

Under New Ownership - So Live Like It!

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[0:00] Thank you for this morning where we come. We offer our praise and worship unto you, O Lord.! I pray for blessings for everyone that is here. May you give them ears to hear.

May you give my voice a steadiness to be understood. May the heart of your gospel, the heart of your message be clear to everyone today. We ask you these things on your most holy and precious name.

Amen. Please be seated. I want to address a sensitive subject that some of you are probably considering or dealing with today. Despite what happened in the hockey game, God still reigns. He is still on the throne. He still loves Canada. Just a little less the United States. I don't know. I don't say that. So I'm glad that you're here.

Brent Smith told me I'm going to need to speak a little bit louder and use more definitive terms to keep you guys awake. So please, first of all, please turn in your Bibles to Romans chapter 6.

[1:07] If you're new or visiting, my name is BK. I have the pleasure of being one of the pastors here that has the delight of serving in this community. Romans 6.

And turn to Romans 6.15. That's where I'm going to begin my reading. But Romans 6 is essentially divided into two sections. And we've covered this, but this is just helps us understand that what Paul is doing in Romans 6, he's answering two specific questions.

The first question was an objection. And that was, if grace increases where sin increases, why don't we sin more?

Because if we sin more, we can experience more of God's grace. The answer to that question is found in Romans 6.1-14.

The second objection, he's answering the question, if we're not under the law anymore, what governs us?

[2:10] There's this fear, if there's no law, then we will descend into chaos, madness. What is going to keep us in check spiritually? So let's read Paul's response to this question beginning in Romans 6.15.

What then? Are we to sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means. Strongest Greek emphatic statement that you can ever say.

There is no way. No means. 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.

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. I am speaking in human terms because of your natural limitations.

[3:31] For just as you once presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness, leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness, leading to sanctification.

For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. But what fruit were you getting at that time from the things of which you are now ashamed?

For the end of those things is death. But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the fruit you get leads to sanctification and its end, eternal life.

For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. Last week, if you were with us, we exposed the lie.

We exposed the lie of autonomy. It's the lie that says, I belong to myself. I answer to no one but me. [4:42] I am free to do as I please. But Paul quickly shatters that illusion. He tells us something that rubs against every modern cultural thought.

You are a slave. You're not autonomous. You're not self-owned. You are not dependent. And he clearly teaches us that you are a slave to what you obey. And there's only two masters. There's either the master of sin or the master of obedience. That was the principle.

Now, Paul moves from that principle now to a reality. And that's why he begins with this incredible statement at the beginning of verse 17. But thanks be to God.

What we're seeing here is Paul is not arguing here, but he's worshiping. Because something decisive has happened.

[5:50] Now, before we go any further, I believe I need to define the gospel clearly. Because these verses only make sense if you understand what actually happens when someone is saved.

One thing Paul has made clear over and over and over again, The gospel is not try harder. The gospel is not, hey, clean yourself up.

Get yourself in a good position before God. The gospel is not, I need you to improve your morality. And the gospel is certainly not become religious.

The gospel is this. One, God is holy. Two, we are sinners. Three, sin is not weakness. It is rebellion against the creator. And four, the wages of sin is death. No man or woman is neutral.

[6:53] No man or woman is considered basically good. And there is certainly no such thing as spiritual free agents. Romans 5 makes clear that we were born in Adam.

Under sin. Under condemnation. And ultimately under death. And the fact is, when we are not in Christ, we were under the rule of death.

Because remember, the world likes to talk about death as the natural progression of life, right? Circle of life. Death is a foreign entity into God's kingdom.

Into God's garden. We were never supposed to die. So sin entered through this one man, Adam, and it spread to all of us.

There is no exceptions, and that is our condition. But here's the thing. God does not leave us there. God sent his son.

[8:01] Jesus Christ lived the life we failed to live. Jesus Christ obeyed where Adam disobeyed. Jesus Christ fulfilled the law that we broke. Jesus Christ went to the cross and bore the wrath we justly deserved.

He deserved. He died as our substitute. And he rose from the grave as our victorious king. And here's the miracle.

When you repent and believe, you are united to Christ. You're not improved. You're not upgraded. You are united to Christ.

That means you've been not only transformed, but you are transferred. And what we mean by this is you went from the world, where death rules, and you now live where grace rules.

What's interesting is your guilt is credited to him, and his righteousness is credited to you. Your old status dies, and your new status begins.

[9:17] And it begins that you are justified, you are declared righteous, you are accepted before God, and it is forever.

Amen? That is the gospel. See, this sermon is not about behavior modification. It's about identity. It's about ownership.

It's about this glorious truth, that if you are in Christ, you are under new ownership. And I know I've been banging on this drum, and I'm going to continue banging it for this morning.

The question that I'm going to ask you at the end of this sermon is a simple one. Are you living like your life is under new ownership?

So this morning, I want to look at three truths about salvation. Essentially, you have three truths you need to know from this passage.

[10:22] Let's turn to the first truth. The truth is you've been transferred. Romans 6, verse 19, But thanks be to God, that though you

were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which we were committed, and having been set free from sin, have begun slaves of righteousness.

Notice that tone. Paul is thanking God. He does not thank or praise them for their own wisdom, their own intelligence, or moral and spiritual aptitude or determination.

And the reason is why? Because none of those things have anything to do with salvation. Jesus said, No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him, and unless it has been granted him from the Father.

That is John 6, 44, and verse 65. Paul will later write in 1 Corinthians 15, Our thanks for salvation should always be to God alone, because it is God alone who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

This is why Paul begins with, Thanks be to God. Because he says something happened. He says you were slaves to sin.

[11:46] Notice, past tense. But notice he doesn't mince the words here, right? He doesn't say you were influenced by sin. You weren't just dabbling and experimenting with sin.

You weren't occasionally failing. He said that you were enslaved to sin. In fact, sin is not defined here.

That is just something you did. It was something that ruled over you. And then something changed. Let me be clear. The gospel is a transfer of dominion.

Look at the verbs. You became obedient. You were set free. You became slaves of righteousness. Notice that these weren't just gradual points of improvement, but they are immediate actions that happen under a transfer of allegiance.

[12:58] You see, when someone comes to Christ, God does not polish up their old master. God replaces their master. You are under sin's authority. Now you are under righteousness.

This language is clearly dominion language, kingdom language, ownership language. The fact is, you were relocated. Before, sin had the controlling claim.

After Christ, righteousness has controlling claim. Make no mistake, that doesn't mean you never struggle. But what it means is, you do not belong to what you struggle against.

Notice this term, obedient from the heart. What Paul's talking about there is an inner transformation. The exterior doesn't change the interior.

The interior changes the external. And you guys who are parents have known that. My friend, when their kids were quite younger at the time, and he had three kids and they used to fight all the time, and one of the things is, you know, he'd make them, you know, go say sorry to your brother.

[14:08] You know, the ultimate story, the response was, they'd be yes, and then my friend would ask him, are you sorry on the inside? You know, we get that.

Before Christ, you may have behaved morally, but your heart did not love righteousness.

Now, because you are now in truth, something inside of you responds to truth. You may resist at times, you may fight it, you may fail, but there is now a new loyalty, and that internal responsiveness is evidence of new ownership.

The fact is, slaves of sin resist righteousness, slaves of righteousness desire it. That is the difference.

Notice the phrase, the form of teaching to which you were committed. Form, it's kind of an interesting word. He's not saying that you were committing to a certain philosophy.

[15:17] He says, you were handed over to a form of teaching, and the picture here is like a mold. Right? And anybody who's, you would take a steel worker or working in some minerals that you'd melt down, you'd pour it into a mold.

You with me on that? And it has a shape that it's supposed to become. So it's like poured metal poured into a cast. And what's interesting is the metal doesn't shape itself.

The mold is what shapes the metal. You with me on that one? This is what he's doing. The fact is, he's communicating that it's the gospel that reshapes you.

So this gospel is the mold, and you are now poured into it. You do not shape yourself into the way that you think God wants you to. The gospel is what the shape is, and you are poured into it. The idea is that when God makes a new spiritual creation of a believer, he casts it into the mold of divine truth. When you believed, you were conformed to a new pattern.

[16:34] And that pattern is that of Jesus Christ. You see, your identity shifted before your behavior caught up.

You get me on that one? Your behavior shifted before your behavior catches up. Identity first, pursuit of righteousness. And that order is crucial.

The fact is, we don't obey to become righteous. We obey because we belong to righteousness.

That is our new owner. Now, Paul says something very important.

He says, having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness. As I said last week, freedom in Christianity is not independence, it's a new allegiance.

You are not liberated into self-rule. You are transferred into a new master. You see, this destroys the cultural lie that freedom means no authority.

[17:39] Biblically, freedom means being under the right authority. The fact is, sin enslaves and degrades, righteousness governs and restores.

And here's the key. This transfer is already true of every genuine believer. Paul is not urging them to make it happen. He is reminding them that it has already happened.

Now, notice Paul pauses here and he says, I'm speaking in terms because of your weakness, because of your flesh. And he's not apologizing for truth. He's saying, I'm using the category of slavery because you need something concrete.

That's why he's using that imagery. Spirit, spiritual reality is bigger than the metaphor. But you must understand this much. You will serve what you will obey.

Now, let me answer the question, why does this matter? Why does this matter right here, right now? And the simple truth is, before we go any further, the rest of this passage demands that we understand this.

[18:55] because if you don't understand that conversion changes ownership, then the next few verses will sound like behavior-based religion.

That's not what Paul is doing. He is saying, you've changed masters. Now, let's talk about where each master leads because every master produces something and every allegiance ends somewhere.

You with me on that? So that was the first truth. You've been transferred. The second truth is, you have a direction.

Whether you know it, you recognize it, or you realize it, you have a direction. For just as you once presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, righteousness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness leading to sanctification. Now, remember that word, present yourself. It's taken our eyes, our ears, our nose, and we talked about this last Sunday or the Sunday before where sin is actually presenting the members of our body to unrighteousness.

[20:15] righteousness. And the opposite is presenting ourselves to righteousness. Then he presses further here.

He says, for when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. And that's an interesting term. I'm going to get back to that. But what fruit were you getting at that time from the things of which you are now ashamed?

For the end of those things is death. That's an incredible statement. And then he builds this contrast. But now that you've been set free from sin and have been slaves of God, the fruit you now get leads to sanctification and its end, which is eternal life.

So remember, the point is you have a direction. See, here's the thing about sin. Sin has a trajectory. That's why Paul reminds him, when you were slaves of sin, sin.

And like I said, verse 21, it's a brutal question. But what fruit were you getting at that time from the things of which you are now ashamed? Has anybody here ever felt shame from their sin?

[21:30] And he's asking, what did you benefit from that? When you lived in that sin, what was it producing? sin? Because the reality is sin always produces something.

But here's the tricky part about sin. Sin promises freedom. It promises satisfaction. It promises identity. But it never tells you where it's going.

Paul says here, sin leads to shame and ultimately leads to death. The fact that he uses that word fruit is not accidental.

It's a powerful word. Fruit is not an instantaneous thing. It takes time. It's cultivated.

It needs to be grown. So when he's talking about that sin, just think of that picture of the fruit. When you commit yourself to that sin, you have this great big shame tree.

[22:34] Eventually, you might be excited. This root's really great. This trunk's really growing. I can handle it. But next thing you know, you see, sin rarely looks deadly at the beginning.

It looks attractive, exciting, harmless, but it compounds. That's why he says lawlessness leads to more lawlessness.

Small compromises normalizes larger compromises. hidden indulgence hardens into habit, habit hardens into identity, and eventually shame.

And make no mistake, shame is not embarrassment. Shame is the moral weight of regret. And here's what makes sin so deceptive.

It doesn't show you the end at the beginning, does it? It shows you the thrill, the rush, the validation, the escape.

[23:45] But it never advertises the aftertaste. Because I'm going to tell you right now, no one plans on destroying their marriage.

No one plans on losing their integrity. poverty. No one plans to become numb to conviction. And no one plans on standing before God unprepared.

Sin never says this is how it will end. Sin says this will satisfy. But Paul asks, what fruit were you getting?

what fruit were you getting? You see, that question forces us to reflect, to think back.

Before Christ, what did sin actually give you? Did it quiet your soul? Did it give you peace? Did it satisfy your longing? Did it bring lasting joy?

[24:49] Or did it only leave residue of guilt, fear of exposure, and personal division? That's fruit.

And if that trajectory is not interrupted by grace, it hardens into spiritual death. The fact is, sin doesn't explode overnight, it erodes, it groves, and the erosion is deadly because it's gradual. Then this quiet realization sets in. sin, this sin did not deliver what it promised. And Paul says here in the text, the end of those things is death.

He's not talking about physical death, but he's talking about spiritual separation, eternal rule. That sin is a master that always pays in decay.

glory. So we know here that sin has a trajectory. But you know what else has a trajectory? Righteousness.

[26:04] Righteousness has a trajectory. Now look at the contrast. But now, remember we talked about this, I don't know, several months ago, the beautiful word of but. God. It interrupts in our sadness and our destruction and then it brings this idea of hope.

Ownership changes, direction changes, you have become slaves of God. So what does that produce? It produces fruit that leads to sanctification.

That idea of sanctification means growth, it means progressive Christ-likeness, it means increasing alignment with your new identity. You with me on that one?

Sanctification is growing in Jesus Christ. It's not perfection. It is direction. Sin spirals downward.

Righteousness grows upward. Both compound, both shape you, both lead somewhere. The question is, are you growing?

[27:15] The question is, which direction are you growing? And here's the warning, there is no neutral ground.

Notice verse 20. When you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. Let me read that. That's an odd-sounding verse, right?

When you were slaves of sin, you were free in regards to righteousness. It almost sounds like it's something positive, but that's not what it's saying. It means this.

When sin owned you, righteousness had no claim on you. You get that? When sin owned you, righteousness had no claim on you.

It means you felt no internal pull toward holiness. You did not experience grief over sin. You had no longing for obedience.

[28:13] You were free from righteousness. But that freedom was slavery. But now the reverse is true.

You were under God. You were under righteousness. You are under grace. And righteousness now has a claim on you. You cannot sin comfortably anymore. There is conviction.

There is resistance. There is internal tension. And that tension reveals evidence of a new direction. Amen? That we have a new master.

That's why when we fight those things, do not get discouraged that we somehow do not have assurance. Be encouraged that you still love righteousness and you know God has given you a check.

Your conscience exists for a reason. Now Paul's argument is absolutely relentless. Master leads to fruit which leads to end.

[29:14] You with me on that one? The equation master, whatever that master is, leads to a fruit and that will lead to an end. Sin leads to shame. Shame leads to death.

God leads to sanctification which leads to eternal life. Amen? Now, notice he's not threatening believers with losing salvation.

He's simply describing the inevitability of your life on that path. Whatever owns you shapes you. And whatever shapes you leads you somewhere.

And you've heard it from this pulpit many times. You don't drift into holiness. And you don't drift into ruin overnight.

But the truth is you're going one way or another. Paul's point, trajectory matters, not just decision, not just a profession, but it is your direction.

[30:26] So let me bring you to the third point, my third and final point. the reality is you have a destiny. You have a destiny.

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

is eternal and the evil of God. This is the climax of the slavery argument that he's been stating here. Paul has shown you were slaves of sin.

You've been transferred to God. Each master produces fruit. Each fruit, each trajectory leads somewhere. And now he says here is the final outcome.

but he's using terminology if you notice it's payroll language. Right? Sin pays wages.

[31:33] The wages of sin is death. We need to think about that. Wages are something that are earned. Wages are something that is deserved.

They are paid because work was performed. And here's the truth. Sin is a master that keeps accounts.

Doesn't forget. It doesn't overlook. It doesn't miscalculate. It pays exactly what is owed. And what is owed is death.

Not just physical death, but spiritual separation, eternal judgment, and final justice. sin. And here's something good you can say about sin.

Sin does not cheat its workers. Sin does not cheat its workers. It always pays in full.

[32:37] Now notice something sobering here, guys. Paul doesn't say the wages of sin as in plural. he says sin singular.

It's because the problem isn't just our wrong actions. It's talking about sin as the master. If sin owns you, death is not a possibility, it is a certainty.

That's the trajectory Paul has drawn out for us. Shame leads to death. And when I make that statement, that's just not a dramatic statement.

This is sobering theology. Now look at the contrast. And again, we have the beautiful but.

The greatest word in the verse, but the free gift of God. Not wages, gift, not earned, something that is given.

[33:46] It's not deserved, it is granted. Sin pays what it is owed, God gives what is not owed, and that is grace.

And what is that gift? Eternal life. And it's not just endless existence. God transfers us to a life with God, to know that we're reconciled, we can feel no shame, we're restored, we live with joy, glory, presence, his presence, unending fellowship.

And I have it on pretty good authority that eternal life also has dogs in it too. Now notice how precise Paul is here.

He doesn't say eternal life generically. he says it in Christ Jesus our Lord. Listen, if you have an idea of heaven that does not include Jesus, there's probably something wrong with your understanding what heaven is supposed to be.

You see, this gift is not detached from the person of Jesus Christ. This gift is found in union with him. that life is not extended existence, it is being in Christ, under his lordship, in his righteousness, in his victory.

[35:20] Ultimately, ownership determines destiny. Here's the thing about this.

Look at how clean Paul makes this. Sin leads to wages which lead to death. God leads to a gift which leads to life.

There's no other option. There's no middle option. There's no partial outcome. There's no hybrid category. Simply says you're working for a master who pays in death or you belong to a Lord who gives life.

This, my friend, is Romans 6. Now, I'm going to say something pastoral here because I believe there's two kinds of people who are listening right now.

One is the tender hearted believer. You love Christ, you fight sin, you stumble, and when you read the wages of sin is death, you feel fear.

[36:29] God let me speak clearly to you. Paul is not threatening those who are in Christ Jesus.

You with me on that? Paul is not threatening those who are in Christ. He's describing what sin pays those who belong to it.

If you are in Christ, you do not work for sin anymore. You may fall into sin, but you will never belong to it again. That's why conviction bothers you.

That's why repentance follows failure. That's why you cannot stand comfortable in rebellion. You see, that discomfort, like I said, is evidence of a new ownership.

But there's others who may hear this differently. Some may be resting on a profession without trajectory. What means is they claim Christ, but they continue to present themselves to sin without resistance.

[37:38] They do not experience grief. There is no fight. There is no direction change. Romans 6 does not allow for that.

Because Paul's logic is unavoidable. whatever master you obey leads to fruit, which leads to an end. There's no movement towards sanctification, no discomfort with sin, no hunger for righteousness.

The question is not are you imperfect? The question is who owns you? I don't say that to crush you. I say this to bring clarity to you. Because eternal life is not a wage you earn. It is a gift given in Christ.

And it is given to those united to him. and union with Christ always produces direction. What I'm teaching here is not some form of abstract theology.

[38:55] This is reality. If sin owns you, death is your paycheck. It may not arrive today, it may not arrive visibly, but it will arrive but if you are in Christ, you do not receive wages, you receive a gift.

And what's great is that gift cannot be earned, it cannot be improved, it cannot be supplemented or secured by performance. It is given because of a union with Jesus Christ.

That's why the gospel matters in this passage because if you misunderstand justification, you will misunderstand sanctification. You don't present yourself to righteousness to avoid earning death, you present yourself to righteousness because you already belong to life.

The gift is secured and the trajectory reflects it. So the question I began with is the question I end with. Who owns you?

Because your direction will answer that question. not your perfection, not your claims, not your church attendance, your direction. Where is your life headed?

[40:15] Is it toward greater comfort in sin or increasing discomfort with it? Is it towards casual compromise or growing sanctification? Because as Paul has made clear, every master pays and every road leads somewhere.

Christian, imagine two employees leaving work on Friday. One receives a paycheck he earned, the other receives an inheritance he did not.

One labored under obligation, the other lives under generosity. generosity. My friends, you are not earning your future, you are living out your inheritance.

Amen? Don't go back to working for a master who only pays in death. The fact is you are under new ownership, so live like someone whose future is eternal life.

Present yourself to the one who bought you because you're not earning a paycheck anymore, you're living out a gift. Amen? And here's the pastoral moment. Some of us have sinned grievously under the name of Jesus Christ.

[41:40] What happens a lot of times is we tend to live in a certain level of shame. Can I really make up for that sin? I knew better, I was saved, I knew the good news, but I took a road that I knew was rebellious.

And the question that always gets asked in their head, can I come back home? Can I come back home? Can I come into the presence of God and not feel ashamed?

Or do I have to sit out on the outside of this beautiful house looking in? I'm going to tell you right now, God's forgiveness is complete. And guess what?

It's perfect. And God never changes. That once you are in the household of God, you are welcomed everywhere in Jesus Christ.

Now I get it. Certain decisions we made in our past produces consequences and it hurts because we sometimes live in those consequences and we're hurting because we wonder if we've been forgiven.

[42:49] I remember committing a grievous sin when I was younger as a youth and I remember thinking, I still love you, God.

I still love you, God. But I was just drawn away from the pleasures of this world for a season and I would be filled with regret every time.

time. And it wasn't until one of my closest friends knew about my sin, knew about my repentance, but knew I did not feel worthy.

And the reality is I'm not. But because of God's great love for me, I can walk in the newness of life. And he's not going to remind me of that sin. It's tossed as far as the east is from the west. I hope I'm getting the right directions here. God is good.

[43:53] And this is also why we have Dave Nannery on staff. Dave does discipleship counseling. He helps us work through some of those things from our past, some of our thoughts.

our prisons. We know they're there. We have that fight. But let me assure you that fight is not because you don't love God.

That fight exists because you do love him and his righteousness. But sometimes you just don't know how to get there. Let me pray.

Dear most holy heavenly father, we thank you for this incredible chapter. This chapter 6 and 7 is in a book of such deep theology is so personal.

It cuts right down to our existence, our decisions, and what they lead to. And it's so simple yet it's true. Father, I love that your expectation isn't perfection.

[45:12] Your expectation is for us to love you and follow you. You are a good father. father. You do not exasperate your children.

You grow us. You discipline us. Whether through life, circumstances, or our inner turmoils, those are the things that you use to mold us to be more like you.

God, I for one am thankful for the God who you are that loves a sinner like me and restores a sinner like me. Father, for some of those here who are still holding on to those thoughts of unworthiness or feel like they're tainted, they can't serve and they kind of willingly put themselves out into this isolation.

You know, I'm just going to live up in the Arctic for a while. But there's a warm home with a God who loves them, with brothers and sisters who love them.

We call them back to this church to be known, to be cared for, to help in growing into maturity, to help us withstand the enemy's lies.

[46:40] The fact of the matter is we so clearly need each other, Lord. Not just me, but we need everyone who is sitting in these pews.

So if there's someone here who wants to be put under a new ownership, they have heard the gospel today, I pray that they would submit to those truths and they would accept the free gift of eternal life that you give to anyone who calls upon your name.

We ask these things in your most gracious, holy, heavenly Father. Amen.