

Romans 6

Pastor Jeremy Cagle, March 4, 2018

Did you guys enjoy the music this morning? Yeah? If you did, come back tonight at 6:30. You can hear some more of it. We're going to be having a worship night here in the sanctuary, at 6:30 tonight. So please be here for that, and we're going to worship the Lord together in song. You can go ahead and turn in your Bibles to the book of Romans. And as you're doing that, this morning we're in a series called "The Book of Romans in Three Months." Where we're looking at this great book in a three-month or a 12-week period of time. (It might be a little longer due to Easter and next week). Next week we're going to take a break, just a quick break, from the series to talk about the issue of sin and how to confess sin. (I'll say a little more about that here in just a moment). We'll look at Psalm 51, because it ties into where we're at in the book of Romans.

But this week if you would turn there, we're going through this book quickly so you can get the big idea of it. And the big idea of Romans is this. If you look in chapter 1:16, there is the big idea of the book of Romans. Paul writes, "For I'm not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes." The book of Romans is about the gospel or the good news that Jesus died for sinners. And Paul says it's about the power of that message, the strength of that message to change lives. That phrase "the power of God" has really stuck with me as we've gone through this series, because I need the power of God this morning, amen? Can anybody relate to that? I need His help to live the Christian life and to build His Church. I can't do this on my own. I don't have the strength, none of us has the strength and the power but God does. That's what Paul says here. He has all the power in the world.

To say it another way, I can't change the souls here in Chilliwack. My wife and I have lived in Chilliwack for a year now, and I'd say I love this town. It's a wonderful place. I send pictures back home and nobody prays for me anymore, because it's so pretty. And you guys have a McDonald's which is wonderful. I need McDonald's, I need cholesterol. But Chilliwack is very diverse, which is wonderful, but it can be challenging for ministry because where do you start with all the diversity. How do you begin reaching people? Do you start over here, do you start over there? Which group do you begin with?

I did some research on this, (these numbers are a little bit outdated) but in 2011, a study was done which said that 13% of the population of Chilliwack are immigrants, they're not from the country of Canada. And 25% don't speak English as a primary language, or it's a secondary language to them. 73% are religious, so it's a very religious town. Those religions include everything from evangelical Christians to Catholics to Hindus and Buddhists. And you look at all that and you say that's amazing, what a blessing to be here. But you also wonder well, where would you start in ministry. Where would you start reaching people for Christ. Paul says here in Romans you start with the gospel.

The City of Rome, I told you last time, was a very diverse place, people came from everywhere. And he says, "Here's how you do it, you start with the good news of Jesus Christ, because that's where the power lies. That's where the strength is found."

This is what the early church did by the way. In the ancient world, the whole world was diverse, and they reached people with the gospel. If you remember in Acts chapter two, when Peter preached his famous sermon at Pentecost, it says that there were Parthians and Medes and Elamites there; there were residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia, Pamphylia, Egypt and the districts of Libya. All these people are there listening to his sermon, and it says that 3,000 of them were saved, why? Because Peter told them the gospel. He told them the good news of Jesus Christ. It cuts through all those differences.

Another example of this, if you read on in the book of Acts it says, as the church was growing Philip has a conversation with an Ethiopian eunuch. You couldn't get any more different than a Jew and an Ethiopian eunuch. Back then those people came from two different planets. And Philip talks with this guy and the next thing you know, the guy's getting baptized, he's getting down from his chariot, gets in the water, why? Because he preached the gospel to him. It's the same idea and you see this happening over and over and over again in the New Testament. As a matter of fact, when Jesus was crucified, above the cross, if you remember it says "King of the Jews" in three languages. Why three languages? Because they spoke all those different languages back then, and symbolically that showed He was dying for all these peoples.

And the point is that if that approach works for them, it can work for us. If that worked for the people back then, it can work for us today. We need to be telling people about Jesus Christ. We need to be telling them the gospel. It's our job as a church to do that.

In the 1800s, a group of believers traveled to London to see the churches there and make a tour of them. And so they went to this church and they said, "What a wonderful choir. What great music," and they went to this church and they said, "What a wonderful building." (It had great architecture), and this one they said, "Great sermon," that one they said, "Great people," and they went to the Metropolitan Tabernacle where Charles Spurgeon was preaching, and when he finished, they sat in silence for a while. They really didn't know what to say. And so one of the guests spoke up and he said, "What a wonderful Saviour."

That's what we want people to say when they visit Grace Fellowship Church, amen? That's what we want them to say when they meet us out in the community. You know it's great if they like our music, and it's great if they think our people are friendly. I think you guys are very friendly, that's all wonderful. But we want them to go home bragging on our God and our Saviour. That's the point of what we're doing here. That's what'll reach Chilliwick. That's what's going to reach this world and make an impact and it leads us to the book of Romans, because Romans tells us about our Saviour. It tells us about Jesus Christ. It's almost as if Paul mentions Him or He mentions the gospel in the first chapter, and he can't stop talking about it until he gets to the end of the book.

And just to show you his line of reasoning until we get to our portion for today, if you look in chapter 1:18, Paul says, "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men." In other words, Paul says God is angry with unrighteous men. He is angry with those who reject His law and ignore Him. And to balance that out, if you look in chapter 2:3, Paul goes on with his next point. And in chapter 2:3, he says, "But do you suppose this, O man, when you pass judgment on those who practice such things and do the same

yourself, that you will escape the judgment of God.” In other words, God is angry with self-righteous men too. He is angry with those who say there is no God. In chapter one and in chapter two, He is angry with those who look back on those people and judge them. He says you're not better than them. Paul says because you sin too, you'll face the wrath of God if you don't repent.

But then in chapter 3:21, Paul shifts gears and gives us some good news when he says, “But now apart from the law, the righteousness of God has been manifested being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe.” In other words, there is a solution to all this sin. There's an answer to all this lawbreaking and the answer is Jesus Christ. Because in Him, Paul says, the righteousness of God has been manifested.

Jesus never broke the Law, Jesus never sinned. Where you and I lied and lusted and stole, where we hated and blasphemed and slandered, He did none of that. And in chapter three, Paul says if you trust in Christ, if you trust in Him, God will treat you as if you kept the law too. He will take all of Christ righteousness, chapter four says, and put it on you, and He will justify you.

If you look in chapter 5:1, Paul talks about that justification. It says, “Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through Jesus Christ our Lord.” This is the argument so far in the book of Romans. If you trust in Christ, He gives you peace with God. He restores the relationship that was broken by sin. This raises an important question, which is what we're going to talk about this morning.

“Okay, well what does that mean now? Does that mean we can sin all we want to?” Does that question make sense? If Christ has justified us, if He has made us right with God and brought us peace, if He has saved us from the law, does that mean there is no law and now for the Christian? Does that mean we can live in sin? If you look in chapter 6:1, this is exactly what Paul says. He says, “What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase?” “If it increases His grace when we sin,” Paul says, “can we continue in it?” That's a fair question, isn't it?

Have you guys ever heard this question raised before? Can Jesus be my fire insurance and get me out of hell, and that's it. Can He be my copilot? You know He flies the plane sometimes, and I fly the plane sometimes, kind of depending on the season. At Christmastime, He really flies the plane, the rest of the year not so much. Is that the kind of Christianity Paul is talking about here? If you've heard this sort of thing before it might interest you to know it's nothing new in history. Christians have wrestled with this for years.

For example, in the Reformation, a group of people taught this called the antinomians. It comes from the word *anti* which is “against” and *nomos* which means “the law”. They taught against the law. They said there is no law anymore for the Christian life. You get saved, you can do what you want, and you're fine, that's it. You can follow Christ and live like the devil. You can go to heaven and live like you're in hell or from hell. But the antinomians were eventually branded as heretics and shunned by the reformers. But they weren't the only ones who taught this.

Another group came around during the colonial days in America called the Free-Gracers who taught this. A few centuries after the Reformation, a group rose up in New England among the pilgrims who said that grace is free; it doesn't cost you anything. This is true, but they took that to mean, you don't have to repent now. You don't have to turn away from sin now that you're saved. Again, it was the same argument. There is no law, there are no rules. And they were branded as heretics as well. Some of them were banished from the Massachusetts Bay Colony. And they weren't alone. This idea has had many different forms.

