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Sermon Notes

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The Wages of Sin; The Gifts of Righteousness

Romans 6:19-23

I. Return on Investment

Galatians 6:7-10 Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. ⁸ The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. ⁹ Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. ¹⁰ Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good

II. Context

A. Universal sin: Romans 1-3

B. Justification by Faith Alone: Romans 3-5

C. Key questions: “Shall we continue in sin...?”

Romans 6:1 “What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin so that grace may abound?”

Romans 6:15 “What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace?”

D. Romans 6: “Emancipation Proclamation”

Basic message: United with Christ means we’re 1) dead to sin; 2) alive to God

Analogy: Past life = slavery to sin; present life = slavery to righteousness

Idea: You show who your master is by how you live!!!

Liberating Power: YOU NEVER NEED TO SIN AGAIN... EVER!!!!

Present question: How can we grow in personal holiness... to be just like Christ?

1 John 2:6 “Whoever claims to live in Him must walk as Jesus did.”

1 John 4:17 “... in this world, we are like Him.”

III. The Analogy of Slavery: “Just as...So also”

A. Paul’s Illustration: Slavery as Analogy

vs. 16 “Don’t you know that when you offer yourselves to someone to obey him as slaves, you are slaves to the one you obey...?”

From verse 16-18, Paul has been using a human analogy to explain our present status in Christ:
SLAVERY

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

1. What is the analogy?
 - a. past life in sin as a life of slavery
 - b. present life in Christ as a life of slavery
2. Paul acknowledges that this is merely an analogy

vs. 19 “I put this in human terms because you are weak in your natural selves.”

- a. Paul apologizes for the analogy, but is forced to do it
- b. WHY? Because of the weakness of our fleshly existence
- c. WE NEED ILLUSTRATIONS AND ANALOGIES

Note: Illustrations and stories in sermons... not for entertainment but for clarification of the text!!

3. Why the analogy?

God stoops to our weakness to communicate His nature, will, and plans

God says: I will do absolutely everything necessary to make this plain to you

- a. basic grammar... nouns, verbs, adjectives, participial phrases!!
- b. incredible variety of speech in Bible
 - Narratives: Samson and Delilah, David and Goliath, the Exodus
 - Laws: Straight commands from an Almighty God through a prophet

- Poetry: Song of Solomon, Psalms
 - Parables: The Good Samaritan, the Pearl of Great Price, the Prodigal Son
 - Prophecies: predictions, types... Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel
 - Apocalyptic visions
- c. ultimately through Christ Himself
- i) Christ's incarnation
 - ii) Christ's words

To Nicodemus, "Born again":

John 3:12 "I have spoken to you of earthly things, and you do not believe; how then will you believe if I speak of heavenly things?"

4. Why does Paul apologize?

The analogy is not perfect at all... just merely illustrative!!

- a. in one sense, we are slaves to God

Romans 1:1 Paul, a bonds slave of Christ Jesus

Philippians 1:1 Paul and Timothy, bond slaves of Christ Jesus

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 "You are not your own; you were bought at a price..."

Romans 14:8 "Whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord..."

- b. in another sense, we must NEVER think of ourselves as slaves

John 15:15 "I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead I have called you friends, because everything that I learned from the Father I have made known to you."

Jesus puts servanthood and friendship together in one verse:

John 15:14 "You are my friends, if you do what I command."

After His resurrection, Jesus goes even further:

John 20:17 "Go to my brothers and tell them, 'I am returning to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'"

Hebrews 2:11 “Both the one who makes men holy and those who are made holy are of the same family. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers.”

Paul himself limited our conception of slavery:

Romans 8:15-16 “For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption. And by Him, we cry, ‘Abba, Father!’ The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirits that we are children of God.”

So, Paul apologizes for the analogy of slavery... BUT YET, he uses it so that we may understand!!

Why? Because our flesh is weak! We are constantly taking grace and using it for sin

Paul wants us to understand that those who are growing in holiness are the true sons of God, and those only grow by a pattern similar to slavery!!

B. The Old Slavery Described

1. “You presented”

Lit. “To offer to a master for service...”

Illus. Samurai = warrior slaves... sworn to total obedience to the master

Ordered to come, they would come immediately, bow low and say “HAI!!!” which means, “YES!! I am here at your complete command.”

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?”

