

Series: *No Longer a Slave to Sin (An Exposition of Romans 6)*

Main Idea: By the grace of God, people can change. But if change is to occur, according to Romans 6:15-18, we have two basic obligations to meet if we are to be set free from sin.

- I. Refuse to rationalize (15).
  - A. We must not excuse sin in our lives.
  - B. We must not adopt a cheap view of grace.
- II. Recognize the truth (16-18).
  - A. All people are slaves (16).
    1. I may be a slave to sin.
    2. I may be a slave to righteousness.
      - Real freedom is not living without a master.
      - Real freedom is living with the right master.
  - B. All who are in Christ have experienced a change (17-18).
    1. I was enslaved to sin.
    2. I have been delivered from sin.
      - True change involves the heart.
      - True change involves the mind.
      - True change involves the will.
    3. I am now a slave to righteousness.

Make It Personal: If Christ is my master...

1. I am not free to do my own thing.
2. I am free to do what is right.
3. I am free to change, by the power of God to the glory of God.

*Before sermon:* Redeemed people...SING THE WORD (March – Psalm 25:4-5)

Heads up. Just four verses today. But a lengthy introduction today. Why? Because there are two key words in today’s text that we need to rethink if we’re going to appreciate fully what our Savior is saying to us. The words? Master. Slave.<sup>2</sup>

It’s hard to live a joyful godly life. Why? There are many contributing factors, according to the Bible. The world. The flesh. The devil. They all have a part. But there’s another foe that’s even more personal, and he’s the one we’re thinking about in our current series.

The question before us today as we open our Bibles is a strange one. *Who is my master?* Whether you realize it or not, you are a slave. This is Bible truth. Everyone is a slave and therefore everyone has a master. Without exception.

Think about how strange this gospel invitation sounds to modern ears. We say to our friends, “Come to the Lord Jesus and He will save you. Experience the joy that comes from submitting to His Lordship.” Does that sound like good news? Not to most people. But that’s because they don’t know the back story. It’s actually your story and mine.

*The Tale of Two Masters.* You are living in dark cave with chains around your wrists and feet. There is no light. You belong to a cruel master, actually, a monster. His name is Sin.

This Monster didn’t look like a monster when you first met him. He seemed so nice and friendly and generous. In fact, it didn’t look like a cave either, more like an entrance to a magnificent resort on the Las Vegas strip with bright lights and a colorful sign.

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\*\*Note: This is an unedited manuscript of a message preached at Wheelersburg Baptist Church. It is provided to prompt your continued reflection on the practical truths of the Word of God.

<sup>1</sup> For a previous look at this passage, see the 2011 series at WBC.

<sup>2</sup> Romans 1:1 “Paul a slave of Jesus Christ.” See also Galatians 1:10; Phil 1:1; Titus 1:1

“Whatever your heart desires,” the sign read. “It’s here for you, and it’s all free.”

So you stepped inside and found yourself in a huge lobby, filled with laughing people and festive music. “What is this place?” you said to yourself. “It’s a party, and you’re invited,” replied a man in a black tux.

As far as your eyes could see there were doors leaving the lobby, with flashing signs on them. Free, they all said. One door said, *free fame*. Another, *free good health*. Another, *free sex*. Free *vacation home*. Free *new SUV*. Another, *free gold*.

That one made you smile, so you approached it. On a glass table in front of the door you saw an expensive tray filled with little stones. Upon closer examination you discovered that these weren’t ordinary stones, but gold nuggets.

“There’s more inside if you want it,” said the friendly man. “And it’s all free! Of course, we’ll need a record of your visit, so we can send you future promotions of our free products. Just sign the register, then walk through the door, and take all you want.”

It sounded too good to be true, so you hesitated. The man smiled and mouthed the word, “Free” again. So you smiled, put your name to the document, and walked through the door.

As soon as you entered the room, the smooth-talking greeter snapped a set of shackles on your wrists, removed his mask, and bellowed loudly, “Welcome to your new home. My name is Sin. You now belong to Me.”