In our time, in the 1980s, a few decades ago, a group popped up in the States called The Easy Believers, who said that salvation is easy to believe. It's easy to accept. All you have to do is pray a prayer and you're in. All you have to do is sign a card, and you're good. Don't worry about taking up the cross, you can do that later. Don't worry about denying yourself, we'll get to that years down the road. John MacArthur wrote a book against that called *The Gospel According to Jesus*. Some of you are familiar with that book, but that's what Paul is referring to here. This is the issue: is salvation easy to believe?

We don't earn our salvation, so does that make it easy? We don't work for it, but does that mean we don't have to do anything now that we're saved? In response to it, can we go on living in sin? I'm sure you've seen this before. I mean I could ask you to raise your hand, but how many of you know someone who says they're a Christian, but they live in sin? We all do. Is that problem prevalent in Canada like it is in the States? Openly? They openly live in sin? How many of you know someone who says they're saved, and they live like the world around them or they live worse than the world around them?

I remember talking with a relative several years ago who wanted me to help him plant a church in Tennessee. But the ironic thing is that he was living in adultery at the time. The woman he was living with who his was not married to was sitting right beside him as he was talking about planting this church. Now what would God say to that? What would the Scriptures say? That's what we're wrestling with this morning. Can we live like the world around us? Can we live in sin? Listen, you can struggle with sin and still be saved, that's what Romans 7 is about. We're going to talk about that in a couple of weeks. You should fight sin. You need to be fighting sin. But what do you say to someone who doesn't fight it? What do you say to someone who just gives into it? That's what Romans chapter six is about.

What do you say to someone who lives like there is no law and no rules at all? And to answer that important question, Paul actually gives us answers to questions about our justification. So if you're taking notes this morning in Romans six, Paul wrestles with two questions about our justification. Like I said, chapter five says that we're justified, that's the point of that chapter. Jesus made us right with God and He brought us peace. He healed our broken relationship with heaven, but that raises some questions. I mean it raises a few concerns, and in chapter six Paul addresses two of them.

They're very similar, but the first one is this: "Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase?" Some of your translations say "abound" which is a great word as well. "Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase?" Are we to be antinomians against the law? Are we to be Free-Gracers like in the pilgrim days? Is Jesus our copilot and our home boy?" I saw one tee-

shirt say that “Jesus is our home boy.” Is that the idea here? Paul says “no” and gives us three reasons why. So three answers to that question.

The first one is this: No, because you have been baptized into Christ. You can't continue in sin because you have been baptized into Christ. If you look in verses one through three, this is what he says. And by the way, this is a tough chapter. At least it was tough for me, so just hang in there, put your thinking caps on. I've taught that at elementary camps before, and I would tell the kids put their thinking helmets on. So put those on, screw them in tight. And we'll get through this together. If you look in verse one, it says,

What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase? May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it? Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death?

Just a few thoughts on this, if you notice Paul doesn't say, “Are we to sin at all”? He says, “Are we to continue in sin?” That means continue in it as a lifestyle, continue in it as a habit or a pattern of your life. You guys understand there's a difference between someone who wrestles in their mind with a lie and someone you would say is a liar. That's the kind of thing he's talking about here.

And he says in verse two, his answer to the question is, “May it never be.” That phrase is translated “by no means” in some Bibles, certainly not in others. In Greek, it's the phrase *ginomai*. It's the strongest way to say “no” in the Greek language. You only see it a handful of times in your Bible. You'll see it a few times later in Romans. But it could translate “No, no, no, no!” or “God forbid”, in the King James. Paul says, “God, forbid that you should sin so that grace may increase.” “God forbid that you should think this is easy to believe.”

Why? He says, “because you've been baptized into Christ.” You have died to sin, in verse two, and when God saved you, verse three says He baptized you. Or the word is “dunked you,” “immersed you into Christ.” When Jesus died, God dunked your soul into Him. When He went into the grave, you went in there too, to die to sin, and therefore you can't live in it anymore. As we've said before, you can't live for the sins that Jesus died for. That doesn't make sense. You can't live for the things that put Him to death.

