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Sermon Notes

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Thank God You Obeyed!!

Romans 6:15-18

I. Your Emancipation Proclamation

- A. Lincoln's Odd Decree
- B. Victory Won; Authority Exerted... Message Must Be Proclaimed
- C. Slavery to Sin Has Ended... For Those Who Obey the Gospel

II. Context: Shall We Sin?

A. Romans 6:1-14

- Romans 5: Formerly united with Adam, now united with Christ
- Grace is the mighty emperor of Romans 5:20-21

Romans 5:20-21 The law was added so that the trespass might increase. But where sin increased, grace increased all the more, so that, just as sin reigned in death, so also grace might reign through righteousness to bring eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

- Refuting accusation: "Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?"
- Deeper issue: sanctification... growth in holiness; fighting sin in your life
- Key: union with Christ means we're **dead to sin AND alive to God**
- Therefore... we should consider ourselves that way
- We're in a whole new realm... live by presenting yourself & members to God
- Last week: ended with ringing words

vs. 14 “For sin shall not be your master, because you are not under law but under grace.”

A whole new realm of life... no longer “under law” but now “under grace”

“Under” = under dominion of, under authority of, ruled by

Question: Who is your true master?

Human beings born to serve... born to be under dominion: God’s dominion

Satan recruited Adam & Eve to serve him Ever since, we have been born slaves to sin

John 8:32 “You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”

John 8:34 “I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave to sin. Now a slave has no permanent place in the family, but a son belongs to it forever. So if the Son sets you free, you will be truly free.”

B. Major Point: You Demonstrate Whose You Are by Whom You Obey!

1. Christians cannot serve sin
2. Christians are ruled by a new master
3. Your lifestyle demonstrates who your true master is

Read text

III. The Former Master Commands (vs. 15)

vs. 15 *What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace?*

A. An Objection to Paul’s Doctrine

1. Legalists
 - a. trust in personal obedience to the Law for their righteousness
 - b. know we must not sin, but think Paul’s doctrine leads that way
 - c. use this question to prove Paul’s doctrine is wrong
2. Libertines
 - a. think grace means total freedom from restraint

b. want to use doctrine as a cover-up for sin

Jude 4 They are godless men, who change the grace of our God into a license for immorality

1 Peter 2:16 Live as free men, but do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil; live as servants of God.

B. Sin's Relentless Wickedness... Using Freedom for License

1. Sin a virulent force... a mighty dominator
2. Can even use pure grace of God as an opportunity to sin

C. Right Preaching Draws this Attack... and Answers It!!

1. Preaching a gospel of works righteousness would NEVER face this issue!
2. "Saved by grace, kept by Law" CANNOT be true
3. Beauty of gospel: it also ANSWERS this attack!!!

If the doctrine is right, this question WILL come up!

If the doctrine is right, this question WILL be resolved!

IV. The True Master is Obeyed (vs. 16)

By no means! ¹⁶ Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to someone to obey him as slaves, you are slaves to the one whom you obey--whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness?

A. Answer with Passion

1. MAY IT NEVER BE!!!
2. Again, Paul is very passionate about rejecting sin
3. God has a holy passion about evil... so should we!
4. To Paul, such an idea is unthinkable

B. Answer with Doctrine

vs. 16 "Don't you know that..."

1. Passion not enough
2. Battle of sanctification fought first in the MIND, then in the emotions and will

C. A Basic Principle of Life: Slaves Need Only Obey Their Master

Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to someone to obey him as slaves, you are slaves to the one whom you obey...?

1. It is impossible to serve two masters

Matthew 6:24 "No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money."

2. Slaves cannot answer two contradicting calls of command
3. Presentation = pledge for obedience

Last week: "Reporting for duty!!"

Matthew 26:53 Do you think I cannot call on my Father, and he will at once put at my disposal more than twelve legions of angels?

When you present yourself to a master, you are proving who your master is by whom you obey

The essence of being a slave is unquestioning submission and obedience

Therefore: you prove who your true master is by whom you obey

D. Two Opposite Masters: Sin vs. Obedience

whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness?

1. Sin personified... a violent master

Illus.: Simon Legree

2. "Everyone who sins is a slave to sin"... sin always seeks to rule, to dominate
3. Opposite master: obedience!!
 - a. obedience is a lifestyle, a standard of living

b. could have chosen God or Christ... chose “obedience”

c. coming to Christ is coming to obedience

2 Thessalonians 1:7-9 when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels. ⁸ He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. ⁹ They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of his power

1 Peter 4:17 For it is time for judgment to begin with the family of God; and if it begins with us, what will the outcome be for those who do not obey the gospel of God?

Romans 1:5-6 Through him and for his name's sake, we received grace and apostleship to call people from among all the Gentiles to the obedience that comes from faith. ⁶ And you also are among those who are called to belong to Jesus Christ.

1 Peter 1:2 who have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and sprinkling by his blood

Paul is personifying obedience the way he personified sin... a powerful force that controls your life; a principle that characterizes the way you live

You had an old master, sin

You now have a new master... obedience

E. Two Opposite Life Paths: Death or Righteousness

Sin which leads to death, or obedience which leads to righteousness

1. Two masters promote two different lifestyles
2. Two lifestyles result in two different destinations

Death vs. righteousness

3. Just like Romans 5...

Adam disobeyed and brought in death

Christ obeyed and brought in righteousness

4. Here the righteousness is that of sanctification... it is HOLINESS; imitation of Christ

- Here is the practical truth... growth in holiness comes through step by step obedience
- We are justified through the obedience of another, Jesus Christ
- We are sanctified through Christ who promotes our own day to day obedience
- Thus, obedience is the unifying theme of this Gospel of salvation

So, Paul can say...

