“Servants Serve”

July 8, 2018

Matthew 6:16-24

Please open your Bible with me to the sixth chapter of Romans.

Let’s call him Sam. Sam’s been a professing Christian for about five years. Sometimes he attends Church. But most of the time he’s elsewhere and doesn’t appear to have any interest in learning how to walk with the LORD. And when you speak to him about it, he says *“Oh, I’m saved. I’m going to Heaven. I just want to live my life my way until I get there.”* What do you think you’d say to Sam?

Let’s call her Cynthia. She’s also a professing Christian. She’s been married for about fifteen years. And you just discovered she’s involved with a man who isn’t her husband. So, you brought up the subject with her today. Her answer *“I know it’s a sin; but God understands and I think He’ll forgive me.”* What would you say to Cynthia? [Idea found on [www.alfredplacechurch.org](http://www.alfredplacechurch.org) “The Christian – a Slave to Righteousness.”].

Fortunately the LORD has something to say to both Sam and Cynthia. Look with me at the fifteenth verse of this sixth chapter and see if you can find an answer for both of them. Romans 6:15 *“What then? Shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid. (16) Know ye not [don’t you see], that to whom ye yield [present] yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?*

*(17) But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. (18) Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.*

*(19) I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded [presented] your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield [present] your members servants to righteousness unto holiness. (20) For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness.*

*(21) What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death. (22) But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. (23) For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”*

I’ve titled today’s sermon “Servants Serve.” Shall we pray?

Now, like my Mom used to say to my brothers and sisters and me, *“it’s as plain as the nose on your face.”* So, let me say this as plainly as I can. Servants serve. If you’re a servant, you are serving. And if you’re serving, you are a servant. And Paul puts a lot of stress on the fact of your servanthood here.

1. Now, before you can deal with the things Paul

presents here, you need to be saved. These things can only be understood by people who are saved. So, are you saved? Have you been justified? Do you have faith in Christ’s blood? Are you confident that the only remedy for your sin is the blood of Jesus Christ? Do you realize what a wonderful Savior Jesus Christ is?

You see, before any of Romans six can make sense to you, you need to be sure in your heart about the One Who was crucified for you. Without salvation, and apart from salvation, there is no understanding whatsoever of sin in the life of the Christian. Just as surely as birth comes before growth, salvation, being “in Christ” comes before “walking with Christ.”

Many people grow up in the Church. They hear the message of salvation and often, never get saved. Yet, they stay in the Church and try to keep up good appearances. And all the while, they have no peace and no true fellowship with God. Now, if that’s you, don’t despair. Let today be the Day of Salvation for you. Stop trusting in your good works and your baptism and your Church connection and repent. Change your mind about Christ, sin, salvation, and faith. And believe on the LORD Jesus Christ and you will be saved today. Then, and only then, will the message of Romans six become understandable to you.

First, then, before you can deal with sin, you need to be saved from your sins by trusting in the crucified Savior.

Second, the Christian life is definitely described in this passage. And if I could make it as plain as the nose on your face, I’d say this. A Christian is a servant.

Now, you might have missed this when I read the paragraph a few minutes ago. But, did you notice how the Holy Spirit in Paul answers the question “What would you say to Sam and Cynthia?” Well, in this one short paragraph, Paul uses one word eight times. It’s the word “servant.” Now look again at the passage and watch for the term “servants.”

Romans 6:15 *“What then? Shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid. (16) Know ye not, that to whom ye yield [present] yourselves* ***servants*** *to obey, his* ***servants*** *ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?*

*(17) But God be thanked, that ye were the* ***servants*** *of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. (18) Being then made free from sin, ye became the* ***servants*** *of righteousness.*

*(19) I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded [presented] your members* ***servants*** *to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield [present] your members* ***servants*** *to righteousness unto holiness. (20) For when ye were the* ***servants*** *of sin, ye were free from righteousness.*

*(21) What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death. (22) But now being made free from sin, and become* ***servants*** *to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. (23) For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”*

The first thing that we all need to see is this. Before you can live the Christian life, you must be “in Christ.” You must be saved.

