

SESSION 8



Romans 6:12-23

“SERVANTS TO RIGHTEOUSNESS, NOT SIN”

Contents



Brief outline and summary of the verses



A more detailed look



What does this mean for our practice?

Brief outline: Verses 12-14

The verses follow the exhortation of V.11. As a consequence of our having died with Christ – our being in Christ Jesus – Sin should no longer reign in our lives practically, no: all is changed.

We have learnt about the death and resurrection of Christ – and our being “in Christ Jesus”, in the same position as He is – there should be a practical consequence, consistent with the change of position that has taken place.

This is all in grace – we should be consistent in our practice with the position that God has brought us into through the work of the Lord Jesus.

Law: Do something to receive something/become something

Grace: Receive freely from God through the work of Christ, and live consistently with what you have been brought into – live out what we really are

Brief Outline: Verses 15-19

Since we are under grace, one might say: It doesn't matter then if we sin occasionally. V.1 began with this question in a general way, here it's more subtle. NO, "far be the thought" – there are only two ways – to obey sin (which leads to death) OR to obey God (which leads to practical righteousness). We have to decide for one of these!

We underestimate sin, yielding to it makes us in effect a slave of it. To sin and claim one isn't a slave of sin is foolishness. John 8:34, 2. Peter 2:19

Paul gives thanks that the slavery to sin is over. The Romans had become obedient "from the heart" (not forced) to the teaching of the gospel they had learned. Their master now is "righteousness".

Paul uses the picture of slave and master by way of illustration and explains that he uses this simple picture because of their weakness.

The master used to be uncleanness and even more lawlessness, but now we yield ourselves to righteousness, which leads to separation to God – holiness.

Brief Outline: Verses 20-23

Do we crave what we left behind? Does it seem hard to us to obey the Lord? When we honestly look back on the time where we were “free from righteousness” we will be ashamed.

Fruit unto holiness, Eternal life ≠ Shame and death

12 Let not sin
therefore reign
in your mortal
body to obey its
lusts.

We are not told to break the reign of sin ourselves, this has been done by Christ – sin can only reign in our lives if we open the door to it

“Mortal body” even being redeemed our body is subject to the principle of death – but it is in this body that we should live out the new life

Not “obeying it’s lusts” – before we gave in to our own desires, what we craved, now we are under the authority of our Lord

¹³ Neither **yield** your members instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but **yield** yourselves to God as alive from among [the] dead, and your members instruments of righteousness to God.

“yield” used twice in this verse – once in present tense: “Do not yield your members to sin ever”; once in the aorist form: “yield yourselves to God: let it have been done, as a once and accomplished act.” (Darby footnote)

Negative: not to sin

Positive: To God

Our members = ourselves – entirely for God

Instruments of righteousness – We are justified by the highest judge, His righteousness must become visible in our lives

14 For sin shall not have dominion over *you*, for ye are not under law but under grace.

There is a huge difference between law and grace, chapter 7 will teach more about this.

Law proved us to be sinners and transgressors – we could not satisfy it's claims. Grace makes no claim, no – grace gives! God has done it all and He provides power for us to live for Him. Our life of sin has found an end, he made us die with Christ in His death. Sin will not reign any longer, we have died to it. Sin had it's power by the law (1. Cor 15:56)– sin is energized by law and rules we make for ourselves – we have nothing to do with the law. We are under grace: grace means to not expect anything from yourself any longer – but giving yourself entirely up to God. Only under grace is there power to live for God.

This is a statement of doctrine, that we accept by faith. Our feelings or experience might contradict it.

15 What then?
should we sin
because we are
not under law
but under
grace? Far be
the thought.

Similar question to V.1 – Do we think that the way to holiness is putting ourselves under a law, and that grace leads to sin – because forgiveness is taken for granted?

“Far be the thought” – the next verses give a more detailed answer –

16 Know ye not that to whom ye **yield** yourselves bondmen for obedience, ye are bondmen to him whom ye obey, whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?

“Yield” – This is practical – only knowing the teaching is not sufficient, we need to do this!

