

Because He Lives 5

Devoted to Righteousness

Romans 6:15-23

Memory Verses: Romans 6:23

MANUSCRIPT

Introduction (Me, We, & the Struggle)

Some of you may be familiar with the famous inventor Nikola Tesla. His ideas literally shaped the modern world. Electricity, wireless concepts, things we still depend on today. He was ahead of his time in almost every way. But it cost him greatly. Early in his life he made a vow; he would let nothing ever get in the way of his work. Not friends, family, relationships, marriage, or even happiness. He knew he couldn't have both if his work was to succeed. In the end he was very successful... but he died alone in a hotel room. You have to admit... that's devotion!

What are you devoted to? Everyone is devoted to something. Your time shows it. Your money shows it. Your thoughts show it. If you don't know what you are devoted to, take a look at your phone's screen time and your credit card report. We don't struggle with devotion, we struggle with what we're devoted to. The question isn't, are you devoted. The question is, what has your heart?

Because Jesus lives; because our savior is alive, we have new life. Everything has changed. In place of war with God we've been given peace with God. Where we were once defined by our sinful nature we are now defined by grace. Where we were once alive to our sinful desires, we have now been crucified with Christ. And today.... where we were once enslaved to selfish pleasure, we are given a new purpose. Now we are enslaved to Christ... now we are devoted to righteousness.

Look with me at **Romans 6:15-23**. The grace we have received in Christ's resurrection isn't there so we can sin without consequence. Again, as we said last week, no Christian would ever think like this. Rather, the grace of Christ is so powerful that it shines into our souls and radically changes our desires. Because he lives... my heart wants to live differently! Instead of living for my own selfish sinful pleasures... I truly want to live for Christ... and I do that by being devoted to righteousness.

So this begs a question... are your desires, more than not, for Christ and righteousness or are your desires still to satisfy your sinful pleasures? If the later, you might not be saved? If you have no desire to live in righteousness then you may not have been redefined by grace nor crucified with Christ. Christ in us changes us... from slaves to sin into slaves to righteousness. The main point of the sermon today is this...

A Rescued Heart Can't Help But Live For Righteousness!

Today, I want to show you three way we go from being slaves of sin to slaves of righteousness.

Teaching (Expand on the Problem, God)

The first way we become slaves of righteousness is this... **We Hear And Receive The Gospel**. Let's look again at **Romans 6:17**. It is the lynchpin of this passage. We were enslaved to sin. As we've seen the last two weeks, our sinful nature is a force to be reckoned with. We were so entangled in our sinful desires that no other option but to indulge in them seemed plausible. We were in a word, enslaved! We were chained, shackled, encased, and imprisoned. We had one focus, one desire... sin and sin some more!

But then something happened. By the grace of God... two things. First, the Gospel happened. And then secondly, the grace of God opened your ears to hear it. The miracle of the Gospel can not be overstated. We've talked about it every week of this series. We talk about every chance we meet together. We bring our attention back to it and stand in awe of it as often as we can. The God of the universe died for us, in our place, and rose again to give us new life! But almost just as miraculous is that God opened your ears to hear this good news and actually comprehend it and consider it.

As slaves to sin, we cannot choose to hear the Gospel. Our ears are closed off to it. **Romans 3:10-11**, and **2 Corinthians 4:3-4** speak to this fact! The only way it is possible for those who are enslaved to their sin to even get a whiff of the Gospel is if God himself allows it. Look at **John 6:44 & 65**.

The shift from a slave of sin to a slave of righteousness begins with the grace of God which allows you to hear and receive the Gospel. You don't simply drift into righteous living by accident or coincidence. No, you are reshaped for it by truth. You are transformed by the standard of teaching you've heard from the Bible. You hear it and then your heart receives it. And from that point forward you are a new person! The point being... **You can't be devoted to righteousness if you aren't anchored to the truth of God's Word!** Devotion doesn't start with effort. It starts with grace then faith in the teaching of the Gospel. Then what we believe shapes what we obey. Devotion is merely a response to something we believe.