You turned to leave but noticed there’s no door handle. There’s no way out. You now belong to this lying, powerful being.

You object, “What are you doing?!” And Master Sin responds, “I’m giving you exactly what you wanted. Look!”

And there before you on the ground you see thousands and thousands of stones just like the ones you saw in the jar. Gold nuggets.

“Wow!” you explain. “Is it real?”

“Of course it’s real!” says your master. “Have at it!”

So you get down on your hands and knees and start picking up the gold pieces. “Mine!” you shout. “All mine!” And you scoop the nuggets together and build a huge mound and gaze at it lustfully.

At the end of the day, Master Sin comes to you again, and this time he kicks the pile and scatters the pieces all over the room. Then he commands you to pick them up again, and laughs as he leaves the cave.

You relive the same experience the next day, and the next, and the next. If you refuse his orders, he beats you. You cry for help, but no one responds. You are all alone. You belong to this cruel monster known as Sin who keeps giving you exactly what you want until you despair of life.

Then one day, unbeknownst to you, a powerful, loving King approaches the cave, enters it, and stands face to face with Monster Sin. He says, “You have a slave here, and I have chosen him. I have come to set him free so that he will serve me in my beautiful kingdom.”

The Monster says, “I own him fair and square. If you want him, a price must be paid. It’s in the contract.”

And the King replied, “Don’t lecture Me, you insubordinate monster. I know what the contract says. This is why I have come. I will pay the ransom price.”

The price is costly. According to the contract, the only way a slave ever leaves this cave is in a body bag. The price is death. The gracious King nods. “I know this,” He

says. “I have come to die in his place.” And the Monster laughs in triumph, for he thinks he has deceived yet another foolish victim.

But what he doesn’t know is that this is a King like none other. After dying, the King did not stay in His tomb, but came back to life. And in so doing He put a dagger into the heart of this cruel monster who is not yet dead, but soon will be.

Now the King is standing at the mouth of the cave calling for you. You hear His voice as He calls your name. “Come to me,” He says. “I am your rightful king and I have come to set you free. You will be my slave henceforth. Be assured that I am not like the monster that has ruled you, for I am a good Master, and I invite you to serve Me in my beautiful kingdom. I will not force you to come. You may remain under the control of this dying cruel monster if you wish. Or you may submit to My wise and loving rule. And if you choose the latter, you will enjoy life with Me in my glorious kingdom forever.”

Who would be foolish enough to reject such an offer? You cry out, “Yes! I am yours! Thank You!” And your new Master picks you up and carries you outside the cave.

“Is the Monster gone?” you ask.

“No,” says your king. “I have given him the death blow, but he still lives for a time.” Then He hands you a scroll and says, “You will need this. This will show you what to do the next time you meet him.”

*A New Life.* You open the scroll and see six words that take away your breath. *No longer a slave to sin.* You blink and read it again. Yes, that’s the message from your King. But you’re wondering how this can be since your old master is still standing there glaring at you, threateningly so. You look again to your King, and He says, “Keep reading.” And so you do, and these are the words your King has given to you.

*Scripture Reading: Romans 6:15-18*

*All of us are slaves.* You may be thinking, “Not me. I’m free! I can do whatever I want. I’m not a slave!”

Really? Answer this. Did you lose your temper at all? Did you utter an unkind word to anyone? Did you think any unwholesome thought? Did you mind wander during any prayer time?

Why did you do those things? Was it because you *wanted* to do them? Here’s the Romans 6 answer. We did what we did because either we are a slave to sin, or we are *not* a slave to sin yet acted like we still are.

Who is my master? This is the question we must address if we’re going to overcome sin. And we must address it the way Paul does in Romans 6.

Let’s set the context. Last week, in verses 8-14 we learned about going to war against personal sin. We discovered that if we are going to overcome sin, we need to grasp two issues. The first pertains to our *position* (8-10). To overcome sin, positionally we must be in Christ. And if we are in Christ, it means we have died with Christ and live with Christ. And this means we have the potential to overcome sin because we are united with the One who defeated sin.