“Put at my disposal” = present for total obedience in service to Christ’s commands

That’s exactly what our old man did with our body... presented each member in slavery to sin

2. “your members” (i.e. the parts of your body)

a. members = aspects of physical body

b. covers every area of physical existence

- Members you can see on earth: arms & hands, legs & feet, eyes, mouth, etc.
- Internal members: imagination, intellect, memory, hopes, fears, etc.

Sin had full use of your neutral body... your body was like a mercenary army for hire.. in full submission to whatever master ruled you

Our old man said “Here sin, use my hands today to do your bidding”... and your hands would do wickedness in disobedience to the laws of God

3. “in slavery”

Slavery implies total submission to the power and authority of the master... no will of your own, no power to refuse, no escape... just total obedience

4. “to impurity”

The slavery was a slavery to sin... to impurity; the word implies internal corruption, uncleanness

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.”

5. “and to ever-increasing wickedness”

Sin never stays put... it always grows like a cancer; sin is never content but restless... therefore, like a cancerous tumor, sin grows and grows and grows

The habits of sin grow ever more entrenched... the acts of sin grow ever-increasingly

Ephesians 4:19 “Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality, so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, with a continual lust for more.”

A CONTINUAL LUST FOR MORE

This is the very essence of the old slavery... a pattern of ever-increasing bondage to wicked acts; a burning relentless drive to increase in sin; a pushing the envelope

Illus.: Teenagers go out on their first date... they are alone in a car at night where they have NO BUSINESS BEING!!! The boy reaches out and hold the girl’s hand for the first time; their hearts are beating wildly, and they are deeply satisfied with this first physical expression of attraction

- Next time, holding hands isn’t enough... now they walk arm in arm as they go through the mall
- Next time, that’s not enough... now they begin to snuggle in the car
- Next time, that’s not enough... now they have their first kiss
- I will stop here, lest your own imaginations take you where you do not want to go

Illustration #2: Company treasurer begins by using company car for personal uses contrary to the rules

- Next time, he breaks company policy and moves some of the accounts around to make his job easier
- Next time, he invests some of the company’s money in the company’s name with a friend who’s a stockbroker, and the friend takes him out to lunch to say thank you

- Next time, he invests some of the company's money in his own name... and that's called embezzlement

Key aspect: gradual growth in wickedness through this daily presenting of the members to sin

C. The New "Slavery" Exhorted: Just as... so also

1. Paul extends to analogy to our present life in Christ

a. remember we have a new life in Christ

vs. 4 *"We were therefore buried with Him through baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may walk in newness of life."*

"WALK IN NEWNESS OF LIFE"!!!

b. but how is that life to be lived w.r.t. this struggle with sin??

JUST AS...SO ALSO

2. Central element remains the same

vs. 19 *"... so now offer them in slavery to righteousness leading to holiness."*

- "Offer" = present... like the samurai soldiers, or even better, the heavenly army that Christ could have called upon to save Him from the cross
- "your members" = parts of the body... physical limbs, eyes, mouth, stomach... also mind, heart, will, memory, imagination
- "in slavery" = you have a new master now, with even more authority over you... you cannot disobey, you cannot run away or escape your new duty
- "to righteousness" ... not to sin, but to God's perfect will

Righteousness = God's character as revealed in His commands

- "leading to holiness"

Gradual, step by step growth in Christ-likeness... actual daily habits of holiness; resisting temptation, good deeds done in service to others, times of deep worship, etc.

STOP: "Holiness" here means "God-like separation from evil"... being actually in character and action LIKE GOD

Justification actually makes NO CHANGE in your basic nature and habits whatsoever... justification declares that you are eternally righteous before God's judgment seat because you are clothed in Christ's righteousness

YET the regeneration and the faith that justified you has changed your basic nature forever; now sanctification takes over and gradually changes you step by step

Here... Paul is saying that the gradual step-by-step growth into personal holiness is very similar in some key ways to the gradual step-by-step decay into wickedness

D. Common Theme: Gradual Increase

IV. Old Master: What Pattern, What Benefits, What Destination?

vs. 20-21 *When you were slaves to sin, you were free from the control of righteousness. ²¹ What benefit did you reap at that time from the things you are now ashamed of? Those things result in death!*

A. One Master

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."*

vs. 16 *"Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to someone to obey him as slaves, you are slaves to the one you obey...?"*

Basic idea: it is impossible to belong simultaneously to two masters... one will give a command which contradicts the other

Therefore, a slave only is responsible to obey his true master... no one else in creation has the right to command him as does his master; he can disregard any call or command from another and follow the word of his master

vs. 20 *"When you were slaves to sin, you were free from the control of righteousness."*

Righteousness had no impact on you whatever!! Sin commanded and you obeyed. Your conscience didn't halt the decay of sin, no other voice had the power to stop sin from ruling you

You were FREE FROM RIGHTEOUSNESS!!!

B. What Pattern of Life?

1. Already described... that obedience led to into constantly increasing wickedness
2. That pattern of life was addictive... ever more sin

3. You demonstrated daily whose slave you were... who was your master by whom you obeyed
4. Righteousness called and you acted as though deaf!!

Paul is saying... okay, now that you have been set free from sin as master, and righteousness now owns you, in the same way turn a deaf ear when sin calls out commands!!

Sin has ABSOLUTELY NO AUTHORITY OVER YOU... act as though deaf when sin calls out its wicked commands

C. What Benefits?

vs. 21 *“What benefits did you reap at that time from the things you are now ashamed of?”*

1. Lit. “What fruit??”
2. How was that life? What was the outcome of following sin day after day?
3. What was the return on your daily investment? “Ever-increasing wickedness!!!”
4. SHAME!! A harvest of shame!!!

Illus. Waking up after another night of drunkenness! Having to confess infidelity to a spouse!
Getting fired from a job for laziness or dishonesty! Trying to explain your way out of yet another lie to a loved one.

A HARVEST OF SHAME!!! Day after day.

On SHAME FOR SIN:

Illus. Thomas Watson **The Doctrine of Repentance** “Shame for sin” an essential element of repentance

Ezra 9:6 **“O my God, I am too ashamed and disgraced to lift up my face to you, my God, because our sins are higher than our heads and our guilt has reached to the heavens.**

Matthew 5:4 **“Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.”**

Luke 18:13 **“But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, ‘God, have mercy on me, a sinner.’**

Peter went outside and wept bitterly

D. What Destination?

“Those things result in death.”

1. Death day after day before God... spiritual deadness
2. Eternal death in hell forever suffering the wrath of God

V. New Master: What Pattern, What Benefits, What Destination?

A. New Master: God

vs. 22 But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves to God...

1. “BUT NOW...” What a **GLORIOUS** transformation of status

2 Corinthians 5:17 “If anyone is in Christ he is a new creation; the old has gone; behold, everything has become new!!”

2. “You have been set free from sin...”

Sin no longer has any authority over you... Sin can NEVER command you again!!!!

3. “and have become slaves to God”

NOTE: “Slaves of righteousness” and “Slaves of God” is exactly the same thing!!

B. New Pattern

1. Daily presenting to members of your body in obedience to God, in service to righteousness
2. Daily walking in newness of life as Jesus walked
3. Daily living under the power and authority of a new master

C. New Benefits

“...the benefit you reap leads to holiness...”

1. Holiness does not come instantly or quickly
2. Holiness comes through daily obedience, daily submission to your new master
3. Holiness blesses you day after day with IMMEASURABLE benefits
 - Benefits of a sweet fellowship with the risen Christ
 - Benefits of a good and healthy conscience before God
 - Benefits of a fruitful prayer life

- Benefits in evangelism
- Benefits in a well-ordered personal life
- Benefits of a happy Christ-centered home
- Benefits of daily obvious progress in Christlike maturity

D. New Destination

“...and the result is eternal life.”

1. Greek = “telos”... the “end”, the “destination”
2. This pattern of daily life ends in eternal life after death
3. NO OTHER PATTERN LEADS TO HEAVEN!!!
4. Restate: if you are not walking in a daily pattern of growth in holiness, you are not a Christian

Hebrews 12:14 “Make every effort to live at peace with all men and to be holy. Without holiness, no one will see the Lord.”

WITHOUT HOLINESS, NO ONE WILL SEE THE LORD

Look again at the text:

vs. 22 But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves to God the benefit you reap leads to holiness and the result is eternal life.”

“The benefit you reap is holiness and the result is eternal life...”

The result of holiness is eternal life.

VI. Application: The One-Verse Gospel

6:23 “For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

- A. Daily growth in holiness is part of eternal life
- B. Daily growth in holiness is a free gift in Christ Jesus our Lord
- C. How you live reveals your master, your character and your destination

Question: How are you living? Are you living as a slave to sin. Or a slave to God? If a slave to sin, how are the wages?? How are the benefits of your slavery to sin?