So, has God given you the grace to hear and understand the clear message of the Gospel? Have you allowed the truth of God's word to impact your heart? Have you embraced the message and mission of the kingdom of Christ? If so, you will be transformed from a slave of sin into a devoted slave of righteousness. **A Rescued Heart Can't Help But Live For Righteousness!**

The second way we become slaves of righteousness is this... **Our Hearts Are Transformed To Obey**. Let's look again at **Romans 6:17**. We became obedient from the heart based on what the standard of teaching

showed us. But again... devotion in our hearts is a gift of the grace of Christ. Notice in **vs.19** that Paul has to speak in human terms. Why? Because something spiritual is happening that we can only understand in human terms. We only understand drive, desire, effort, and accomplishment. If something was done, we did it through hard work and grit!

But that's not what is happening here. Here, your heart is being regenerated by the Holy Spirit. We talked about this last week. When you hear the Gospel and it takes root in your heart, the Holy Spirit starts to work to change your soul! That's why **vs.18** says "having been set free from sin." You didn't set yourself free... you were set free! That's a big difference!

I say all that to say this... the devotion you feel in your heart isn't because you figured out what this is all about. It's because the Holy Spirit changed you and freed you! And what changed? Your desires, convictions, and direction. **Now, though everything in your sinful nature only wants to obey your own sinful desires and pleasures... you actually want to obey Christ and live for righteousness. You are made into something totally the opposite of who you were! You aren't forced to obey Christ and his righteous decrees. Instead you freely rejoice in doing them. It's like this... when the holy spirit frees you from your enslavement to sin... righteousness doesn't need to be forced. Rather, it freely flows from a heart of obedience.**

So, do you feel new desires for righteousness forming in your heart? Do you have unexplainable passion to live for Christ and his righteousness or are your feelings still for your sin? **A Rescued Heart Can't Help But Live For Righteousness.**

The third way we become slaves of righteousness is this... **The More We Obey The More We Want To.** Let's look again at **Romans 6:19-22**. This is the process called sanctification. It's the working out of your salvation. Justification saves us... sanctification is saving us. And it's not a works thing or an effort based religion. It's the working of the Holy Spirit in us as we choose to obey and live for him! So it's not just the working of the Holy Spirit, though I would contend he does most of the heavy lifting. But we have a part too.

The end of **verse 19** says that when we devote our bodies to doing righteous works, we will enter into the process of sanctification. Meaning... the spirit calls, we obey. Then the spirit works as we obey. Then **verse 22** adds, the fruit (or the reward) of living for God is sanctification. Meaning... sanctification is the means and the reward. Living in righteousness for Christ leads us to more living in righteousness for Christ. **The more we devote our lives to living for Christ the more we will grow into who Christ wants us to be. A Rescued Heart Can't Help**

But Live For Righteousness!

Application

But what happens when we choose to ignore the truth of the word of God? What happens when we choose to follow the Holy Spirit into obedience? What happens when we reject the draw of Christ into righteousness? What happens when we choose not to walk in sanctification or devote ourselves to righteous causes? It's clear... the power of the Holy Spirit will stop drawing and the process of sanctification will stall. You will fail to become who Christ wants you to be. You will fall back into old habits and be devoted to yourself and your sin again. And as a Christian... this is a tragedy. Why? Because God has set you free from sin by dying on the cross for you!

Reject that drift back into sin with all you have. Rather, as best as you can, beg the Holy spirit to help you as you devote yourself to righteousness. Become, as best as you can, a slave of righteousness. This means leverage your life. Give all you have. Do what you can. Help the needy as best as you are able. Feed the poor. Sell out for the cause of Christ. Remember Tesla, who gave up everything for his cause. What are you willing to give up to enslave yourself to Christ and righteous works?

Conclusion

Eternity is at stake. Paul reminds us again of one of the greatest verses in the entire Bible in **Romans 6:23**. The wages of sin, rejecting Christ and righteousness is spiritual death. But the ultimate reward of becoming a slave to Christ and righteousness and devoting your life to him is eternal life!