Second, Paul teaches something revolutionary. Christians are no longer servants of sin. Now, granted Paul uses the term “sin” over and over again in this passage. But every one of us here knows that we sin. What you may not have come to grips with yet is this. Christians are not servants to sin.

Let the Light of the Holy Spirit open up your spiritual understanding here. Romans 6:17 *“But God be thanked, that* ***ye were the servants of sin****, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you.”*

Past tense. You were, meaning, you no longer are a servant to sin.

Look at verse twenty. Romans 6:20 *“For when* ***ye were the servants of sin****, ye were free from righteousness.”*

And notwithstanding all that that means, go with what *the Word* says about you. You who are saved are no longer servants of sin. I am not a servant of sin.

So, first, before you can deal with sin, you need to be saved.

Second, Christians are no longer servants of sin.

Third, then, Christians are servants of righteousness.

Is this not, as my Mom used to say “as plain as the nose on your face?”

Romans 6:18 *“Being then made free from sin,* ***ye became the servants of righteousness****.”*

And just what does it mean to be a servant of righteous-ness? It means that you are now a servant of God. Romans 6:22 *“****But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God****, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.”*

Folks, everyone is a servant. Everybody serves somebody. And whereas once you were a servant to sin, you are no longer a servant to sin. Now you are a servant to God and to righteousness.

Can you now see why Romans six is a word to Christians? At the moment of your salvation, something phenomenal took place. You became a servant of righteousness; verse eighteen. Romans 6:18 *“Being then made free from sin,* ***ye became the servants of righteousness****.”*

Now, granted, if you are not yet convinced of your new standing, and if you are constantly at war with your flesh, then you are struggling right now. So, let me make it plain to you. Whatever God says is the Truth, no matter what you think or what you believe or what you understand. God has done to you what could not be done by any personal effort, any wish or any work by you. He’s made you what you are. And right now, you are a servant of righteousness.

And please don’t let yourself get side-tracked by the “how.” Instead, look in faith to the LORD and say to Him *“thank you for making me a servant of righteousness.”*

Folks, you’ve often heard me say *“God’s ways are better and higher than man’s ways.”* Let me add this. *“God’s Word is infinitely better than man’s thoughts.”*

The main problem with the human race is sin. Your main problem is sin. My main problem is sin. And sin is the problem Christ came to address on the day He entered into the human race.

So, what is Romans six but God the Holy Spirit explain-ing and exposing you to the truth about yourself? It’s easy to preach and teach about sin. What’s difficult is to take God at His Word. You see, He intends that this Book will keep you from sin. How? By depositing the Truth upon your spirit in layer after layer.

It’s the Truth that makes a man free. Yes, you have to deal with sin today. But, make the choice to do it with what He says, not with what you think or feel.

I know what you think. I think the exact same way. I think I sin. So I am a sinner. God says I sin because sin dwells in my body. Those are to wildly different things.

To see myself as a sinner now that I’m saved is to choose to disbelieve God. God says over and over and over that you are a Saint. And when you choose to sin, you are a Saint who chooses to sin.

Folks, if He said it, that settles it. He’s right. And the sooner you see it, the sooner Romans six will come alive to you.

So, first, before you can deal with sin, you need to be saved.

Second, Christians are no longer servants of sin.

Third, Christians are now servants of righteousness.

Fourth, and maybe foremost, your main responsibility as a Christian is to bring something to God; to make a presenta-tion to Him; yes, present something to God every day and every hour and every minute. And what is it that Christians present to God?

Romans 6:13 *“…yield [present] yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.”*

Romans 6:19 *“…for as ye have yielded [presented] your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield [present] your members servants**to righteousness unto holiness.”*

The reason I include the word “present” here in place of “yield” is this. To present something to someone is a definite act. Folks, to live the Christian life I only need do what God tells me to do. And what is that? He says I am to present something to Him.

