

Sunday, June 7, 2026

## When in Romans Part 16

### Choosing Righteousness: Freedom from Sin's Slavery

---

#### **Sermon Summary**

This sermon explores the profound theological tension in sanctification - the process of becoming more like Jesus. Pastor Chris emphasizes that Christians are no longer slaves to sin but have become slaves to righteousness through their identification with Christ's death, burial, and resurrection. The central message is that while sanctification is 100% a human responsibility requiring intentional choices, it is simultaneously 100% dependent on God's gracious work. Believers must maintain this balance or fail in their spiritual growth. The sermon challenges cultural Christianity that accepts ongoing sin as normal, calling instead for wholehearted obedience that flows from a transformed heart. True discipleship involves internalizing Scripture, obeying from the heart, and sharing the gospel with others, all while partnering with God in the sanctification process.

---

#### **Scripture References**

##### **Explicitly Mentioned References:**

- Romans 6:15-23 - Main passage of the sermon
- Matthew 5:3 - "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to them"
- Matthew 10:39 - "Whoever does not take up his cross and follow me is not worthy of me"
- Hebrews 12:4 - "You have not yet resisted to the point of bloodshed in your struggle against sin"
- 1 Corinthians 1:2 - "To those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, and called to be saints"
- Galatians 5:22-23 - The fruit of the Spirit
- Philippians 1:6 - "The one who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus"

### **Alluded to References:**

- Romans 3-5 - Mentioned regarding justification (chapters referenced but not quoted)
- Romans 6:1-14 - Referenced as "last week's" passage and the beginning of chapter 6
- Psalms 51 - Alluded to when discussing David's repentance ("Search me, O God, and know my heart. Renew me, cleanse me of my sin. Restore unto me the joy of my salvation")

---

### **Key Points**

- Balance is essential in understanding sanctification - it requires both human effort and complete dependence on God's grace
- Christians have been freed from slavery to sin and have become slaves to righteousness and to God
- True believers obey from the heart the pattern of teaching they have been entrusted with (Scripture)
- There is no biblical category for a Christian who continues in willful, unrepentant sin
- Discipleship involves three components: hearing good teaching, obeying it, and sharing it with others
- Sin always leads to death (both physical cessation of life and spiritual separation from God), while righteousness leads to sanctification and eternal life
- Believers must "begin with the end in mind" - recognizing that while sin may offer short-term benefits, its ultimate end is death
- Sanctification is a miraculous transformation accomplished by the Holy Spirit, producing fruit we cannot generate ourselves
- The partnership principle: "You can't do it without Him. He won't do it without you."
- Repentance should be as big as our sin, following David's example of returning to God immediately after failure

---

## Discussion Questions

- Paul uses the metaphor of slavery extensively in Romans 6. How does understanding ancient slavery—where people chose their master out of desperation—change your perspective on what it means to be enslaved to righteousness?
- The sermon emphasizes that sanctification requires both 100% human effort and 100% divine grace. How do you maintain this balance in your daily walk without falling into either self-reliance or passivity?
- Pastor Chris states that if sin had no benefit, we wouldn't do it. How does honestly acknowledging the short-term benefits of sin help us make better choices when we 'begin with the end in mind'?
- Romans 6:17 speaks of obeying 'from the heart' the pattern of teaching. What does heart-level obedience look like compared to mere outward compliance, and how can you cultivate this in your life?
- The sermon challenges the idea of 'cultural Christianity' where people attend church but continue in sin without conviction. What are the markers that distinguish genuine faith from cultural religiosity in your own life?
- Hebrews 12:4 says we have not yet resisted sin to the point of bloodshed. What does it mean to struggle against sin with this level of intensity, and where might you need to increase your resistance?
- Pastor Chris mentions that David was a man after God's own heart not because he didn't sin, but because he repented greatly. How does this truth about repentance change your response when you fail?
- Paul repeatedly asks, 'Shall we go on sinning?' and answers emphatically, 'By no means!' Why do you think Christians today struggle to take this prohibition as seriously as Paul intended?
- The sermon states that discipleship involves not just learning but sharing the pattern of teaching with others. What fears or obstacles prevent you from sharing what you've learned, and how might you overcome them?
- Philippians 1:6 promises that God will complete the good work He began in you. How does this assurance affect your perspective when you feel discouraged about your spiritual progress or repeated failures?

---

## **Devotional: Choosing Righteousness in Partnership with God**

### **Day 1: No Longer Sin's Slave**

#### **Reading: Romans 6:15-18**

Freedom is a gift we often misunderstand. Paul reminds us that we're never truly autonomous—we always serve someone or something. The question isn't whether we'll be enslaved, but to whom we'll surrender. Before Christ, sin held us captive, leading us toward death and destruction. But through Jesus' death and resurrection, those chains were broken. Now we have the privilege of choosing our master. Will we return to the familiar bondage of sin, or embrace our new identity as servants of righteousness? This isn't about legalism—it's about love. When we grasp how much Christ sacrificed to free us, our hearts naturally turn toward obedience. Today, recognize that your freedom came at the highest price, and choose to serve the One who died to set you free.

### **Day 2: Obeying from the Heart**

#### **Reading: Psalm 119:9-16; Romans 6:17**

Cultural Christianity settles for external compliance while the heart remains unchanged. But God desires something deeper—obedience that flows from genuine love and devotion. When Paul speaks of obeying "from the heart," he's describing a transformation that goes beyond behavior modification. It's about aligning our deepest desires with God's will. The psalmist understood this, treasuring God's word in his heart to avoid sin. This heart-level obedience isn't about perfection; it's about direction. Where is your heart pointed? Are you merely going through religious motions, or are you genuinely pursuing holiness because you love Jesus? True discipleship begins internally. Ask God today to search your heart and reveal any areas where you're simply performing rather than truly following. Let your obedience be motivated by love, not obligation.

### **Day 3: The Pattern of Teaching**

#### **Reading: 2 Timothy 3:14-17; Romans 6:17**

Scripture isn't merely information to collect—it's the pattern of teaching entrusted to us for transformation and transmission. We're called to internalize God's Word, allowing it to shape our thinking, inform our decisions, and guide our steps. But the process doesn't end with personal growth. What we receive, we must also share. Every believer is both student and teacher, learning from God's Word and passing those truths to

others in our sphere of influence. You may not stand behind a pulpit, but you can share what God has taught you with your children, neighbors, or coworkers. Don't let fear of inadequacy silence your testimony. Begin with the end in mind: God has entrusted you with truth not just for your benefit, but so others might know Him too. Who needs to hear what God has been teaching you?

#### **Day 4: Beginning with the End in Mind**

##### **Reading: James 1:13-15; Romans 6:20-23**

Every sin promises pleasure but delivers death. The deception is powerful because the benefits are real—that's why we're tempted. Lying protects our reputation. Selfishness preserves our resources. Sexual sin offers immediate gratification. But Paul urges us to look beyond the momentary payoff to the ultimate destination. Where does this road lead? Sin's trajectory always ends in separation—from God, from others, from our true selves. Conversely, righteousness may require sacrifice now, but it leads to sanctification and eternal life. David's greatness wasn't that he never sinned—he committed grievous sins—but that he always returned to God with genuine repentance. When temptation comes today, pause and ask: "Where does this path end?" Then choose the road that leads to life, trusting that God's way, though sometimes harder initially, always leads to blessing.

#### **Day 5: Partnership in Sanctification**

##### **Reading: Philippians 2:12-13; Galatians 5:16-25**

Here lies the beautiful tension of sanctification: you can't do it without God, and He won't do it without you. We're called to work out our salvation with fear and trembling, yet it's God who works in us both to will and to work for His good pleasure. This isn't contradictory—it's partnership. The Holy Spirit produces fruit in our lives, but we must abide in the vine. God transforms us, but we must present ourselves as living sacrifices. We cannot manufacture love, joy, peace, or self-control through willpower alone; these are supernatural fruits. Yet we're responsible to position ourselves where the Spirit can work—through prayer, Scripture, worship, and obedience. Stop striving in your own strength, but don't become passive either. Daily surrender to God, asking for His help, confessing your weakness, and trusting His power. Sanctification is a divine work requiring human cooperation. Partner with God today in becoming who He created you to be.