V. Thank God You Obeyed!! (vs. 17)

vs. 17 But thanks be to God that, though you used to be slaves to sin, you wholeheartedly obeyed the form of teaching to which you were entrusted.

A. Stunning Verse: Ascribing OUR Obedience to GOD

Illus. Thanking the wrong person for the gift [imagine Christmas...]

1. We think of the gospel all wrong

- I am walking down Worldly Street
- I hear the advertising call from the gospel truth seller
- I look over and see the "Salvation Store" open for business
- I choose of my own free will to heed the call... I repent, I believe, I obey... all by myself
- Obedience is my work and no one else's

2. Here Paul ascribes your HEART obedience to God

Thanks be to God that, though you used to be slaves to sin, you obeyed from the heart that form of teaching to which you were committed

3. Your obedience is God's work in you!!!

Augustine's Confessions:

And my whole hope is only in your exceeding great mercy. Give what You command, and command whatever You will. ... You command sexual purity; give what You command, and command what You wilt.

Pelagius outraged!!! But he overestimated human ability

God commands righteousness... absolute, perfect righteousness!

Matthew 5:48 “Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.”

- God gives the righteousness of Christ to us as a gift
- God then works the obedience of Christ in us as well

B. Unfolding the Truths

1. A Christian has undergone a great change... of heart & of ownership

a. change of heart... regeneration

“You obeyed from the heart...”

Every sinner has free will... the freedom to sin however he chooses and as often as he chooses

No sinner has the freedom to stop sinning

Why? Because we cannot change our nature

Jeremiah 13:23 Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard its spots? Neither can you do good who are accustomed to doing evil.

The essence of the New Covenant is that God gives you a new heart, then writes His Law right onto your new heart

Ezekiel 36:26-27 I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. ²⁷ And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.

Jeremiah 31:33 This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time, declares the Lord. I will put my laws in their minds and write them on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people.

Sin owned your mind and your heart... there was NO WAY you could suddenly decide to obey God

You had no power to change your basic nature

But what you could not do, GOD DID in you

Thanks be to God that, though you used to be slaves to sin, you obeyed!!!

b. change of ownership

formerly slave to sin... to the devil... to death

now a slave to God... to Christ... to righteousness... to obedience

A Christian is someone who's undergone a radical transformation that only God could accomplish

2. How does the change happen? Doctrine!

You obeyed from the heart that form of teaching to which you were entrusted

a. you were entrusted to DOCTRINE... a "form of teaching"

b. you were entrusted (committed) to the GOSPEL

Romans 1:16 "I am not ashamed of the gospel because IT IS THE POWER OF GOD for the salvation of everyone who believes"

Q: What is the power of God?

A: The gospel message... doctrine!!

The whole gospel message... from dead in sin through justification through sanctification into glorification

Romans 1-16... the WHOLE THING!!!

c. "you were entrusted"... you were "handed over" "committed to"

Illus. Like a prince and heir to throne, committed into the care of a tutor for his development

God handed you over to the gospel to get you saved

Same word used in Romans 1:24

Romans 1:24 Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another.

Romans 8:32 He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all...

- God hands sinners over to their sin
- God hands his son over to death
- God hands us over to Gospel doctrine

3. Who is responsible for the change? God!!

NOTE: verb is passive... you "were entrusted to the gospel"

Who did that? God Himself

That's why Paul says "Thanks be to God"... He gets full credit for your salvation from start to finish

STOP: Does this message offend you? Do you like to think of yourself as "master of your fate, captain of your own soul... able to make all free decisions anytime you choose?" You "decided for Christ" of your own free will... God simply made salvation possible, you made it actual

That is NOT the gospel Paul is teaching here! God's activity in your heart to make you obey is your only hope for salvation!!!

If you are to be congratulated and thanked for your own obedience then

1) You have grounds for boasting

2) You have NO assurance... how do you know you'll still be obeying tomorrow??

4. What is the outcome of the change? Glad obedience to Christ!

"You obeyed from the heart" = GLADLY

VI. Your Emancipation Proclamation (vs. 18)

vs. 18 You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness.

A. Statement of Fact... Not Exhortation

1. Paul again returns to doctrine

2. Does not tell them to do anything... simply to know what has happened to you

3. Exactly the same teaching we've had earlier, just in different words

vs. 11 In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus.

B. Set Free from Sin

1. FORMER STATUS: slave to sin... no freedom, no chance for parole, no possibility of a change of status

2. NOT employees of sin, but slaves of sin

3. Sin called, you HAD TO obey... no choice in the matter
4. Sin ruled, you obeyed
5. Now, everything has changed... sin no longer can command you!!!
6. Sin has absolutely NO authority over you

C. Enslaved to Righteousness

1. YET you are still a slave... now a slave to righteousness
2. But, this master is a good master, and his benefits are perfect!!
3. Ultimately a slave to Jesus Christ... He is your new master

Matthew 11:28-30 Come to me, all you who are weary and heavy laden. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰ For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

YOKE = symbol of slavery... let me be your master... my yoke is easy; sin's yoke CRUSHES you!!

Romans 1:1 Paul, a bondservant of Christ Jesus...

Paul called himself gladly a slave of Jesus Christ... he taught that we are the same

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 You are not your own; ²⁰ you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.

D. Work It Out in Your Life

1. We demonstrate who owns us by whom we obey
2. If sin is your master, you will constantly obey sin's commands
3. If Christ is your master, you will habitually obey His commands

Illus. Sin is your former master, and is outraged at losing you... he wants you back; he is like a caged former tyrant, still barking out commands... you still quake inside when you hear sin's voice but you must train yourself to refuse

E. Conclusion: Sin is Monstrous!

Paul's original question:

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

A believer may answer: NO WAY!!! Sin was a wicked master... I now have a delightful master whose yoke is easy and whose burden is light