Paul says in verse four, “Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of his death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection.” The resurrection was a victory over sin, that was the point of it. Jesus rose from the grave to show that He defeated sin, and now you need to live in light of that. You need to defeat sin too. You need to live in victory because Jesus gave you victory.

He says in verse four, you need to walk in newness of life. If you think about it, you can't walk in two directions, you can only walk in one direction. In a similar way, you need to walk towards God, and walk away from sin. This leads to another answer to the question (and we're going to go through these pretty quickly, because I want to give you some application here in a minute).

“Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase?” Here's another answer to that question: No, because we have died with Christ. We have been baptized into Christ, that's the first answer here. Second one is we have died with Christ, and this is a little stronger. But I just showed you that baptism symbolizes death. As you go down into the water it symbolizes your death to the old man. As you come out it symbolizes your resurrection to the new man. And Paul picks up on this here, and he says in verse six, he says, “knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin; for he who has died is freed from sin.”

And then he goes on in verse eight and he says, “Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, is never to die again; death no longer is master over Him.”

And he goes on and says, “Even so”, in verse 11, “consider yourselves to be dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus.” You see the word “death” mentioned over and over again there. But the argument is that Jesus died to sin so that it has no hold on Him anymore. And it should have no hold on us. Verse 10 says “He died to sin once for all” which means it was a total death, absolute victory over it. To say it another way, you shouldn't play with death. I don't think I have to say that, but you shouldn't snuggle up close to death and call it your friend. It's the same way with sin.

I grew up next to two cemeteries, when I was a kid. I could tell you a lot of jokes about that, it was interesting. We had one cemetery beside my house that was for the unknown confederate dead. And then behind it was the cemetery from the 17 and 1800s. But I'll tell you nobody ever played in those cemeteries, pretty rare. Nobody hung out there on weekends and had parties, because it symbolized death. You stay away from death, that's what Paul is saying here.

So another story, Eric Russell was the coach of the Georgia Southern football team from 1981 to 1989. And he was an unconventional guy in his methods, very unorthodox coach. And one time he had some backwoods farmers bring in a six-foot rattlesnake into a meeting where his players were at, and just threw it on the table. And as they did that, the players scattered for the door, and coach Russell yelled at them, “You need to fear drugs like you fear that snake, because they'll both kill you.” My friends you need to fear sin like you fear that snake. That's what Paul is saying here. You need to run for your lives, you don't need to play with it, you don't need to get close to it, you don't need to buddy up to it because it will kill you. And that leads to another answer to the question. (And we'll go through this one quickly as well).

A third answer to the question is this: No, because Jesus is your master now. Are we to sin so that grace may increase? No, because you've been baptized into Christ; no, because you have died with Him, and here's a third answer, no, because Jesus is your master now. When you're saved, Jesus becomes your master. He becomes your Lord. And he says this in verse 12. Paul says,

Therefore, do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts, and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. For sin shall not be master over you, for you're not under law but under grace.

As you've read that, you might pick up on a couple of master images in here. When he says, "For sin shall not be master over you, for you're not under law but under grace." That word "under" means "under law". It means under law as a way of salvation. You're not under that, you're under grace. You serve grace, and you should live accordingly. He says, "Do not let sin reign in your body so that you obey its lusts." Reigning and obeying, that's the idea of mastery. Instead, do not present members of your body to sin (like presenting yourself to a king), instead present yourself to God. But the point is that Jesus is your master now. Let me give you a few applications to this. I've been going through a lot of Scripture this morning. (I told you this is a tough passage). I appreciate you guys hanging in there with me, it's pretty deep.

But let me back up and give you some applications to these. These are pretty simple, here's one: You need to fight sin. Is that simple enough in the passage, do you guys all get that? You need to be fighting sin. J.C. Ryle said in his day "There's nothing more common..." (I've quoted this to you before) "...than jellyfish Christians. They don't fight anything, they don't have a backbone, they don't stand up for anything. Paul says here, if you follow Christ, if Romans one through five applied to your life, then you need to apply chapter six as well. You're going to have to fight sin. Your life is going to be a spiritual battle. It's a battle in the mind, it's a battle of what you think about, what you put in your head throughout the day, what you meditate on. It's going to be a fight.

And it's a fight that's never over. I've never been in combat before, but I hear the hardest thing about combat is it just never feels like it's over. You never sleep, you're awake all the time. In some senses, the Christian life is like that. You never shut down your fight against sin.

In his book *Adopted for Life*, Russell Moore tells a story of a time he and his wife adopted two little boys from Russia. And they picked them up in a dirty orphanage. And he says when he picked these little boys up at the orphanage, there was dirt everywhere. There was dirt on their clothes, there was dirt in their hair, there was dirt in their food and dirt on their bed. But he said it was the weirdest thing. He said, "When we took them away from that, they cried." He said, "It didn't make any sense. We took them away from that dirty environment and they sobbed the whole way back."

I think we all do that to some degree when we're saved. When you're saved, Jesus washes the dirt off of you. Can you say "amen" to that? He washes the filth off of you, and then we turn back around and we cry over it, don't we? We miss the dirt. Paul says you can't do that and be saved. You've got to fight the dirt, you've got to pull out the soap and scrub yourself off. Whatever the sin it is, lust, pride, slander, gossip, jealousy, coveting, you've got to scrub it all away in the blood of Christ and you've got to do it every day.

Which leads to another application to this. And this one I think really impacts us as a church. That is that head knowledge doesn't save you, heart knowledge does. Head knowledge doesn't save you, heart knowledge does. What I mean is it doesn't matter what you know if you don't believe it. It doesn't matter how much you know about the Christian life if you live in sin, if your life is covered in dirt. There were probably some children at that orphanage I just described that were really smart kids. But they were still dirty. They were still covered in the filth. They needed to come out of that environment and you need to come out of your sin if you were to be clean this morning.

At a church like Grace Fellowship, there can be a real tendency to emphasize head knowledge over heart knowledge. And I just want to say head knowledge is not a bad thing. After all you, can't learn about God without your head. You can't learn about God without doctrine, and we need to emphasize that. That's important but you can have a lot of head knowledge and go to hell. Does that make sense? Did you get that this morning? You can listen to sermons and go to hell. You can read good books and go to hell.

You see it this way, the devil listens to sermons. He's heard more sermons than you and I put together, but he didn't believe them. And because of that, he's lost. You need to believe the Word of God this morning if you want to be saved. You need to go home and examine your life, and if you're living in sin, turn away from it. Don't have a religion like the devil.

This leads to another application to this, and that is don't forget the power of God. If you're wondering as we're going through this tough stuff in Romans 6, "How do I do this? How do I get rid of sin? How do I fight it?" Well the answer is if you go back to Romans 1, is the power of God. We've been talking a lot about that in the series, because that's the theme of the book. But not only does this power of God save you, it keeps you safe. Not only does it wash you off once, it washes you off 100 times, a million times, a billion times.

They say that no matter how many steps you take away from God, it's only one step back. No matter how many times you fail and mess up and blow it, it only takes one true prayer of repentance, and you'll be right with God. You serve a merciful God. You serve a loving God. And God will hear that sincere prayer, and He will change you. Don't forget that. Don't forget we have victory in Jesus. And let me say this too, don't forget the world needs to see that victory. They need to see your victory over sin.

A friend of mine told me about the time a traveling salesman came to the door selling diet pills, but he weighed 300 pounds. And my friend said, "Look man ..." He wasn't rude about it, but he's like, "I'm not going to buy that. It didn't work for you, it's not going to work for me. It didn't change your life, it's not going to change mine." Which is pretty funny but let me tell you this, if you stay in sin this morning, people are going to say the same thing to you when you tell them the gospel.

If you live a sinful life this morning, the lost world out there will say the same thing to you when you come and tell them about Jesus Christ. They'll see your life and they'll say, "If it didn't work for you, it won't work for me. It didn't change your life, it won't change mine." They'll say,

“Where's the power in there, where is the strength in that?” See the power is seen in a changed life. It's seen in a life that defeats sin, and the world needs to see that.”

James Montgomery Boice said, “It's a lamentable fact that one man dishonors the gospel more by an unholy walk, than ten men do with a holy one.” You can dishonor the gospel more by an unholy walk than ten of us can with a holy one. So turn from your sin this morning, lean on the power of God and get victory over it.

