

Series through Romans: TRUTH: UNASHAMED, PART II

Sermon Title: Week 5, FREE AT LAST!

Principal Scripture: Romans 6:15-23 Date: September 2, 2018

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† **Gotta serve somebody!**

- **Want to start this morning by quoting a great American philosopher, actually winner of Nobel prize for Literature, and considered by some to be almost a prophet of his time: referring of course, Bob Dylan**

*But you're gonna have to serve somebody, yes*

*Indeed you're gonna have to serve somebody*

*Well, it may be the devil or it may be the Lord... but you have...*

- **Today tackle last section of Romans six, where Paul further describes the miracle of our UNION with Christ... To do so, he's given us three of the great counter-intuitive truths of the NT...**
  - **To live, we must die**
  - **To obey, we must be set free of law**
  - **To be free, we must become a slave**
- **THIS is where we are going (third), BUT FIRST, pick up where we left off last week, which is the second of these, fully unpacked in chapter seven... the ESSENTIAL reality of...**

† **The great counter intuitive of Law and Grace**

**Romans 6:14** *For sin shall no longer be your master, because you are not under the law, but under grace.*

- **Think of this for a minute. From a human perspective, this makes no sense. If I want to make sure that a person behaves a certain way, everything about human thinking tells me that my best strategy is CLEARLY and CONSISTENTLY communicate how I want him to behave, and then implement a system of punishment and reward to incentivize the behavior I want to see. RIGHT?**
- **THIS MAKES TOTAL SENSE. AND YET, paraphrase..**

*For sin (life inconsistent with God's goodness) shall no longer be your master (key word), NOT because you are under the law, but because you are under grace.*

- **WAY MORE IN CHAPTER 7- next week... But now, Paul anticipates the response of our flesh...**

<sup>15</sup> *What then? Shall we sin because we are not under the law but under grace? By no means!*

- **And now, to explain, Paul turns to the third great counter-intuitive, example of Freedom and Slavery.**
- **HERE'S HIS POINT. HOW WE LIVE, how we behave, how we shape our mind/will/emotions (think, feel act) ISN'T just a matter of choosing whether or not to obey a system of moral law. It's a matter of....**

† **Choosing a master**

- **Dylan was right. We do have to serve somebody. Either by intentional choice, or passive default, we daily choose who/what will be the master of how we think, feel, and act (mind, will, emotions). VS 16...**

**Romans 6:16-18** *Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to someone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one you obey—whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness? <sup>17</sup> But thanks be to God that, though you used to be slaves to sin, you have come to obey from your heart the pattern of teaching that has now claimed your allegiance. <sup>18</sup> You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness.*

## A few important terms...

### • Slaves

- *Hard for us to deal with this word, such a negative concept, and one that is largely historical for most of us. But for the people Paul was writing to, they understood exactly what he meant. For the majority of early Christians, slavery was an inescapable reality of everyday life, as most of them were slaves. Historians have noted that when Christianity took root and began to grow within the Roman empire- specifically within Rome itself, it did so inside the lowest class- slaves and the poverty class of the common laborers.*
- *In this context, slavery meant OWNERSHIP. As a slave, you didn't belong to yourself, you had no hope of self-determination. Your life, what you did, your identity, and the nature and outcome of your life was placed upon you by your owner.*
- *SO- slave=ownership, Master is the greatest influence on who you were, how you live.*

### • Death

- *Not just physical death, but LACK OF LIFE. Lack of goodness, lack of peace, lack of joy, lack of HOPE, both present and future. ATTRIBUTES of death therefore is opposite of the goodness of life, leading to immorality, anger, fear, self-centeredness, pride...*
- *Ultimately, permanent spiritual death and separation from God, and his goodness.*

### • Righteousness

- *KEY! "We have become slaves to righteousness"... what does this mean?*
  - *RIGHTEOUSNESS, first in Romans, is our rightness with God, that we are in a whole, complete, and barrier free relationship with him- that he CREDITS to us because of our faith in him.*
  - *HERE, same thing, but even more... RIGHTEOUSNESS, simply put, is the goodness of God. The nature of God. His moral character. The way God loves. The nature of God's peace. God's joy. God's courage. God's hope. God's LIFE.*
  - *FOR US, God's righteousness fully manifest is all of who he is, in all of who we are, expressed in all of how we think, feel, and act- ALWAYS in the context of our relationship to OTHER PEOPLE.*
- *NOW, walk through verses 16-18 again...*

*Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to someone as obedient slaves, you are slaves (OWNED BY, mastered by, defined by) of the one you obey—whether you are slaves to sin, (self-leadership, self indulgence, rejection of God's authority and presence) which leads to death (lack of life, attributes of death), or to obedience (to God), which leads to righteousness?*