And when I do that, He receives what I present and He takes over. I now begin to act like what He has made me. I am a servant who is doing what I’m told to do; verse sixteen.

Romans 6:16 *“Know ye not [don’t you see], that to whom ye yield [present] yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?”*

Folks, this is the essence of your daily walk with the LORD. He’s not calling you to greatness. Nor is He calling you to a task that cannot be done. He’s calling you to present something to Him because without the presenting of yourself and your body’s members to God, He has nothing to work with.

This is the practical side of “I Surrender All.” Don’t you sometimes wonder how to live the Christian life? Of course, you do. Well, here it is. “Present” yourself to Him.

And even, present yourself to Him to see what He will do. You see, to present yourself to God is an act of your will. And God knows how much you need Him and His help.

There is no living the Christian life if you don’t present. There is no dealing with temptation and there is no dealing with sin if you don’t present. There’s also no obedience without presenting. It’s like the Christian life is this huge struggle until you come to end of yourself and simply present yourself to Him. Then it works. Then it’s *His* life that infuses you. Then you’ve exchanged your life for *His*. Then, the blessedness of the Christian life comes into your spirit.

Who are we? Christians are people who offer themselves and the members of their bodies to God.

Now, let’s review the Christian life from Romans six.

Romans 6:1 *“What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?”*

Here’s God’s answer to Cynthia who thinks she can have a romantic relationship with a man who isn’t her husband and that God will forgive her. And here’s God’s answer to Sam, who thinks he can live his live as he pleases until he gets to Heaven. *“Cynthia, will you continue in sin that grace may abound? God forbid, how shall you who are dead to sin continue anyone longer therein?” “Sam, …yield [present] yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.”*

And when Sam and Cynthia receive these words from the LORD’s heart, they begin to see that the Christian life is much more than going to Heaven while you let sin have its way over you.

Folks, God’s plan is for sin to not have dominion over you any longer. So, Romans 6:3 *“Don’t you* ***understand*** *that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death?”*

Romans 6:6 *“****Realizing*** *this, that our old man was crucified with Him that the body of sin might be destroyed [rendered inoperative] that henceforth we should not serve sin.”*

Romans 6:9 *“****Seeing*** *that Christ being raised from the dead, dies no more, death hath no more dominion over Him.”*

And now Romans 6:16 *“Know ye not [****don’t you see****], that to whom ye yield [present] yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?”*

God’s Word is what you need; not your full understand-ing of it. Let His Word fill your spirit with Light. When that happens, you can be sure the Holy Spirit Himself will fill your spirit as well. And why? Because you need the Word. You need the Spirit. And you need the Son of God more than you need your next meal.

All of us have to deal with sin every day. And that’s why the Holy Spirit writes through Paul about it. The opposite of sin is righteousness; something we all think of as perfection, which it isn’t. Sin, folks, is a condition we were born with. Righteousness is also a condition. But none of us were born into it.

So, let me ask you *“Is it O.K. to treat sin lightly?”* Or, as some would say *“Since I can’t seem to overcome it, I guess I’ll just have to live with it. Besides, I just don’t see myself as righteous.”*

I think the difference between what you were before you became a Christian and what you are now is this. Before salvation you had no choice. You were a servant and a slave to sin. Now, since you’ve trusted in Christ, you are a servant of righteousness and now you are able to choose righteous-ness. Before the Cross, you had no choice and you thought you did. After the Cross, you have a choice and think you don’t.

Now, a word about presenting yourself to God as a gift. Throughout history whenever the opportunity arose to meet with the King, people have brought gifts to him.