And that leads to another question Paul gives us in this passage and it's similar to the first one, so we won't spend a lot of time on it. But another question for our justification. The first one is, “Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase?” And we saw the answer is no, because we've been baptized into Christ, died with Him and Jesus is our master now. But that leads to our second question which is this: “Shall we sin because we're not under the law?” You can see how similar that is to the first, same kind of thing. “Shall we sin because we're not under the law?”

I think we all understand that we're not under the Old Testament Law this morning, not in every sense, because you didn't bring a goat with you this morning to sacrifice. Did anybody bring a goat and put it in the parking lot? Okay, good, because I don't know what to do with it. But you didn't come in here expecting me to kill it and spread the blood on the altar, because on some level we understand that Jesus has fulfilled that law. He has been the one-time sacrifice for sin. But Paul's question here as a Jew processing this is, does that mean there is no law anymore? Does that mean we can sin all we want to now?

Like I said earlier, this is a question people have wrestled with down throughout the ages. And Paul's answer is the same answer: no, there is a law for the Christian. In fact, if you want to read the phrase, Galatians 6:2 mentions the law of Christ. If you've read through the New Testament before, you know the Sermon on the Mount, there's lots of “... do unto others as you had them do unto you.” There's lots of commands in the New Testament. Paul says we follow those and here's three reasons why. We'll go through these fast.

The first one is this: No, you can't sin all you want to, because you're slaves of righteousness. This is something Paul just mentioned a moment ago. He mentions masters before, but now he says you are slaves of righteousness. And in verse 15 he says, “What then? Shall we sin because we're not under law but under grace? May it never be!” that's the phrase *me ginomai* again. “No, no, no, no! God forbid.”

And then he says in verse 16, “Do you not know that when you present yourself to someone as slaves for obedience, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin resulting in death, or obedience resulting in righteousness? But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed and having been freed from sin, you became...” here's the phrase “...slaves of righteousness.”

There's a lot in this passage but it's a pretty simple argument. You can't be a slave of sin and a slave of righteousness. You can't be enslaved to your lust and pride and greed and coveting and all those sins and be a slave of Christ. Verse 17 actually says you used to be slaves of sin, you

used to be under sin's control and authority, but Jesus saved you and now you're free from that. And verse 18 says you're freed from sin, and now you've become slaves of righteousness.

The word "righteousness" here is the same word for justification, that we saw in Romans 5. To be justified is to be made righteous, it's to be made right with God. And Paul's very simple argument here is, if you're right with God, then you're right with God; you're a slave of that, you live under that now, not to earn it, but because Christ earned it for you. This leads to another answer to our question, "Shall we sin because we're not under the law?"

And that is: no because we are slaves of holiness. You're slaves of righteousness and you are slaves of holiness. Paul says in verse 19, "I'm speaking in human terms" or "I'm speaking simply, plainly," he says "because of the weakness of your flesh." It's another other way of saying "this is hard to put into words." He goes on, he says, "For just as you presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness, resulting in further lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness resulting in sanctification."

The word sanctification there is the Greek word *hagiasmos* which means "holy" or "set apart". In other words, Paul says you need to live a set apart life. You need to be different from the world around you. When people look at your life, lost people, they need to say there's something different about him, there's something different about her. When people look at you, they shouldn't say, "Well, they're just like us." Paul says you don't want to be "just like us". You want to be holy, sanctified, set apart, which is not easy by the way.

I've heard from some of you guys it's not easy when people are telling bad jokes in the break room, what do you do as a Christian. Well Paul says your first priority is not "Did my coworkers like me?", your first priority is "How do I be holy in the midst of this?" Set apart. What do you do when they're gossiping about someone, or things like that? Same idea. This leads to one more answer to the question.

"Shall we sin because we're not under the law?" Paul says, no, because you're slaves of righteousness, slaves of holiness. And here's a third answer: No, because you're ultimately slaves of God. So it all goes back to our relationship to God. That's the point of the passage. We hate sin, because we love God. We run from sin, because we love Him. Verse 20 says,

For when you were slaves of sin, you were free and regard to righteousness. Therefore what benefit were you then deriving from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the outcome of those things is death. But now having been freed from sin and enslaved to God, you derive your benefit resulting in sanctification, and the outcome, eternal life.