- *NOW- paul gives picture of a spiritually/emotionally healthy Christian....*

<sup>17</sup>*But thanks be to God that, though you used to be slaves to sin, you have come to obey from your heart the pattern of teaching that has now claimed your allegiance.*

- *What is pattern of teaching? It's the gospel! Righteousness, life by Faith. UNION WITH CHRIST, LIVING BY GRACE... message of NEW COVENANT*
- *This is what it means to be a mature Christian... that the righteousness of God, HIS LIFE, HIS LORDSHIP... has laid claim to our allegiance... our DESIRE, OUR IDENTITY.*
- *BY OUR INTENTIONAL CHOICE- not coercion or the choice of any other person... we have looked to Christ, confessed HE IS LORD, and offered ourselves as slaves to HIM. OWNED by him. DEFINED by him.*

<sup>18</sup>*You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness.*

- *We have the choice of two masters- when we first come to faith, and every day of our lives since. We have the choice of offering ourselves to ourself, to a posture of our mind that ignores God, or offering ourselves TO GOD as HIS, him as our LORD.*
- *THIS CHOICE MAKES ALL THE DIFFERENCE.*

## † **The crucial concept of OFFERING**

**Romans 6:19-21** *I am using an example from everyday life because of your human limitations. Just as you used to offer yourselves as slaves to impurity and to ever-increasing wickedness, so now offer yourselves as slaves to righteousness leading to holiness.* <sup>20</sup> *When you were slaves to sin, you were free from the control of righteousness.* <sup>21</sup> *What benefit did you reap at that time from the things you are now ashamed of? Those things result in death!*

- **“offer ourselves”.** *In the ancient world it was not completely uncommon for a person to offer themselves into slavery, either to save their life on a battlefield, or to try and at least have some form of livelihood. The picture here is powerful. THE CHOICE of to whom or what we offer ourselves as chief influence/identity, will lead to inevitable result.*
- **HEAR!** *If we choose the path away from God- that path will lead to increasing distance from God, and increasing distance from his goodness and character.*
- **V20-** *“slaves to sin, free from control of R”... When I was young adult, for about five years when I chose to turn my back on God.. led to results that increasingly were inconsistent with who I was as a believer- far greater consequences than I realized then. I had ‘offered myself’ to sin, and during this time, IT FELT NORMAL. Because of the posture of my mind and heart- solely upon myself- I became mostly numb to conviction, and I had no problem with the sin in my life. I was ‘free from control of righteousness’. We can see what Paul is warning us against!*
- **HERE IS THE REAL TRAP.** *This choice to ‘offer’ ourselves to sin is often PASSIVE. It is the ONLY default position if we do not ACTIVELY choose to offer ourselves to God. Example...*
- **NO ONE EVER SAID** *“I’m going to start a habit that will destroy my health, relationships, life, and steal away everything I hold dear”. NO. “Adultery”. WE DON’T CONSCIOUSLY CHOOSE DEATH, but we passively choose to turn away from the source of LIFE, and the results, over time, are inevitable.*
- **BUT CHURCH, HEAR!** *As devastating as sin is...*

**Reality!** *The biggest tragedy of death is missing out on LIFE*

- *There is another path, and it is to INTENTIONALLY and ACTIVELY CHOOSE to offer ourselves to God. IN OBEDIENCE TO HIM.*
- *We think... I can’t overcome this issue... I’m trapped, its just too big. YOU ARE RIGHT. YOU CAN’T. And here’s the miracle Paul is crying out to us...*
- **TODAY, right now, take the SINGLE STEP to turn to the NEW PATH, and offer yourself to GOD.** *“JESUS, here I am.... Just as I am.. I surrender to you.” With just this one step, I am obedient. Then, take the next step. Maybe it’s getting help. Confession. Changing the influence’s in your life. Putting yourself around people on the same path. Starting to make God’s WORD part of your life. Personal worship. ONE STEP AT A TIME, OFFER... EYES FIXED UPON...*
- *Then, the result is just as inevitable... it is Righteousness. Holiness. LIFE OF GOD...*

**Romans 6:22** *But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life. **THEN AND NOW***

- *Paul concludes this thought with one of the most memorized verses in the new testament. This choice of ‘to whom’ we offer ourselves, at its core, is the choice of...*

† **The choice: Earning a WAGE or receiving a GIFT**

- *If we choose to offer ourselves to SELF, or to others, to temporary things, what we receive is the result of what WE DO. We earn it. “Just desserts.” BUT, when we offer ourselves to GOD. JESUS. Obedience to him, the result we receive is the GIFT of what HE HAS DONE.*

**Romans 6:23** *For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord*