

Romans 6:15–23 "A Slave to Sin or a Slave to Christ"

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[0 : 00] Hi, my name is George Sinclair. I'm the lead pastor of Church of the Messiah.

! It is wonderful that you would like to check out some of the sermons done by Church of the Messiah, either by myself or some of the others. Listen, just a couple of things. First of all, would you pray for us that we will open God's Word well to His glory and for the good of people like yourself?

The second thing is, if you aren't connected to a church and if you are a Christian, we really, I would really like to encourage you to find a good local church where they believe the Bible, they preach the gospel, and if you have some trouble finding that, send us an email. We will do what we can to help connect you with a good local church wherever you are. And if you're a non-Christian, checking us out, we're really, really, really glad you're doing that. Don't hesitate to send us questions. It helps me actually to know, as I'm preaching, how to deal with the types of things that you're really struggling with. So God bless. Let's pray. Father, we're going to look at your Word now, and your Word has some shocking things to say, but we know, Father, you've shocked us to comfort us and to wake us up, bring us to our senses and see new truths and beauties about who you are and who we are in you. And so we ask that your Holy Spirit would fall with, continue to fall, Father, but with gentle and deep penetrating power deep into our hearts, that we might receive this truth in your Word and be formed by it to live free and whole for your honour and glory. And we ask this in Jesus' name. Amen. Please be seated.

So one of the things that we do in this church is we try to not just have it as lip service, but to actually try to put it into practice that God sets the agenda for the church. And so one of the things, one of the ways that we try to put this into practice, that it's God who sets the agenda, not us, is that we preach through big chunks of the Bible and that over the course of the year, we'll make sure both the Old Testament and the New Testament are covered, and we try to have a range of books throughout the years. And by going through big chunks of the Bible, it makes us look at things that we would normally not pick and look at. So that's, I was thinking about that a lot this week, because if we were a church which is sort of more what's called seeker sensitive, you try to pick a topic that you think everybody would like and want to come to, you would not pick a text that insults Canadians by saying that they're all slaves. That's just probably not what we would pick. But that's what the text is saying. I don't know if you picked it up, but it's basically making a very shocking claim claim about what it means to be human, both Christian and non-Christian, is that we, in fact, are slaves.

[3 : 04] So what on earth is going on there? Why would such a shocking imagery be used? So it would be a great help. Let's look at what the Bible teaches, and it's going to be Romans chapter 6. We're going through the book of Romans. We have two more weeks in Romans, and then we're going to a series that we're going to take a break until January. From Romans, we're going to go into the Psalms. I think we're probably going to preach the book of Joshua after that, and then some Advent Christmas sermons, and then back to Romans. But two more weeks, and here's what it says. And it begins actually with an understandable question, if you understand a few things about Christianity, and an understandable question if you can bring those outside the Christian faith to hear this central Christian claim.

And it goes like this. Chapter 6, verse 15. What then? Are we to sin because we are not under law, but under grace? I'll read it again. Are we to sin because we are not under law, but under grace? So what on earth does that mean? Well, here's where it's a bit of a reasonable type of question, an understandable question to ask. And you know, Josiah, when he was introducing the Creed, said

that Christians believe that when you put your faith and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you enter into him, you're united with him, every single wrong thing that you have ever done, both sins of commission, where you've done something, and sins of omission, where you should have done something and you didn't. Every single thing that you've ever done in the past that was wrong, and every single thing that you will do in the future until the moment of your death, that Jesus pays the penalty for that. He dies, and taking the punishment upon himself, and every single sin, from the moment that you're old enough to actually commit a sin until what is, you know, for some of you, if Jesus tarries, it might be another 70 years. All of your sins, next 70 years, all covered, all completely forgiven, broken, and you're freed from them, and that's what Christians claim. And so the obvious question, an obvious question is, why on earth would you do anything good? Like, if that's the case, why don't you just ignore the law? And whether you understand the law to be the entire Pentateuch, or just the moral law, the law written in your heart, like, what incentive is there to do anything good, if that's the case? And this question flows from what he's just been talking about. Now, so how does he answer? Well, if you look at the last part of verse 15, on one hand, he answers in a reassuring way, but on another hand, not a very reassuring way. Look, we'll read all of verse 15 again.

What then, or what therefore, are we to sin, because we are not under law, but under grace? By no means. So it gives you the answer, okay? We can move on to the next topic. He just says no. Well, I know that when I've talked to people outside the Christian faith in particular, and it's got to that point, if I just said no, they'd say, come back, we're not finished here yet. Like, you just can't say no, okay? That doesn't cut it. And so on one hand, Christians are relieved, no, yes, you should still be doing good things after you become a Christian, trying to grow in doing more and more good things. But we'd be a little bit hard-pressed to explain why that is. And that's what Paul's going to do. And he does it now by giving a shocking, a shocking image. And it's more shocking to us in Canada than it is, than it would have been in the past, but it would have been a shocking image even in Paul's day when he wrote this around the year 57 AD. Look what he says in verse 16.

[6:58] He says, do you not, actually it's interesting, he begins to answer by putting it in the form of a question, which is a very interesting technique, right? But he says, do you not know that if you if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves to the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness. Now, I'll just read it again, just so you catch it. You know, one of the problems with reading and preaching the book of Romans is it's almost like reading a creed. The words are very tight and compact and dense, and you have to read them slowly. And some of them you only understand if you go a little bit further on and you link back and you understand what's being said. But read it again. Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, now when he says here if, the if isn't whether or not you have an option to do it. The if is there's only two options about how you live as a slave. That's how the if is to be understood. That's grammatically, English is clunky, but that's what the original language is saying. It's saying in a sense, everybody presents themselves to be a slave. There's only two options, ultimately, as to who you are a slave to. And so if you listen to that, so if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey. And now here's the choice. You're either a slave of sin, and that leads to death, or of obedience, and it's almost like capitalized, the obedience, which is referring to God, the triune God, ultimately.

And if you are, in a sense, the slave, being willing to obey the triune God, this leads to righteousness. So that's what Paul is saying here. And some of us probably think, Paul, you've actually made it worse, not better. But actually, he really does make it better. Now, just a couple of things about this before we try to get our minds around why he would use such an analogy like this, and why it's actually a profound comfort. In some ways, you could say that slavery seems to be natural to the human condition. Most of human history, and virtually every society, had slaves. The First Nations people in Canada had slaves. The last slaves in Canada were owned by some First Nations people. I'm not picking on First Nations people. I'm just saying it's a very natural natural condition for most of human history. When Paul was writing this, it's probable that about 30% of the Roman Empire were slaves. And interestingly enough, I was listening to part of a debate by a fellow who's an agnostic, and he was saying, very obviously, that it's ultimately because of Christianity that slavery stopped to exist. Or at least, I mean, if slavery still exists in the world, obviously, there's a thing in the paper the other day that there's a concern that with the World Cup of soccer coming to Canada, that that will go along with sex trafficking, which is a type of slavery.

In Canada, in the United States, they're worried about that will be an increase of sex trafficking, which is a form of slavery. But this fellow made the comment, just like a casual thing, and he defended it, that it's ultimately because of Christianity that slavery came to an end. It's easy if you understand it. The atheist regimes have had a horrible history, in fact, have not eradicated slavery, but when in power, have in fact reinstated slavery. And for our Muslim friends, you know, just to be very honest, they, I mean, most people don't know this, many Muslims don't understand that according to the Quran and the ancient and best hadiths, Muhammad was a slave owner and a slave trader. And so it's actually woven right into the Quran and the binding hadiths of permissible slavery within Islam. And so it has been Christianity, which is responsible ultimately for, if not eradicating slavery, beginning to outlaw it and see it as being something cruel.

So why on earth would he use an analogy like this? Well, here the original word is going to be a little bit helpful to us. And the original word in the language is doula, and there's no English equivalent to it, like absolutely none. Some Bible translations translate it as bond servant, which is a bit more literal, but is such an archaic word that nobody knows what it means. Or they'll translate it as slave or as a servant. Now, the problem with slave is that in North America and throughout the First World, when you hear the word slave now, you think of the horrible situation that existed with the slave trade in the United States and in the empire and through Europe. And it's not slavery. The word doula does not mean the same thing as when we think of slavery. Amongst other things, the word doula has no connotation or connection whatsoever to race. It's a completely different thing. But so it's not as cruel as what happened in the European and North American slave trade. But on the other hand, it's definitely not the word servant, because a servant is just somebody who gets paid, goes home, you know, they get a pay. It's no, no, what it's trying to capture, which and here it is still going to be a bit offensive, is so by the way, in the ancient world, a doula could be actually almost as bad as an American slave trade thing. If you were in one of the galleys rowing, your life would be nasty, poor, brutish, and short. But on the other hand, you could also be a doula and be in charge of the master's family, in charge of estates, you could even be paid. But what unites this word, and what is at the heart of it, is two particular ideas. A doula does not belong to themselves. They belong to someone else. All doulas do not belong to themselves. They belong to someone else. And since they belong to someone else, it is their responsibility to obey that someone, and to live according to that someone's desires and their glory, their prosperity, not your own.