Paul uses the interesting phrase in verse 22, "You're now enslaved to God." You were once enslaved to sin, you got no benefit from that. He said you're now shamed of those things, the outcome was death for you. But when you came to Christ, you became slaves of God leading to eternal life. That's what this master pays or gives you freely, He gives you eternal life. Slaves in the ancient world, you understand, they weren't paid anything. That was the idea of slavery. I mean maybe some were, but most were not. The point was you were a slave, you were owned by

the master, so you did whatever you were told. Paul says when you become a believer in Christ, God becomes your master now, but in His mercy, He pays you eternal life as a gift.

Verse 23 says that this way. He says, “For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” That’s an interesting passage if you ever want to witness to someone, memorize that. It’s a great verse. He says, “for the wages of sin,” the things sin brings out of your life, the things you work for in sin is death. But God’s gift is eternal life in Christ Jesus.

Paul says at the end of the day, those are your two options: You can have life or you can have death. Those are your two choices. You can go to heaven or you can go to hell. But it all depends on which master you serve. It all depends on who your Lord is. So he rounds this chapter out, and he asked the question, “What’s it going to be? Are you going to be a slave to God or a slave to sin? Are you going to follow Christ or are you going to follow the flesh?”

Elizabeth Huxley was a slave in Missouri before the Civil War. She wanted to buy her freedom back. She wanted to get her life back, essentially. So she went to her master and asked him how she could do that. And he said, “You could be free if you raised \$1,200,” which was a lot of money back then. He said, “That’s what it would cost you to get your life back, \$1,200.” But she couldn’t do it. She made dresses, and she could not make enough money with the dresses to raise that much. Some of her friends heard about her plight. She had wealthy friends. And to her amazement, they raised the \$1,200 and gave her her freedom.

That’s what Paul says Jesus did for us, that’s what God did. He bought us back from our sin, He raised the funds. He paid it Himself, and He gave us freedom. And with that, we serve Him in return not because we have to, but because we want to. Not out of debt, out of gratitude. We can’t help it. We want to do this. That’s the issue of sin friends, it’s an issue of what do you want to do. Do you love God enough in response that you want to run away from those evil things or do you not really care that much about what He did for you?

He’d say it this way closing this out. Paul says, “Do you want life? Do you want heaven? You get it by trusting in Christ and in response serving Him by turning to Jesus and turning away from sins.” Like I told you, they’re in opposite directions. If you turn toward Christ, you turn from sin. If you follow the Lord, you flee from the evil things, so will you do that this morning? Will you flee from sin? Paul says, “Will you receive this free gift of eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord?”

If you’re having trouble doing that this morning, I want to encourage you to come back next week. We’re actually going to take a week just to talk about this issue of confessing sin. I know we dealt with some heavy theological stuff this morning, but I want to take a break from Romans to talk about how to get right with God if you’re wrong with him. If you remember Psalm 51, in that Psalm David prays, “Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.” And he prays. “Purify me with hyssop; and I shall be clean, wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.”

Some of you read a passage like this and you say, “I want to be whiter than snow today. I want to be clean. I want to be pure.” Well you can come back next week, and we can talk about how to do that. But this morning I will tell you, you can be pure and clean if you trust in the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ. If you trust in all God has done for you in Romans one through five, you can enjoy the benefits in chapter six through Christ alone. And let's pray and thank the Lord for that this morning.

Father I feel like we've kind of swallowed an elephant and maybe spit out the tail a little bit today, going through a lot of information. But Lord I pray it would be beneficial for our church. We want to be a church, Lord, that pleases You. We want to be a church that gives You glory in the midst of an evil world. We want to be different. We want to be holy. We want to be all these things You've written in here. So we pray for Your mercy in doing that Lord.

Thank you for what Christ has done for us. Thank you that He's given us this freedom, that we can flee from our sins and our evil works. Lord may You be glorified in the rest of our service this morning. May You be glorified tonight as we come back and worship You in song and as we sing about the great things Your son has done for us. And we pray this all in His great name, in the name of Jesus, amen.