I Kings 4:21 *“And Solomon reigned over all kingdoms from the river unto the land of the Philistines, and unto the border of Egypt: they brought presents, and served Solomon all the days of his life.”*

II Chronicles 17:5 *“Therefore the Lord stablished the kingdom in his hand; and all Judah brought to Jehoshaphat presents.”*

II Chronicles 32:23 *“And many brought gifts unto the Lord to Jerusalem, and presents to Hezekiah king of Judah: so that he was magnified in the sight of all nations from thenceforth.”*

This story is titled “The Servants Who Honored The King.” It comes a man named Yaakov Paley.

Once upon a kingdom, a king set off on the back of his fine steed, accompanied by three burly bodyguards. They toured the countryside, riding up hills and racing down valleys. Further and further they went, delighting in the fresh country air. The warm sunshine enchanted them, and the kingdom's breathtaking scenery set smiles in their hearts. Every now and again they gave their steeds a rest, to refresh themselves in a stream and graze on thick wild grasses.

The king was not hungry. He was still full from his elabo-rate breakfast. And the guards? They were used to long, arduous trips between meals. So all was bright and all were content as they basked in the freedom of the open landscape. Thus they continued for many miles.

As the hours rolled by, the king eventually grew weary. And hungry. It was very well for the horses; they could eat grass. Yet the king and his men required a meal to replenish their strength for their journey back to the capital. Gazing in all directions, they realized they had strayed very far from the cities and even the villages. There was no habitation in sight. Moreover, their predicament was strengthened by the once bright sun, now reluctant to remain above eye-level. As if frightened by the sound of hoof beats, the sun dropped further as the steeds galloped forwards.

Just as the sun had sighed its last rays, the king and his guards sighted a small bright cottage, whose light bravely defied the dusk of an already darkened valley. Guided by this glow, the king arrived extremely hungry at the solid oak door. Whilst two guards roped the horses securely by a tree, the third rapped on the door with its rusty knocker.

A startled face appeared in the doorway, and was immediately surrounded by additional surprised faces. A family dressed in rags gasped in undisguised astonishment as three splendid soldiers explained their arrival, and ushered in the most unexpected visitor the family could ever have imagined: the king!

Now, what could a family that had eaten its last crust and drunk the day's last drop of milk offer to the hungry king and his men? Without hesitation, the father of the household strode over to their only sheep, the last remaining asset save his clothes and his home, and declared:

“Oh Glorious King! I have neither horse nor goose, neither cow nor hen. Aside for my rooster to wake me, I have but one solitary sheep. Her wool provides clothes and her milk provides sustenance, for myself, my wife, and my five growing sons! Yet it is my extreme privilege and honor to slaughter this sheep and prepare her meat as a meal for my king and his loyal men. I do so with joy! I only wish that I had some wine to serve Your Majesty, along with the meat...”

The man and his wife immediately set about preparing the meat, whilst their sons set the table and chairs for their royal guests. And as the king and his men were enjoying the most loyal lamb in the kingdom, the impoverished family lay straw down for their guests to retire upon until the night itself would tire and leave their valley in the morning.

The royal party slept through the sound of the rooster, which awakened their hosts at dawn. As the sun laid claim to the treetops, the father and his five sons gathered acorns and pears, then drew fresh water from a never tiring stream. Meanwhile, the lady of the house began roasting the remainder of their sheep, creating an enchanting aroma that roused their royal guests and informed them of their pending breakfast.

By the time the king was ready to mount his rested steed, the sun had reclaimed its throne and winked the way back to the capital. The king turned to his hosts and proclaimed:

“You have treated us with great hospitality and devotion. You have proven your loyalty with your only sheep. [The rest is added by me] From now on you shall be known through-out the empire as the servants who gave their best to the king. And so the man and his family were known as the servants who honored their king.” [Found on <https://www.chabad.org>].

What now will you do with Romans six? Will you present yourself and your body to the King of Kings? Will you honor Him with the gift of yourself?

The LORD sees the gift of yourself to Him as the gift of a servant who gave his best to the King of Kings.

Hymn # 589 “Here I Am, LORD”