We also learned about our *practice* in verses 11-14. To overcome sin in daily life, we must take action. First, we must *reckon* (11), meaning we must affirm that I am dead to sin and alive to God. Second, we must *reject* (12). We must refuse to give sin a foothold in our lives. Third, we must *relinquish* (13), meaning we must yield ourselves to God and our members as instruments for righteous purposes. Fourth, we must *realize* (14)

that God has reasons as to why we must not yield to sin. One is that our new Master says that our old master is no longer to be our master! The other is that He says that He has made this possible, because we are no longer under law but grace.

Arriving at verse 15, we now come to the second major section in chapter 6. The question which God's Word addresses for us is this. How does this change from old master to new master work in practical terms? How do we break free from the chains that enslaved us when we belonged to the Sin Monster?

According to Romans 6:15-18, we have two assignments. The first is negative (something we must not do) and the second positive (something we must do).

### I. Refuse to rationalize (15).

Notice Paul's rhetorical question in verse 15, "What then? Are we to sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means!" It sounds similar to the question he posed in verse 1, "What shall we say then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase?" But the questions differ slightly, and both identify objections that Paul knew his readers might raise.

The first five chapters of Romans deal with the doctrine of justification. The question addressed is, "How can unholy people ever be right with a holy God?" By keeping the Law? By living a good life? Is that how we get right with God? The resounding answer in Romans 1-5 is, no, a person can never be reconciled to God on the basis of personal merit. Justification is by faith alone, in Christ alone, through grace alone.

To put it another way, a sinner cannot make himself righteous. But he can be declared righteous by God, and that happens if a sinner believes in the finished, redemptive work of Christ (3:23-26). That's justification.

Someone might hear this doctrine of justification, misunderstand it, and come to the conclusion, "Wait a minute. Is Paul saying that if I am justified by God, then I can sin and still be okay? Can I murder someone and still go to heaven? Is he saying that obedience doesn't matter since I'm saved by grace?"

Paul answers that line of reasoning twice in chapter 6 (in verse 1 and again in verse 15), "By no means!" [KJV, "God forbid!"]. Why not? Because justification (the theme of chapters 1-5) leads to sanctification (the theme of chapters 6-8). Those who have been justified by faith in Christ will live in obedience to Christ.

Which brings us back to the question: What must we do if we want to be set free from sin in our lives? Here's the first obligation. We must not rationalize. What does that mean in specific terms? It involves two refusals.

**A. We must not excuse sin in our lives.** Any sin, no matter how "small." I'm convinced that we who believe that salvation is the work of God need this reminder. Yes, the Bible teaches that salvation is God's work, not ours. It also teaches that when God saves people, they are secure, *eternally* secure. They can't be lost.

But that truth leads some to assume, "Well, since I've professed Christ, I'm going to heaven no matter how I live. I may not be the best Christian, but I've got fire insurance. I can't be lost."

Hold on. It's true that a saved person can't be lost (1 John 5:11-13; John 10:27-29), but neither will a truly saved person want to live like he's lost. If that's what you want to do, you have every reason to doubt that you've been saved.

I urge every one of us to heed Paul's exhortation in 2 Corinthians 13:5. He says, "*Examine yourselves* to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you—unless, of course, you fail the test?"

Peter gave a similar charge in 2 Peter 1:10-11, "Therefore, my brothers, be all the more eager to *make your calling and election sure*. For if you do these things, you will never fall, <sup>11</sup> and you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."

We must not excuse sin in our lives. Nor this.

**B. We must not adopt a cheap view of grace.** Romans 6-8 is all about how to live the Christian life. To live successfully, we must have a proper view of grace (ch 6), of the law (ch 7), and of the Christian life itself (ch 8).