[13 : 53] So that is very clear there in this particular text. So is that help? Well, it lessens it a little bit, but here's the big idea, which I'm going to return to in a moment. And this is very, very, very contrary to how North Americans think, but I am going to suggest that it's actually the truth we need to be free and less anxious. And the truth is this, no one belongs to themselves. You do not belong to you.

I do not belong to me. That's why he's using this particular text to shock you. And in a few verses, in verse 19, he's going to sort of semi-apologize for using the image, by the way, realizing that it's like, whoa, even because in the Roman days, like a Roman senator or a tribune hearing this, that they're a doula, like would have been a shocking type of thing. So it was shocking then.

It's even more shocking now. But that's one of the big things. Human beings don't belong to themselves. And to think that you belong to yourself is to be caught in an unreal world, which if I have time, we'll talk about this a little bit more. Now, if you think about it, actually, if you think about it, on one level, we do understand that there are a lot of people who don't, they are slaves to something. They are doulas to something. Like, we just go out the door here, out there, or out that way, and just walk around. There's obviously people who serve fentanyl and alcohol. It's obvious that some people are completely and utterly caught up by something, and which we would describe as sin, as evil, and they serve that evil, and they belong to that evil, and it's just bringing them obvious ruin. So we can understand that that can be true of human beings, and we understand that people can give themselves to some person or some tribe or some things or some ideas, and they can serve and trust it and serve it and get their identity from it and get their meaning from it. And we understand that that can happen, and we can see how that's happening very bad. But here's what we don't consider. Do you guys know that when I say somebody's being catty?

You know, being catty means, you know, you're just really being quite insulting about other people and really looking at them in a negative type of way. So let's just say for a moment we were to go out in a field exercise, and I said, I want you to channel your inner cattiness. Be as catty as you really are out loud. And we're going to go into different coffee shops, and we're going to go to

Costco, and we're going to go to a grocery store, we're going to go to Whole Foods, we're going to go to different places, and I would just like you to unleash your inner cattiness and talk about everyone you see and say, what idols do you think they give themselves to? What idols do they give themselves to? And once you finally, maybe I have to give you a little drug to get that inner cattiness really out.

We'll all effortlessly go and say, oh, that person's really full of themselves. I'm sure they're a raging narcissist. Obviously, they give themselves to clothes. Obviously, they give themselves to money. You know, this particular person, I look at it, they just give themselves to all the prestige, like you would be able to do it for every single person that you saw.

[17 : 28] And don't give me any baloney that you wouldn't be able to do that. I know that I'm a worse sinner than a lot of you, but I'm not that much worse. We'd all be able to do it for people we saw. Now, here's the shock. You get back, and you realize, you don't realize that Josiah has led another group, and his group looked at your group, and his group all said, look at those people over there. There's their idols. And you'd be shocked. What? How dare you think that about me? I mean, even the fact that we realize that that's probably true, doesn't that sort of indicate to you something about the fact that this profound truth, that actually every human being is a servant, a doula of sin, that that's, well, actually, it's probably true.

And part of that sin is that I flatter myself too much to detect or hate my own sin. Part of my sin is that I'm very good at seeing specks in other people's eyes and not seeing the logs, some of the logs in my own eyes. And the fact is, if you just think about it for a second, about this whole world system, like, isn't it true that everybody's going to die? Like, why is that a shocking thing? Later on, it's going to connect serving sin to death. Well, aren't we all going to die? And even this idea of everyone's sins, if you actually, I've talked about this endlessly, but you can't talk about it too much, because it's one of those things that we say yes and then completely and utterly ignore.

If you met somebody who said, you know, I have a 12-year-old, I have a 14-year-old kid, and from the moment they could make moral decisions to now, they have never done anything wrong. I can't even say it without laughing. And no one would believe it. In fact, you'd go back and say, is this person ever deluded? You know, we don't believe, like, why? On one hand, we're offended by this, but the Bible's actually just the same thing. You know, the fact is, you are under the reign of death, and you are under the reign of sin, and if you don't think so, then tell me the person who hasn't died, and tell me the person who's never done anything wrong, and tell me whether you actually believe it, and isn't it true that if you channeled your inner cattiness and were able to get in a very catty circle where you could chat with each other more and more and more and more and just unleash your full cattiness, wouldn't you be able to identify the idols that rule other people's lives? And wouldn't you be shocked to discover they did it for you? Like, isn't that, in fact, just the case?

So why are you so offended by verse 16? Ouch. But then you say, okay, George, you know, here's the problem with you religious people.

Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. You say that, but, you know, you're really giving yourself a mulligan. You're really one of those guys as well, seeing specks in other people's eyes and not logs in your own, and that's the problem with you Christians. You think your poop smells better than other people if you even poop at all, and you just look down your nose at people, and, and, and, and, and, and, and, and that's actually obviously often true, often true. But it's not true here in this particular text. And that's why, um, look at verse 17 and 18. And, uh, here's what he says.

[21 : 06] But thanks be to God that you who once were, 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. That's a very, very dense sentence, but here's, here's this idea.

The, the first idea, but thanks be to God, um, what Paul's going to say is that his new status, all he can do is be grateful because it's not something he's accomplished.

And, um, and then when it says that you who once were slaves of sin, and here the, the you is plural, yous, who once were slaves of sin, have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed. Very complicated sentence in the Greek, but here's the fundamental idea.

The idea is of being carried. The verbs are all passive, divine passive. So the idea is, I was born human, human, like everybody else. So was Paul, all of you are born, and when you're born, you're born into a realm. There's a master called sin, also sometimes called death, but here in this

particular text called sin, and this master is one whom you serve, and you serve under their, in a sense, dominion or world, and you breathe its air. And it's a whole other topic of conversation about common grace and why people aren't as bad as they could possibly be, but that's an aside. We're going to talk about that in a couple of weeks. Uh, but fundamentally that's, that's who you are, and why am I no longer saying that I am part of that? Why am I saying that there's actually a second master who can reign, to whom you can belong, and, and whose culture, in a sense, you start to imbibe, and whose values and goals and ends you start to imbibe? Well, I'm going to tell you this, it's not by, I don't get there by, by getting, by being so good that God has to accept me, that in fact, what happens is that God does something for me, for which I can only be grateful, and what he does is he, in a sense, carries me into this new world, and I get carried into this new world when I believe what he has proclaimed at the level of my heart, the center of whom I am, and I believe that he says, when, if you come to me, all who are labor and are heavy laden, I will give you rest, take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly of heart, and you will find rest for your soul, for my yoke is easy, and my burden is light, and I believe him when he says that, and I come to him at my heart, and he carries me into this new realm, and in this new realm, I now belong to him. I belong to him. Let me say it again.

I belong to him. I don't belong to sin. I don't belong to death. I don't belong to Canada. I don't belong to my shame. I don't belong to the terrible things that I've done. I don't belong to terrible memories. I do not belong to any of that now, not because of my righteousness, but because I put my faith and trust in Christ, and God has carried me into a new relationship where I now belong to the triune God through Christ. That is who I belong to. I belong to him. I don't belong to demons.

[24 : 41] I don't belong to slander. I don't belong to belittlement. I don't belong to state power. I don't belong to cruel words. I don't belong to unforgiveness. I belong to Jesus.

I belong to him. And you might think, and sometimes Christians get really worried about this language of sin and righteousness, because frankly, it is very corny in our Canadian culture, but it's actually profoundly helpful, because the sin word emphasizes, if you could just say law, I mean, it's going to talk about lawlessness, and there's moral laws and all of that, but those all are a bit abstract. Sin is a personal word. Sin says that I have usurped the position of God. I try to usurp his position. I try to be a God. I try to ignore him. I try to belittle him. I put him in my rearview mirror. I don't care what he says, and all of these different things is I usurp a relationship with the triune God, and righteousness is at its heart being right with the triune God.

And what's not talked about, but you're going to see when you get to Romans chapter 12 and 13 and 14 and 15 and 16, where it's going to talk about more and more about what it means to follow, to belong to God when you're saved by the gospel, is being right with God means that not only am I now right with God myself, but I'm right with God. I belong to God. I belong that I'm working in a world where people don't belong to themselves, but belong ultimately. They're tragically seeking to belong to sin, or they belong to God. Like, we come together as a church, all of us individually belonging to God, and you not belong. The church doesn't belong to me. You don't belong to each other. You belong to God, and because you want to be right with God, being right with God means not only doing moral types of things, but it also means acting justly, seeking the good of the city, seeking the good for creation, because at the end of the day, the creator God has created the entire world with all of its structures, and he wants all of that to be right with him. He's deluded. If you think that's going to happen, it'll never happen.

You just join us with living a life where we don't care about any of that type of stuff, and Christians, it's so different. Why is it that I do good things? I do good things because I belong to Jesus.

And I'm learning to live under his authority in his world, seeking his criteria and his ends, and his ends are that oppression would cease. His ends are that marriage would be between a man and a woman, and it would be harmonious. His ends are that people would be free. His ends are that people would be generous and not enslaved to money. His ends are that we would learn to forgive, and that is why we do good things. Not to belong, but because I belong. And the world is completely different when you strive to try to belong, rather than because you belong. And that's the profound truth.

[28 : 08] I just want to say a couple of things here to bring it to a bit of a close. George, oh yeah, I mentioned one other thing. You know that whole slave image? And some of you might say, George, you know, over the other weeks you've said how the Christian doctrine is radically different, that the pagan gods created human beings to serve them, in a sense to be their slaves, and how it's very

common in lots of thought about that type of slavery. Now you're saying that Christians are saying the same thing, and George, isn't that like a bit of a contradiction? And it's, here's the profound difference. Look again at 17 and 18. Actually, just verse 18. And having been set free from sin, had become slaves of righteousness. That word set free is containing a very important idea that completely transforms what we're just talking about, and that's the word ransom.

And Bishop Dan mentioned this last week, and I thought it was very profound, so I'm going to try to say it again, because I think it just was a very profound thing. So see, so the thing is, in the pagan world, and in all other religions that ultimately see human beings as slaves, you are a slave, a slave, a slave, a slave, a slave, a slave. Say a slave a few more times.

But in this text, you're rescued out of slavery. And the idea here is one of ransom. Now here's what is shocking. So I don't know who, if, you know, if, I don't know, my guess is, you know, maybe you over there, brother, if you have maybe the most money, whoever has the most money, you get kidnapped.

There's probably going to be a very large ransom sum that has to be paid. I mean, not because you're worth more, but just because you have lots of money, so your family can pay more. You have ransom insurance. And I don't know, if I've gone to Zimbabwe, and I've gotten kidnapped, and there was a ransom, I mean, good grief, if it's more than a couple of thousand dollars, or out of luck, they're just going to have to put up with me for all eternity, because my wife couldn't pay it. And maybe the congregation could raise 5,000 or something like that. But that's not very much. Because the whole idea of being ransomed from slavery is, the more important the person is, the higher the price goes up. So why does this at all help to transform this whole understanding?

Well, here's where, and this is where this isn't just a story, it's true. The whole message is that you are of so much value that God, the Son of God, is the ransom price to free you.

[30 : 44] I mean, in my flesh, maybe my family and congregation could reach 10k to ransom me. I'm not that important.

But God views every person, even in the Roman Empire, the slaves, even if those sex-trafficked guys and gals who are brought into Canada and the United States because of the World Cup of Soccer, and they come to Christ, they are just treated as terrible property and terribly abused. But this text is saying they are of such unbelievable value to God, that God, the Son of God, would be the ransom price to free them. I belong to the triune God when I put my faith and trust in Christ. I now serve him. And do I matter? I matter so much that God, the Son of God, died for me to ransom me and set me free.

Profound teaching. Let's just finish the text, and I'll just draw a couple of things in closure. Look at verse 19. Here's where he sort of semi-apologizes for the analogy.

[32 : 08] I am speaking in human terms because of your natural limitations. In other words, he's saying, I'm sorry for shocking you. I want to get your attention. Right? And then he goes on, for just as you once presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness, leading to more lawlessness. In other words, every human life is in a trajectory. We're not static.

You're either moving into farther and farther and farther away from the triune God. Verse, and it continues, to now present your members as slaves to righteousness, that is, being right with the triune God, leading increasingly. Sanctification here means that you both become ever more clear that you belong to God and that you're not only becoming clear and clear in your mind that you belong to God through Jesus, but you're becoming more like Jesus, and you're in this trajectory into this. And presenting your members means everything that makes you you.

You're giving to serve something. Right? And then verse 20, for when you were slaves of sin, that is, usurping God's place, you were free in regard to righteousness. In other words, you were completely and utterly outside of his kingdom and domain. But what fruit were you getting at that time?

Verse 21, from the things to which you are now ashamed, for the end of those things is death. That's the end of being completely and utterly usurping the relationship with God. It's just going to end in death.

Verse 22, but now that you have been set free from the dominion of sin, you've been ransomed by the death of Jesus. You are of such value that he ransomed you, and you've now become the doula of God.

[33 : 44] The fruit that you get from belonging more and more to God, and being more and more like Jesus, is that you continue to become more and more like God, and more and more like Jesus.

And it's something that begins on this side of the grave, eternal life, and will go into eternal life.

And then the powerful closing sentence, for the wages of sin is death. If you're serving death, you get wages paid, and those wages are death. But it doesn't say, but the wages of following Christ is, no, no, because it's all gift.

It's all gift. The free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. He doesn't weigh my merits. He pardons my offenses. So just a couple of things to bring home to you as we come to a close.

We cannot remember enough that we belong to Jesus. You don't belong to the state. You don't belong to evil. You don't belong to your addiction.

You don't belong to your alcoholism. You don't belong to your debt. You don't belong. You belong to Jesus. And it's partially our role to remind each other that we belong to him.

[34 : 52] I don't belong to myself. I belong to him. And if you're outside of the Christian faith, there's no time better than right now to say, Jesus, I want to belong to you.

Thank you that I am of such huge worth that you died for me. The other image, and I meant to call you up, brother, and borrow your tool belt.

When I had supper with you a year or so ago, and you came from work. He's a carpenter over there. And they have their tool belt. So one of the things which this whole thing is, you know, the only verb in this entire thing is the second part of verse 19, where it says, So now present your members as slaves to righteousness, leading to sanctification.

It's saying take a pause to ask yourself a little bit about how to understand your mourning, and how to understand particular meetings and particular confrontations. And just picture yourself as belonging to a carpenter's union.

And a carpenter shows up at the job site with a tool belt around his waist, filled with tools, and maybe something that he's carrying with tools. And just say to yourself, every day when you wake up, what job site are you showing up at?

[36 : 06] Are you serving, are you showing up at the sin job site? Or the Jesus job site? And then when you're serving, you're showing up at whatever job site you're at, what tools do you have with you?

You know, what tools do you have with you? And that's a way to understand how your day is doing. It's also how to understand different particular things. I had to have a very difficult conversation the other day.

And I'll be honest, I'm a fallen human being. Partly I just want to smash the person. Okay, now you understand. When I say I'm a sinner, I'm a sinner. I'm not very religious. That's what I wanted to do in my flesh, just smash them.

Well, I don't want to show up at... I'm not showing up at sin's job site. I don't belong to sin. I... The sermon preparation was unbelievably helpful to me. I said, I'm going to show up at this conversation.

I'm not going to show up with anger and pride and violence and getting my own way. I want to come knowing that this person that I had to have the difficult conversation with, they also belong to Jesus.

[37 : 12] And I'm going to come in a different... I'm going to come with different tools. I want to come with prayer and with listening. I want to just come with different tools in this particular situation.

And I want to be under my master Jesus with different criteria. And the criteria there is for that person's good, for their healing and their wholeness and their restoration. Not for me to inflict my sin and my anger on them.

So, what job site are you showing up for when you begin your day? Or when you go into awkward meetings or other types of things?

Or when you're having to have a conversation with your wife or your kids? What tools do you have with you? Who are you serving? And always remember, if you're in Christ, you don't belong to yourself.

You belong to Jesus. I invite you to stand. Just before we pray, another way to summarize this sermon and what Paul is getting at is, when that original question, if you're not under...

[38 : 23] if you're not under law, why don't you just sin as much as you want? One of the common ways to misunderstand the gospel is to take it as fire insurance.

With fire, in a sense, referring to hell. And Paul is saying, if you just understand coming to Christ is like a type of fire insurance, you haven't understand Christ at all.

You give yourself to Christ, he takes you. And you now belong to him. You belong to him now. And he will call you and urge you and prep you to serve him and his purposes and his glory, all for your good.

Let's bow our heads in prayer. Father, we thank you that sometimes you want to shock us to get our attention. Father, we acknowledge before you it's a shock to think that no human being can be their own master, that we human beings were designed to serve.

And we give you thanks and praise, Father, that you thought us of such great worth, that God, the Son of God, would die for us as a ransom, to free us from slavery, that we might belong to you, that we might belong to Christ, that grace might be the air we breathe, that the fruit that comes from knowing Jesus more is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

[39 : 50] So, Father, we ask that you would bring to our memory time and time and time again that we who are in Christ, that we belong to Jesus. And help us, Father, to think of whose job site we show up at when we show up and do our day.

And, Father, grow within us a deep desire to be generous and forgiving and to seek justice and to do good and to pray that we might become more and more like Christ.

And we ask these things in Jesus' name, your Son and our Savior. Amen. Amen.