There are only two paths, and no in between:

Either we obey sin – and that path leads to death

Or we obey God – and that path leads to righteousness

Let’s make sure we do not take any steps in the wrong way.

(Not that we are justified by works, that is all God’s doing – but obedience leads to practical righteousness in our lives, everything and everyone, especially God is given His due place)

17 But thanks
[be] to God,
that ye **were**
bondmen of sin,
but have
obeyed from
the heart the
form of
teaching into
which ye were
instructed.

Paul gives thanks, praise to God for what He has done.

They were bondmen/servants of sin – but now had obeyed God not by force, but “from the heart”

“the form of teaching into which ye were instructed” – This is the gospel, what God has done through the Lord Jesus – as shown in the earlier chapters of this epistle. Now we have given Him our heart, and have been freed from sin.

18 Now, having
got your
freedom from
sin, ye have
become
bondmen to
righteousness.

We have been freed from sin **because** we have been brought under God's authority. Sin hasn't got power over us any longer –

Do you enjoy this freedom?



¹⁹ I speak humanly on account of the weakness of your flesh. For even as ye have yielded your members in bondage to uncleanness and to lawlessness unto lawlessness, so now yield your members in bondage to righteousness unto holiness.

The apostle explains the shortcomings of the picture he uses to describe our relationship with Christ – but we need a picture because of our weakness and slowness to understand.

There were two masters in our life before

1. Uncleanness = sin is filthy, impure thoughts and acts characterise it
2. Lawlessness = denying any authority; “unto lawlessness” – it gets worse. The illusion to live freely and yet being a servant of sin.

Now the aim is “holiness”= separation and devotion to God, to be put aside for God – which includes turning away from sin

²⁰ For when ye were bondmen of sin ye were free from righteousness.

As servants of sin we didn't and couldn't even do God's will. Our own lusts and desires were our guide.

We were "free from righteousness" now we are "free from sin" V.18 and V.22

**"For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness."
Romans 6:20**



21 What fruit
therefore had
ye *then* in the
things of which
ye are *now*
ashamed? for
the end of
them [is]
death.

Looking back over a life as servants of sin we are ashamed. Where did it lead to? What was it's fruit? – It's end was death

What grace that God didn't bring this death sentence over us, but the Lord Jesus who died in our stead.

Do you want to turn back?

22 But *now*,
having got your
freedom from
sin, and having
become
bondmen to
God, ye have
your fruit unto
holiness, and
the end eternal
life.

Now there's another fruit in view:

“fruit” includes blessings we receive, but also what God receives.

“the end eternal life” – Paul speaks of Eternal life as something future – connected with a glorified Christ in heaven (Rom. 2:7; 5:18,21; Gal.6:8; 1. Tim 1:16)

John speaks of eternal life as our present possession, the life of the Son in us (John 3:15, 16, 6:40, 54; 10:28; 1.John 5:11,12,13)

No contradiction:

“That which is ours now in its essence, will be ours in its full expanse when eternity is reached.” FB Hole

23 For the wages of sin [is] death; but the act of favour of God, eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord

The last verse is a conclusion of the chapter: By sin we receive what we deserve. Everyone deserves death as the wage of sin. But God puts something before us that cannot be earned – it is an “act of favour”, an act of grace:

”wages” ≠ “act of favour”

Sin knows no grace, it only pays it’s due wages: death

But God’s act of favour is:

Eternal life, which God gives to us in Christ Jesus our Lord

“in Christ Jesus” – this is not merely a doctrinal argument – Everything is found and centres in a person – All blessings come to us by Him. He has taken away every obstacle. God sees us connected to Him, that’s why God can give us this great blessing of Eternal life.

What does this mean for our practice

Before we were servants to sin – We could only sin

Now we are freed from this – We do not need to sin any more

Sin has no claim or authority over us, it is only by opening the door to it that sin can come in

This might contradict our experience, but faith sees us the way God sees us: In Christ



What does this mean for our practice

It is death that has freed us from the reign and power of sin

When temptation comes: Think of the fact that sin hasn't got power over you any more

Not: "I mustn't do this" – which would be the principle of law

But: "I do not have to do this (any more)" – laying hold by faith of what God has done in Christ