The tense of the verb used in verse 15 is different from the one in verse 1. In verse 1, it's present tense, hence the question, "Shall we *go on sinning*?" That is, shall we live a life of sin so we can give God lots more opportunities to display His grace? In verse 15, the Greek verb is aorist tense. The aorist indicates sinning, not continuously, but every now and then.<sup>3</sup>

Some would see living a life of sin as being wrong, but would tolerate a little sin every now and then. "Nobody's perfect, you know!" Is that okay, since we're under grace and not under law? Paul's answer, "Forbid the thought."

All of us are prone to rationalize our sin, aren't we? Yes, we are. "God knows I can't be perfect. He'll understand a little sin, now and then. He's a God of grace."

Beloved, we will never see the patterns of sin broken in our lives until we stop rationalizing. That's our first obligation.

Do you have any destructive habits in your life? The first step to freedom is calling the habit what God calls it. Anything which would not be found in the life of Jesus is a sin. May I be specific? Do we see any of the following in Jesus' life? Bitterness. Slander. Gluttony. Hatred. Stealing. Drunkenness. Lust. Lying. Impulsive buying. Fantasizing. Gossiping. Can you even imagine these actions and attitudes being associated with Jesus? No. Nor should they be in the life of a follower of His.

You say, "I know it's wrong and I want to change, but I can't. My problem is too big." My friend, perhaps you have been defeated by sin for years, but if you're in Christ, you have a new master. And it's time to affirm that, and start living like it.

This is our first assignment. We must refuse to rationalize any longer.

## II. Recognize the truth (16-18).

Notice verse 16 (ESV), "Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness?"

In first century Corinth which was where Paul was living when he wrote this epistle, at least one-third of the population would have been slaves, and almost as many again may have been former slaves who had been set free.<sup>4</sup> Certainly, Paul's readers knew all about slavery. It was a fact of life in the Roman Empire. Though the apostle did not condone slavery, he used the image of slavery to illustrate two key truths.

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<sup>3</sup> Observation by *Bible Knowledge Commentary*

<sup>4</sup> Dunn, 341.

**A. All people are slaves (16).** Again, that statement may shock us, but according to Romans 6, it's true. All of us are slaves, the only question being *who is our master?* There are two possibilities according to verse 16.

1. *I may be a slave to sin.* Listen again to verse 16 in the NIV, “Don’t you know that when you offer yourselves to someone to obey him as slaves, you are slaves to the one whom you obey—whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness?”

Here's the first possibility. I may be a slave to sin. What is the end result of being a slave to sin? Paul says being a slave to sin “leads to death.”

Don't miss that. The apostle is describing what was true of us before we believed in Christ. The old man (the person we once were before regeneration) was a slave to sin, a slave doomed to die. But in Christ, that has all changed. Why? Because we died to sin (remember verses 6-7).

Think about it. When a slave is dead, his master can go on giving orders to the corpse until he is blue in the face, yet the slave will pay no attention.<sup>5</sup> Here's the connection. We once were slaves to sin. Sin was our master, and we had no power to say “no to the Monster’s wicked commands.

But since we have been united with Christ, what has happened? We've died to sin and sin is no longer our master. We don't need to follow the dictates of the Monster any longer. We are free!

But free to do what? Watch this carefully. What does the text say is the result of our freedom? It’s a new slave relationship. Which brings us to the second option.

2. *I may be a slave to righteousness.* That’s Paul’s point at the end of verse 16. I may be a slave to sin which leads to death, *or* a slave to obedience which leads to righteousness. The old man was a slave to sin, condemned to die. The new man (that's who I am in Christ) is a slave to obedience which results in righteousness.

Please don't miss this. Freedom in Christ is not a license to do whatever I want. It means I have a new master.

Here’s an irony. There is a sense in which an unsaved person is free. He is free from righteousness. That’s what verse 20 indicates. The NIV says, “When you were slaves to sin, you were free from the control of righteousness.” But like the prodigal son, the “freedom” of the unsaved person doesn’t produce what it promises.

Remember what happened to that younger son in Jesus’ story? He decided he wanted his freedom so he left his father to live it up. Where did his pursuit take him? Deeper and deeper into slavery. He became the servant of his own desires. What he thought was freedom turned out to be the worst kind of slavery. Not until he repented, returned home, and submitted to his father, did he find the true freedom for which his soul longed.<sup>6</sup>

Oh my friend, please know this. Real freedom is not living *without a master*. Real freedom is living with the *right master*. We see this in very beginning. We see man who was created by God to serve his Maker, and joyfully so. But Adam rebelled and by the time Genesis 3 ends, he is a slave to sin. And so are his descendants.

But what the first Adam lost, the last Adam restored. When we put our faith in Christ, we are set free so we can live as God designed us to live. Not as our own masters,

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<sup>5</sup> Bruce, 140.

<sup>6</sup> Wiersbe, 533.

but as servants of righteousness. Your non-Christian friend can't live that way, and frankly, doesn't want to do so. But in Christ, you and I have been set free to serve God.

Is Christ your Master? Don't rush past that question too quickly. When you think of Christ, does the word *master* come to mind?

Just because I don't steal, don't lie, and don't do other things God's Law prohibits, doesn't mean I am living the Christian life. I may be living a moral life yet not the *Christian* life. I may be living a good life (in the eyes of people) and not know Christ. The Christian life is a life in which we know and obey and experience the power of a new Master whose name is Jesus the Christ.

So is He your Master? Settle that issue today, my friend. Joyfully embrace the Lordship of Jesus Christ over your life. This brings us to a second truth.

**B. All who are in Christ have experienced a change (17-18).** According to Paul, his readers had. Listen to how he described their change in verses 17-18, "But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed, and, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness."<sup>7</sup>

This is such a helpful sentence for in it we learn how a person can be set free from the stranglehold of monster sin. If I am in Christ, this is my story. This is what has happened to me, three facts that I must affirm and live in light of daily.

Fact, I was enslaved to sin. Fact, I have been delivered from sin. Fact, I am now a slave to righteousness. Let's ponder those one at a time.

*1. Fact: I was enslaved to sin.* Let these words from verse 17 sink in, "You *used to be* slaves to sin." The KJV says, "You were servants of sin." You WERE, past tense.

Before we trusted Christ, do you know why we sinned? Because it was the natural thing to do. Nobody needed to teach us how to sin. We were slaves to sin. And even if we did do good things, we did them for twisted, self-promoting reasons.

At times we thought we could impress God, or people, or at least ourselves. But we were slaves. We couldn't change the real us, who we are on the inside. We may not have been *as bad as* we could have been, but we were *as bad off* as we could have been. Why? Because we were enslaved to sin and powerless to break the chains by ourselves.

Again, sin enslaves. Listen to William Barclay's description of sin. "Sin begets sin. The first time we may do a wrong thing, we may do it with hesitation and a tremor and a shudder. The second time we do it, it is easier; and if we go on doing it, it becomes effortless; sin loses its terror."<sup>8</sup>

He's right. Sin leads to more sin. If that weren't bad enough, something else is also true. More sin doesn't satisfy.

Barclay continues, "The first time we allow ourselves some indulgence, we may be satisfied with very little of it; but the time comes when we need more and more of it to produce the same thrill. Sin leads to sin; lawlessness produces lawlessness. To start on the path of sin is to go on to more and more."<sup>9</sup>

That's how pornography works. And fantasy books. And fashion. And trophies on the mantle. You can't get enough. Sin never satisfies. Sin is a cruel taskmaster.

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<sup>7</sup> NIV "But thanks be to God that, though you used to be slaves to sin, you wholeheartedly obeyed the form of teaching to which you were entrusted. <sup>18</sup> You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness."

<sup>8</sup> Barclay, p. 90.

<sup>9</sup> Barclay, p. 91.

And that's exactly what was true of us. We were enslaved to this master. But then something happened, if we've come to know Christ.

2. *Fact: I have been delivered from sin.* Don't miss the first words of verse 17. "But thanks be to God!" We didn't change ourselves. We couldn't. We were slaves. God did it. God took the initiative. God set us free from sin (as verse 18 states plainly). God delivered us by His grace. So we thank Him! We thank Him now and will forever.

You say, "But I don't feel free at times. I still feel like sin is my master. What needs to happen?" What needs to happen is this. We must allow God to transform three areas of our lives mentioned in verses 17-18.

- True change involves **the heart**. "You have become obedient from the *heart* [NIV 'wholeheartedly']," says Paul concerning the Roman Christians. Breaking sin patterns involves more than behavior. It involves the *kardia*, the heart. It's not just external conformity, but internal transformation enabled by the Holy Spirit.

- True change involves **the mind**. What must we obey to experience change? Verse 17 says (NIV), "You wholeheartedly obeyed *the form of teaching* to which you were entrusted." The Greek term is *didache*. It refers to "teaching" and "instruction" and has to do with what we call "doctrine."

I've said it before but must say it again. True change doesn't come from a *zap*. Nor having our emotions stirred. God uses the consistent intake and application of biblical truth to set people free. Sound doctrine is not only a nice idea, but essential.

Jesus said it is the truth that sets us free (John 8:32). That's why we emphasize teaching at WBC, and why we urge you to be studying the Book every day. We believe that the truth of God's Word is sufficient to break destructive habits that have paralyzed us. But to know truth we must learn truth, and this involves the mind.

- True change involves **the will**. We see this in verse 17 in the words, "you obeyed." Change involves the heart, the mind, but the bottom line is the volition. I must choose to do something with the truth I have learned.

*Trust and obey, for there's no other way to be happy in Jesus*, as the songwriter said.

I can't underscore this enough. Change is linked to obedience. When a person says, "My life's a mess. My marriage is crumbling. There's a wall between me and my kids. I can't sleep at night. What should I do?" the question that must be answered first is this. Have you been *obeying* God's Word?

When God's Word says, "Love your spouse," it's not a suggestion. When it says, "Don't forsake the assembly of the church," it's not a negotiable. When it says, "Don't let any root of bitterness be in your heart," and exhorts us to forgive, only one thing is needed. *Obedience* to the Master, by the strength He provides.

This is critical. We can't disobey God's Word without reaping serious consequences. Change involves the heart, the mind, and the will. In order to break a habit, I must yield all three to God.

Do you know Him? Most of you do. Why? Because He saved you, by His grace, through the work of His Son. He is your Master now. And He has things He wants to teach you, so you can live for Him, and help others know Him.

Did you come to church today with a prepared mind ready to learn? When we come to church merely to get an emotional pick-me-up, we're settling for a deficient and dangerous goal.

It reminds me of a Science experiment our oldest daughter participated in during a Junior High Science class. The students were instructed to have a caffeine fast for three.

They took their pulse rates and recorded them. Then they broke the caffeine fast with a caffeine feast by drinking Mountain Dew. When she retook her pulse rate, her heart rate soared more than forty beats per minute faster than before the caffeine intake (to about 120 bpm). Her energy level soared, too.

Then, not long afterwards, before the morning was over, something happened. Once the caffeine rush was gone, the pulse rate dropped. The energy level dipped way down, too. She felt sluggish. The artificial boost to the system was gone.

In my estimation, that's how far too many people try to live the Christian life. They go to church to get a high, a spiritual caffeine fix. They want music that stirs the emotions, stories that warm the heart, and jokes that make them laugh. They want to feel good when they leave.

And when they leave the church building, they feel just great. Until a car cuts them off as they're leaving the parking lot. And by the time the boss hassles them on Monday morning, the Sunday church experience is long gone, now replaced by anger they can't control and feelings of frustration they can't shake.

My friend, God never intended for us to live this way. We need to pay attention to the scroll He's given us which shows us how to stand against Monster Sin. If I am a Christian, these are the facts. I was enslaved to sin. I have been delivered from sin.

