannot come into the Lord’s presence. To every principle of thought that seeks to justify sin, the Spirit answers with a resounding “*God forbid!*”

The Law of God does not allow sin, and grace does not either. The fact that we are not “*under the Law*” does not make provision for some sin, or for a relaxed attitude toward it. In fact, grace is a far greater disciplinarian than Law. Under grace we die to sin. Under grace, our old nature is cut away from us and crucified with Christ. How can sin be justified under such a circumstance? The answer is that it cannot, and those who attempt to do so only reveal their servitude to sin.

I am greatly impressed with the powerful effects of yielding – making ourselves available. If we make ourselves available to sin, we will be dominated by

it. On the other hand, if we yield ourselves to God, we will be graciously governed by Him. He is a good Master, and will employ us in His vineyard, providing, leading, and teaching us along the way.

The power of the Gospel is confirmed in the conferment of righteousness upon those believing in Jesus. That righteousness impacts upon the heart and mind of the individual, producing a revulsion for sin and a love of righteousness. It accomplishes what the Law could not do. As that righteousness is maintained by faith, it cultures a life of holiness, out of which a precious acquaintance with God is developed. When men receive a righteousness from God, it is effective in accomplishing the will of God. This is no lifeless imputation.

Once again, ponder the affirmations made in this passage. They reveal the greatness of salvation as well as its nature. They are all as certain as God Himself, and can be trusted to buttress sound and spiritual frame of mind. Those

who embrace them will surely triumph! They serve to clarify the nature of spiritual life, the importance of the good fight of faith, and the surety of our hope.

- We are not under law, but under grace (6:15).
- We are servants to the one to whom we yield to obey (6:16).
- We WERE the servants of sin (6:17a).
- We obeyed from the heart the form of doctrine to which we were delivered (6:17b).
- We were made free from sin (6:18a).
- We became the servants of righteousness (6:18b).

- We once yielded our members as slaves to uncleanness, and lawlessness that led to more lawlessness (6:19).
- When we were the servants of sin, we were free from righteousness (6:20).
- The end of the things we once did was death (6:21).
- We have been made free from sin (6:22a).
- We have become servants to God (6:22b).
- We have fruit unto holiness, and the end of everlasting life (6:22c).
- The wages of sin is death (6:23a).
- The gift of God is life everlasting (6:23b).

These are the pillars of sound spiritual reasoning, and we are to reckon upon the truth of them. They are not suggestions but affirmations: declarations of the way things really are. As we approach life with them in our hearts and minds, we will be strengthened to do what is right and good.

If you are ever prone to minimize sin, or speak accommodatingly of it, remember what it did to you when you were dead in it—when the Lord found you. Remember how utterly fruitless life was then, and how it produced shame as you stood before God. Sin is still that way!

Our next Hungry Saints Meeting will be held on Friday, 10/20/2000 Continuing in our studies on Romans, we will cover 7:1-6, **“LIBERATED FROM THE LAW.”** Here is a most powerful proclamation of what occurred when we were baptized into Christ, born again, and made a new creation in Him. We became dead to the very thing that had condemned us—the Law. But death to the Law was the appointed means to an end, and not the end itself. Our meeting will convene at 7:00 P.M. You are invited to bring your family and friends for fellowship around the Word of God. Refreshments are served afterward, with a time of extended fellowship.

The Blakely Family: Given, June, Benjamin, Jonathan, and Eva

406 South Sergeant Street, Joplin, MO 64801

Telephone: (417) 782-3063, Email: Given (GivenB@aol.com) June: (JuneE01@aol.com)
Benjamin (Bensvison@aol.com), Jonathan (Jonstalk@aol.com), Eva
(Evablakely@aol.com)

Ada Hutchcraft (jahutch@planetdirect.com)

WORD OF TRUTH Website: <http://wotruth.com>

WORD OF TRUTH FELLOWSHIP Website: <http://wotruth.com/wotf/wotindex.htm>

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