3. *Fact: I am now a slave to righteousness.* That's what verse 18 says, "You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness."

Some Christians seem to have the notion, "I am saved and I can do as I please." But I cannot do as I please. I belong to Christ. According to verse 18, I am now a slave for righteous purposes. I have been set free from sin so I can please God with my life.

Here's where a lot of the popular support groups miss the mark. Take AA for example. AA emphasizes self-control and the need to change behavior. That's fine. But for what reasons? Listen to the reasons. "I want to get rid of alcohol so I don't lose my job, or my family, or my health."

That's not what Romans 6 is talking about. Biblical change is motivated, not by, "What's best for me?" but by, "What would most glorify Him, the One who set me free?"

Take weight loss as another example. A Christian who is trying to shed a few pounds needs to ask the why question, "Why do I want to lose weight?" So I can look good? So people will think well of me? So I can feel better about myself? Those are deficient motivations, for they're neglecting the Person who gave us the scroll.

### **Chapter Three.** *The gospel invitation.*

"Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved," says the scroll in Romans 10:13. If you put your weight into this promise right now, my friend, the Lord Jesus will save you.

But what does *Lord* mean? Lord means ruler, owner, *master*. Jesus Christ is Master, and when we receive Him as our Savior, He is acknowledging Him to be our Master.

What happens to our previous master, Monster Sin? What happens is that he is no longer our master and has no authority over us any longer.

This is gospel truth. But so is this. We who belong to Master Jesus can treat our previous master as though he still owns us. It's to prevent this from happening, and to help us if it's already happening, that the Spirit of God gave us today's text. This is the issue we must settle today and daily. *Who is my master?*

Make It Personal: If Christ is my master...three outcomes are certain.

1. *I am not free to do my own thing.* When is a train free, when it says, “I can't stand these restrictive tracks,” and veers off them? No, it's a runaway then, heading to destruction. A train is free when it runs on the tracks designed by its maker.

Is a person who has multiple sex partners free, like Hollywood says? No, that person is a slave to passion. The free person is the person who submits to the will of the Good Master. Will you affirm this today? I am not free to do my own thing.

2. *I am free to do what is right.* There is no middle ground, no other alternative this morning. We are either slaves of sin or slaves of righteousness. The Psalmist recognized this when he wrote in Ps 116:16, “O Lord, truly I am your servant; I am your servant, the son of your maidservant. You have freed me from my chains.”

That is why God sets us free, so we can serve Him.

3. *I am free to change, by the power of God to the glory of God.* Are you in sin's bondage today? Do you want the chains to be broken? Then surrender to the Master, the Lord Jesus Christ. He will set you free from your slavery to sin so you can joyfully serve Him as you were created to do.

**Testimony of salvation:** Raj Kataria

**Closing Song:** #201 “*Grace Greater Than Our Sin*” (sing all four verses)

Community Group Discussion:

1. We are continuing our series, *No Longer a Slave to Sin*. After reading today's passage, Romans 6:15-18, discuss what stood out most to you and why. Discuss the implications of the statement by Tim Keller, “You do not do sin. Sin does you.”

2. Last week in verse 11 we saw one of the most important phrases in the New Testament. It's the tiny two-word phrase “in Christ”. What does it mean to be “in Christ”? Working as a group, use your smart phones to find and read ten other passages that use this phrase “in Christ”. According to these passages, what is true of people who are in Christ?

3. The doctrine of our *union with Christ* is one of the most hope-giving doctrines in the Christian faith. What does it mean and what does it have to do with overcoming sin? Think of ways to illustrate this wonderful reality.

4. Think about this statement. *All people are slaves*. How do those words make you feel? What do we learn about being a slave in verses 15-18?

5. What does it mean practically speaking to see yourself as “a slave of righteousness” (see verse 18)? Verse 22 says we have become “slaves of God”. Is there a difference? What will life look like this week if you live as a slave of righteousness/God?